



Visitor Readiness Report

McKenzie River, OR



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Introduction

The McKenzie River Visitor Readiness Report is an initiative by the department of Lane County Economic Development, the Convention and Visitors Association of Lane County Oregon and the McKenzie River Chamber of Commerce. It is designed to provide a checklist of actions to enhance the destination's tourism performance. It is not a tourism development strategy or marketing plan, hence does not include all of the actions that the area may address in its annual tourism programs.

McKenzie River Valley is located in the east/north-eastern part of Lane County and is traversed by Highway 126 as it cuts across Interstate 5 from the Oregon Coast and Eugene. This 'eastern arm' of Highway 126 basically follows the McKenzie River Valley/corridor all the way east from Springfield through to the Cascade Mountains and on to the river's headwaters at Clear Lake. The highway also serves to link Springfield/Eugene with Sisters, Bend and further beyond into Eastern Oregon.

Nature and natural beauty coupled with outdoor recreation and adventure opportunities are the area's strength. The 'wild and scenic' McKenzie is an internationally recognized fly fishing river and also offers varied and highly scenic rafting, kayaking and boating experiences.

The recommendations in this report were created after site visits by the TDM team, consultation with local stakeholders and research.

The priority issues identified in the report are:

- Brochures and visitor information distribution
- Focus on key experience themes
- Positioning and Branding
- Product development initiatives
- Wayfinding, gateways and signage
- Web marketing

The recommendations should not be interpreted as meaning that current tourism efforts have been flawed. They are designed to fine-tune critical points of contact and communications with visitors and to enable the area's tourism performance to generate greater economic benefits from tourism.

Methodology

The development of the Visitor Readiness Report for McKenzie River involved a variety of actions which included:

- A review and analysis of past and current marketing materials, including brochures, websites, maps and partner marketing materials (e.g. hotels/lodges).
- A review of relevant past reports, strategies and plans relating to McKenzie River.
- Online research to review key web sites relating to McKenzie River, as well as those that potentially should carry references to McKenzie River.
- An online community survey providing stakeholders with an opportunity to express their opinions.
- Personal interviews with local business and community leaders.
- Discussions with local residents, particularly those in contact with visitors.
- On-site assessments of the McKenzie River and its adjacent areas by the TDM team to experience the Valley and its tourism features through the objective eyes of first time visitors.

Visitor Readiness Report

This Visitor Readiness Report provides recommendations for enhancing the McKenzie River area's capabilities and competitiveness in ways that are essential for successful tourism. It is divided into the following sections:

- 1. Positioning and Branding** What does the area want to be known for and how will it build its reputation as a desirable destination?
- 2. Attractors and Experiences** These are the elements that attract visitors, encourage them to stay longer and are the core components of the area's tourism experiences.
- 3. Visitor Services, Streetscapes and Signage** These place elements underpin the visitor experience and the signage and wayfinding inform, guide, and motivate travelers.
- 4. Marketing Communications** The actions and messages that communicate the tourism benefits of the area.
- 5. Soft Adventure Operators and Outfitters** These businesses enhance the visitor experience by enabling a higher level of engagement and excitement with the destination.
- 6. Leadership and Organization** These capture the way that the area is organized and motivated for tourism.

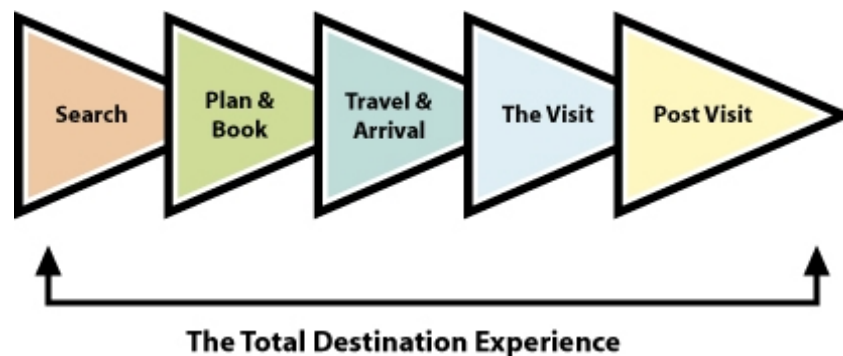
Total Destination Experience

The Visitor Readiness Report is founded on the need to deliver outstanding and appropriate experiences at every point of contact with visitors at each stage of their total destination experience. The information and experience needs of prospective visitors change according to stage in their decision making in regard to the destination.

The following model is useful for considering customer's decision-making and satisfaction at key moments in their contact with McKenzie River. It reflects the fact that as customers proceed from one stage to the next, their behavior, desires and needs change. This has a direct influence on the methods and content of communications. These five stages are:

1) *Search*: This stage includes the early points of contact that influence whether the person becomes a customer for the destination or not. Commonly, these points of contact include advertising, articles in newspapers and magazines, brochures, web sites, guidebooks, word of mouth, emails and past experiences.

2) *Plan, Compare and Book*: Bridging the gap between a potential visitor's consideration of a community and becoming a customer is possibly the greatest challenge facing all destination marketers. The points here commonly include fulfilling the questions from prospects and the ease of making transactions and bookings. They may relate to web sites, reservations services, price, conditions and rules, discounts, packages, and staff.



3) *Travel and Arrival*: At this point the experience is well underway, and the journey is an integral part of the total destination experience. The cost, quality, and ease of access and transport can influence attitudes toward the place. Upon arrival in the city, is it easy to find their way around? What are their first impressions? Is there a sense of welcome?

4) *The Visit*: This is the phase where we are most conscious of the experiences associated with a destination. What is the quality of the attractions and their experiences? How are customers interacting with the place? What are the quality and service standards? What is the appropriateness of attractors, signage, brochures, tour guides, taxi drivers, and visitor services?

5) *Post Visit*: This phase is frequently overlooked and does not receive the attention that it deserves to build positive word of mouth and positive memories. What is their reaction to leaving the place, engagement in social media, souvenirs and local products, direct mail, and "thank you" correspondence and emails?

1. Positioning and Branding

While fundamental positioning and branding issues are addressed in this report, it is not a brand strategy. Increasingly, places of all sizes are turning to the principles of positioning and branding in order to shape their marketing and help them stand apart from competitors. It establishes what's special about the place. This plays a role in influencing whether people plan to visit, recommend it to others, or decide to stop there in transit to other places. This top-of-mind awareness is activated when people hear the name of the place or associate it with activities or experiences.

Positioning is at the heart of branding and establishes what we want customers to think and feel about the place. It relates to the position in consumer's minds (and hearts) that we want to occupy. The strongest positioning frequently involves temporarily sacrificing some attributes in order to select the most enticing, meaningful and differentiating. The objective is to secure the largest number of high yield customers possible, while upholding the community's values and achieving its strategic objective of benefit all of the community.

The three most important concepts for places like McKenzie River to master in branding are (i) differentiation and positioning, i.e. leading with what sets it apart, (ii) focusing on these attributes that provide its differentiation and (iii) being consistent in how these attributes are presented, and ensuring that tourism partners deliver on the area's brand promise.

"A brand is a living entity – and is enriched and undermined cumulatively over time, the product of a thousand small gestures."

Michael Eisner
Former Disney CEO

McKenzie River Positioning and Branding

The McKenzie River's greatest strength is the concentration and integral mix of wild and scenic river activities, scenic drives and trails with companion nature-based and personal 'riverside retreat' lodging choices - all in close proximity to the Interstate 5 and Eugene (Oregon's second largest city). What personifies the destination above all (and particularly the Upper McKenzie) is its truly wild and wilderness nature, with genuinely scenic and spectacular sights.

The name of a place is one of the most integral elements of its brand identity. Names are important because they are usually the first reference point by which consumers "file" and associate various attributes to a place. In the case of the McKenzie River visitors soon discover that there are some potentially confusing name variations, many based on the term, 'McKenzie'. Appendix 2 outlines nineteen name variations that are being used to embrace the region's tourism products. Many of these variations are not of great consequence to the visitor experience. However, in some cases different names are used to refer to the same attribute e.g. West Cascades Scenic Byway and Robert Aufderheide Memorial Drive. Of greater concern is that the marketing of the area is usually conducted using the names McKenzie River Valley, McKenzie Valley or

McKenzie River. This can lead to a dilution of the area's marketing messages and less than optimal awareness of its attributes.

An indicator as to which name might be most appropriate to simplify visitor understanding is the name already in use on the Interstate 5 directional and exit signs to the area. These simply say 'McKenzie River' as the unifying place and destination name. This is not as wordy as the more unwieldy "McKenzie River Valley". The term 'river' is also more synonymous with the most significant common link that unifies the corridor, far more than the less enticing notion of a 'valley'.

Recommended Actions:

1. Agree on the official **overarching name for the region**. We recommend that this be McKenzie River. Conduct a review of the different regional names in use and where necessary take steps to address these variations. Ensure that future references to the region are aligned with the official name of the region.
2. McKenzie River should adopt the **positioning** based on: 'wild and scenic river adventures' (note: this is not intended as a tagline). Accordingly, river adventures should **lead images, copy and experiences** in brochures, web sites and articles. It is through this focus and consistency over a long period that awareness will increase and McKenzie River will become synonymous with wild and scenic river adventures. The strengths that underpin this positioning are:
 - Wild and scenic white water rafting
 - Fishing, including the unique drift boat fishing
 - McKenzie River National Recreation Trail - hiking and biking
 - Nature-based lodging, including great camping locations and RVing
 - Hot springs and 'water gardens' in natural settings
 - Wildlife including birds, fish, mink, otters, beavers, elk, deer, bears, mountain lion
3. After developing a brand strategy, design a **tagline and distinctive logo**.
4. Identify a series of **key phrases and words** to be consistently conveyed to support the brand in all marketing applications by the Chamber and stakeholders.
5. **Communicate** the positioning and branding to local stakeholders in order to generate their awareness and support.
6. Constantly **innovate and develop strategies** to ensure that the area is able to consistently excel at being perceived as a Northwest leader in delivering wild and scenic river adventures.

Alignment with Regional Brand

The new regional tourism brand is founded on accessible soft adventures. The McKenzie River experiences that are most aligned with this brand are river rafting, kayaking and boating, fishing, hiking, trail biking, camping, scenic drives, horse riding, golf and nature-based lodging.

Recommended Actions:

7. Collaborate with CVALCO to ensure that McKenzie River's soft adventure activities, leading trails and nature-based lodging and retreats are included wherever appropriate in the region's brand communications and product development initiatives.
8. Whenever the soft adventure experiences are promoted, simultaneously include riverside lodging options as **companion experiences** that enhance the adventure.
9. The Chamber of Commerce, in association with CVALCO, should **convene branding meetings** with all relevant businesses throughout the McKenzie River to demonstrate the importance of the new county and local area branding and positioning. They should explain how its delivery will enhance the success of the area's businesses and the steps that need to be taken to underpin and deliver the brand to visitors.

2. Attractors and Experiences

These are the features and attributes that motivate people to visit a place and in turn may encourage them to extend their stay. They may be physical sites, events, places or a feeling that people derive from the place. The visitor attractors for McKenzie River are centered on nature-based experiences.

Key Experience Themes

Key experience themes are the broad categories of activities that complement the positioning of the area. These themes reflect its value proposition and competitive advantage in delivering outstanding customer moments in these activities.

The nature-based tourism themes of the McKenzie River area are complementary to one another - the river and its adventure and recreation activities, the availability of nature-based lodgings, hot springs and the synergy of the area's scenic byways and their natural beauty form a highly attractive and distinctive destination.

Recommended Actions:

10. The recommended **key experience themes** in McKenzie River are:

- Land Adventures: Hiking and biking on McKenzie River National Recreation Trail, and birding, hunting, wildlife viewing, photography, skiing and scenic sightseeing
- Nature-based lodging retreats in scenic natural settings
- Scenic Byways and natural beauty and wonders
- Water Adventures: Fishing, rafting, kayaking, boating on the 'Wild and Scenic McKenzie River'

McKenzie River Visitor Focal Points or Hubs

The McKenzie River has been promoted as a location spanning more than 40 miles, without a strong focus on any individual communities and areas along the route. This has resulted in a somewhat unclear identity as to the exact nature of the McKenzie River's visitor experiences. Is it a river ...a valley .. a scenic route ... or all of these?

It is far too easy for travelers to treat it as a place you pass through on the way to somewhere else such as Eugene, Sisters or Eastern Oregon. The length of the Highway 126 corridor coupled with the absence of a major city or destination along its route creates an added challenge for motorists to determine the location of the visitor focal point on the McKenzie River. This is a dilemma facing the area as a travel experience because it lacks a focal point or hub with a strong identity from which visitors can explore the region. While the concept of the McKenzie River as a touring route may not be impacted by the absence of visitor hubs, those visitors seeking to experience the "wild and scenic river adventures" may not be as readily satisfied.

The strongest sense of arrival at a potential visitor interest occurs within the **Rainbow/McKenzie Bridge** zone, but even then only when viewed in combination or as one clear zone of business. This area best represents the '*Upper McKenzie*' destination and a base for wider exploration of the whole McKenzie River area and its surrounds. Further west along the corridor, in the Mid to Lower McKenzie, the **Vida/Leaburg** zone creates something of a presence, but does not as yet possess a strong mix of visitor interests.



When presented in geographic terms the McKenzie River should be presented as the Upper McKenzie and Lower McKenzie.

For the Rainbow/McKenzie Bridge zone to make sense, it would be helpful if all its component parts shared the same 'umbrella name'. In this way it could be more effectively marketed and developed. However the multiple place names may pose a problem because individual communities such as Rainbow and McKenzie Bridge have preferred to keep their own identity. To complicate matters further, these two adjoining areas, McKenzie Bridge and Rainbow are found listed under the name 'Blue River' in addresses for local businesses on websites such as www.all-oregon.com.

Recommended Actions:

11. Simplify visitor understanding of the Hwy 126 corridor by formally identifying the McKenzie River as **two distinct destination zones**, these should be termed:
 - **Upper McKenzie** - McKenzie Bridge/Rainbow area
 - **Lower McKenzie** - Leaburg/Vida area as the potential option, but is more difficult to group
12. Prominently welcome travelers' arrival (from both the west and east along Hwy 126) at each zone by creating a set of scenically located and commonly designed visitor **gateway signs and gateway display sites**. These gateway sites should encourage drivers to safely pull off the highway and view an enticing, large scale interpretive map, a large map of the relevant zone along with important additional information. An example of such a map is the large scale McKenzie Corridor Map found at the US Bureau of Land Management's, 'Silver Creek Boat Landing', which makes good use of activity symbols along the route, but is too narrow in focus. At the very least, these special gateway maps must feature the zone's highest appeal,

tourism related features (natural as well as man made), visitor experiences/adventure activities and travel services (including nature-based lodging options, dining and gas stations). Mileages involved from one key point to the next should also be provided and a north-south and east-west orientation to help visitors with planning and decision making.

McKenzie River Markets

The McKenzie River is not known for shopping, except for the *Christmas Treasures* store.

If feasible, consider the introduction of outdoor riverside markets in the key upper and lower precincts could address this visitor and community interest in a highly appropriate way.

Farmers and craft markets are gaining in popularity across the country due to the rising consumer interest in obtaining products directly from farmers and artisans. These markets enable customers to access locally and regionally grown farm fresh produce and enables farmers the opportunity to develop a direct relationship with customers.

Recommended Actions:

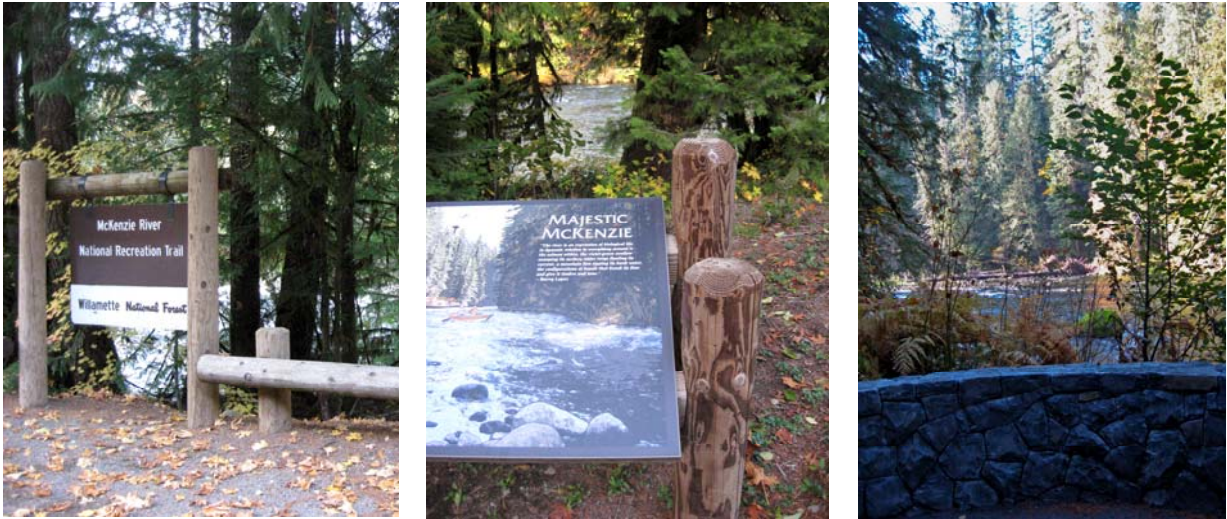
13. If no suitable McKenzie River markets already exist as candidates to be developed into leading attractions, **investigate the feasibility** of establishing seasonal market with the following qualities:
 - Based on the principle that its reputation will encourage outstanding vendors
 - Good parking nearby
 - Quality local products
 - Readily visible from the highway, or close to the highway
 - Scenic outlook

In keeping with the region's wild and scenic positioning, selection of an atmospheric but functional, natural location would inject additional visitor appeal and marketing advantage. One site option worthy of consideration in the Upper McKenzie might be along McKenzie River Drive. In the Lower McKenzie, a site option with high visibility from the highway is the McKenzie riverbank area adjacent to the Leaburg Dam/Lake. These can be seasonally timed to maximize community, visitor and passing traveler attendances.

McKenzie River National Recreation Trail

The very length (26 miles) and national status of this trail determines that excellence in signage and ease of location and accessibility is required and expected. This is particularly important at key entry points relatively close to the areas of greatest visitor interest. This trail has the potential to become a nationally recognized destination in its own right. Its existing use of simple brown hiking and biking symbols,

heightens the sense of awareness that this is likely to be a great hiking and biking area.



The McKenzie River National Recreation Trail presents outstanding visitor experiences, however signage to various trailheads near Highway 126 should be improved.

However, there is a need for many more access signs indicating additional entry points from the highway and continuity and reassurance signs given its considerable length. Points of convergence such as that between the Trail and Belknap Hot Springs Resort also need better signage.

The benchmark for higher standards being implemented here is readily found already at the excellent U.S. National Forest Service's interpretive and visitor access 'MRNR Trail Welcome' point and 'McKenzie River Viewpoint'. Such higher level treatment should also be applied to its marketing status and attractor value by the McKenzie River destination at large. Unlike many other sections of the river, this trail absolutely delivers the true river experience in the most rich, satisfying and varied ways.

Recommended Actions:

14. Manage the MRNR Trail as a **product in its own right**, seek marketing opportunities and develop its awareness as a destination brand that has "must do" national status for hikers.
15. Create a **distinctive logo** for the MRNR Trail to be included in all signage and supporting promotional material. This will help to visually represent it in a memorable way that serves to clearly distinguish it from other trails, particularly those of lesser status. Such a logo could also help to highlight its national significance.
16. More 'Enter MRNR Trail here' signs should be erected at all key roadside bay and safe traffic points along the highway. These should include sub-signage with appropriate symbols for the activity types visitors can undertake e.g. hiking, biking, wildlife/bird watching, kayaking, fishing, etc.

17. Key **wildlife and birding viewing areas** should always be clearly identified along the trail, at relevant highway entry points and on trail maps.
18. The **Belknap Hot Springs entry point** to the Trail (at the rear' of their grounds) should be given more prominent directional signage from the lodge foyer and parking area, preferably with the trail's own visual identity system.

McKenzie Pass / Santiam Pass Scenic Byway

This seasonal scenic byway loop extends from Sisters to the Upper McKenzie River and Valley and back. On the way, it traverses the two passes that possess truly outstanding scenic qualities, including spectacular volcanic mountain views. However in terms of access to the Upper McKenzie zone and use of its lodging and visitor amenities, it is Proxy Falls on the McKenzie Pass Scenic Byway (Scenic Route 242) and the lakes, falls and trails on the way to Santiam Pass that offer the closest, high quality experiences.

Recommended Actions:

19. In addition to marketing and reinforcing awareness of the scenic byways, specifically communicate the merits of the best experiences and locations found along them in key relevant publications and web content.
20. Approach **CVALCO and Travel Oregon** to include more descriptions and details of the Scenic Byway and its experiences on their web sites. It should be done within the context of choosing the Upper McKenzie as the base for a visit providing close access to most of the Byways leading experiences.

McKenzie River Drive

This tree lined drive is a hidden local scenic treasure, being situated just off Highway 126 and running basically in parallel with the highway along the banks of the McKenzie River.

The Drive is signed (in name only) from the Highway but little indication is given of its likely degree of visitor value, particularly the existence of the Belknap Covered Bridge and its tree lined, interpretive site. Nor is the existence of the excellent restaurant and bar facilities or riverside rental cabins at the Holiday Farm Resort conveyed effectively using official highway signage. The relevant blue highway sign simply says, 'food' and 'camping' ¼ mile on right with the name.

The resort's restaurant and lounge is conveyed using prominent, privately erected highway signage highlighting access to their facilities via a private off-highway entrance, and not McKenzie Drive.

Holiday Farm Resort has erected its own Restaurant and RV Park signs with a direct exit possible from the highway onto their property. However, also encouraging travelers to take McKenzie River Drive would seem desirable and logical. Also providing some time and distance indication to let motorists know just how easy and non-time consuming this scenic route is would also be very beneficial. This information

should occur on the area's maps, highway signage, web site and key marketing materials and communications.

Recommended Actions:

21. Introduce **highway signage and gateway display** to more prominently feature the attractions and visitor services on the McKenzie River Drive. Indicate the *ease* of enjoying the drive by specifying the relatively short distance and time involved in driving this loop road. A loop symbol on the proposed gateway display with distance shown in miles is possibly the simplest and most common method of achieving this.

Belknap and Goodpasture Covered Bridges

Covered bridges hold considerable appeal for a wide variety of visitors and are a pleasant discovery for motorists when visiting the area. The McKenzie River Ranger Station indicated that some of its visitors are found using Lane County's Covered Bridges Trail Map. Both the Belknap and Goodpasture Covered Bridges are located in picturesque settings, however both are painted white. This particular (most likely historic) paint color works fine with the Belknap Bridge, but given its considerable length and prominent highway position possibly greatly reduces the potential impact to viewers of the Goodpasture Bridge. The two covered bridges both lack appropriate symbol-based advanced warning signs, or in the case of Belknap, close-by existence on a side road.

Recommended Actions:

22. Install **official tourism attraction highway signs** for each bridge using the covered bridge symbol and their names. In the case of the Belknap Bridge, this outcome might be achieved more simply by attaching covered bridge symbols to the 'McKenzie River Drive' highway signs already erected in advance of both its western and eastern highway entry points.
23. Consider **painting** the Goodpasture Bridge in a much richer and vibrant color that is still aligned with heritage standards.

Lane County and State Parks

These parks, coupled with the boat ramp access points and many great camping grounds found along the McKenzie River corridor (particularly at the upper end and around Blue River Reservoir), are important and attractive visitor assets.

Pre-trip planning revealed that information regarding the parks on the Lane County web site is not easy to access or navigate. The link is not easy to find and the information provided is neither comprehensive nor arranged in an intuitive manner. Parks are listed alphabetically and then by jurisdiction i.e. the government authority responsible for their management. There are approximately one hundred parks in the

list. One has to be aware of the park's attributes before-hand, otherwise one will spend a lot of time searching through each park before selecting one. A short-cut is to open the PDF of the County brochure and this highlights the county's main parks. While this is useful, it would be more beneficial if the online search for County Parks was more user-friendly.

The following is a summary of many of the parks visited by the team:

Hendricks Bridge	Excellent park, nice trees, no County Park sign on highway, only negative is the untidy Host area.
Howard Buford	No sign seen on highway.
Deerhorn	Well shaded picnic area and good boat ramp.
Old Fish Hatchery	Has an official advance warning visitor information sign, but very poor information presentation. The kiosk is very dirty and worn. Contains no map or other information except for some brochures. The ¼ mile advanced warning highway sign is obscured by bushes upon approach.
Ben and Kay Dorris State Park	Large and densely forested area with many picnic tables that has potential to be developed into a visitor rest area including an interpretation and viewing area. There are no walking trails, but development of a short one along the river may be possible to provide open riverside vistas.
Jennie B Harris Wayside	This is an excellent small park and is a very attractive natural roadside rest area. Although 'wayside' is a meaningful term to Oregonians and many other Americans, international visitors would not readily understand that it means a small roadside 'rest area' - the actual wording used on the second sign found once in the park.

Unfortunately in terms of first impressions at many of the County Parks, the multiple rules and signs stating what a visitor is NOT allowed to do seem highly dominant and potentially off-putting to some visitors. The fee requirements may also deter some visitors, although obviously applied for budgetary reasons.

By way of example, 'Camping Prohibited' signs are one such 'don't do this' sign. This is obviously a legitimate and important message, however in public relations and compliance terms it would be more impactful if it also provided a supplementary message on the location of the nearest permissible camping sites. Alternatively, the notice could provide a list of the area's major natural camping sites and possibly a basic map.

Recommended Actions:

24. In conjunction with CVALCO, **redesign the County web site** in regard to County Parks to provide a much more attractive and user-friendly interface with prospective visitors.

25. **Review signs at County Parks** with the view to refining the negative connotations of many of the existing signs. This should include a thorough review of the effectiveness of advanced warning signs on highways. At the same time consider signs and interpretation needs inside parks that may enhance visitor experiences.
26. Investigate the addition of short **riverside walking trails** at selected County Parks such as Ben and Kay Dorris.

3. Visitor Services, Streetscapes and Signage

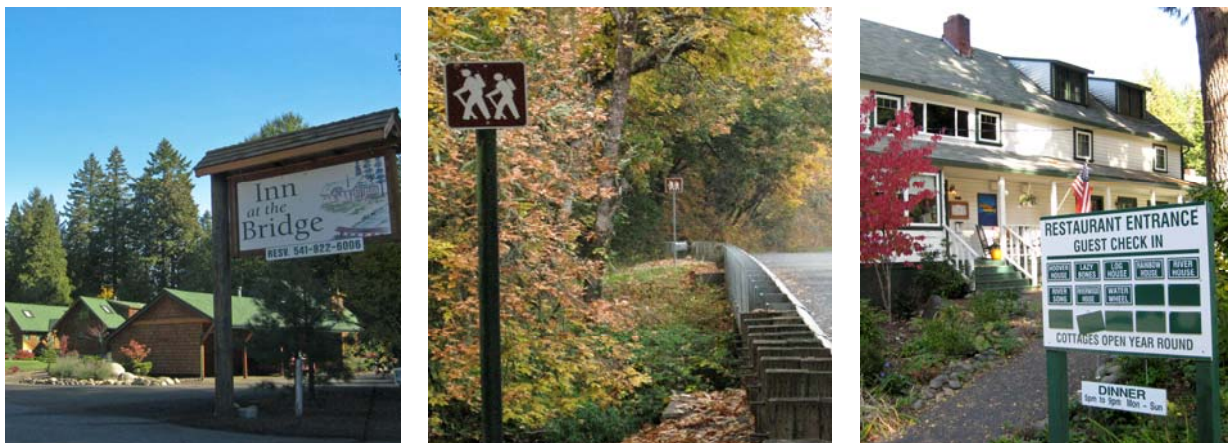
This section addresses the streetscapes, place elements and signage that are needed to provide a quality visitor experience. These promote a sense of place, welcome and community spirit.

First, impressions start at the entrance to the city. Appearances really do count when it comes to attracting visitors and the economic well being of places. Visitors are attracted to, and spend more time in places that are attractive, clean, welcoming, and well maintained. It is easy for communities to overlook the appearance of their streets, the absence of trees, poor lighting, trash and bad signage that may have evolved over the years. Visitors however, are much less forgiving. Where attention has been paid to the aesthetics of a place (including preserving or enhancing its natural qualities and environments), it gains the reputation as a “special place” .

Signage and wayfinding systems also serve vital roles. They inform, guide, and motivate travelers. They are also important in shaping the identity of a place through their style, design, colors, lettering and content.

Visitor Services and Amenities

Given the considerable potential of the area, it has a relatively undeveloped level of visitor infrastructure and visitor amenities. A visitor traveling through the area anticipating to find some idyllic location for lunch or coffee with river views may be disappointed. In fact, there is an overall lack of variety and quality in restaurants, coffee shops, cafes and even shopping options.



Lodging establishments throughout the region have the opportunity to integrate nature-based experiences even more into their visitor offerings.

The area’s network of ‘nature-based’ cabins and lodges, many located beside the river and immediately off the highway, offer an appealing alternative to conventional highway motels. However some establishments are showing their age and would benefit from refurbishment and upgrading of services including food and beverage and nature-experiences which add value to the stay of guests. The area does not have the

variety of quality establishments that might be expected in a place of such natural beauty. Many of the lodging establishments have the opportunity to position themselves as nature-based lodges if they can strengthen the ways that visitors can more fully immerse themselves in a greater variety of nature experiences. We understand that State and County regulations are restricting the development of some forms of lodging in many locations.

The McKenzie River corridor is not the only region in the world to have had to address the challenges of developments in environmentally sensitive areas. There are hundreds of nature-based resorts in world heritage areas, and national and state parks that are constructed and operated successfully using the latest in environmentally sustainable management principles. Many of the following developments can provide insights into how eco-lodges can be introduced into the region in ways that do not result in adverse environmental impacts.

Daintree Lodge, Far North Queensland (Australia)
www.daintree-ecolodge.com

Freycinet Lodge Tasmania (Australia)
www.freycinetlodge.com.au/

Explora Resorts - Patagonia, Easter Island and Atacama (Chile)
www.explora.com/patagonia_theplace.php

Lapa Rios Eco-Lodge (Costa Rica)
www.laparios.com/

Maho Bay Resort, St. John US (Virgin Islands)
www.maho.org/

Cuffie River Nature Retreat (Tobago)
www.cuffie-river.com

Kumbuk Eco Lodge (Sri Lanka)
www.kumbukriver.com/

Eco Lodges of Ecuador
www.sacredearth-travel.com/activities/lodgeindex/ecuadorlodges.php

Recommended Action:

27. In conjunction with CVALCO and Lane County Economic Development **investigate best practice in nature-based lodges** and resorts with the view to encouraging State and County regulations to be adapted to enable several developments that conform to these principles. This should be approached with the objective of establishing Oregon as a leader in this field of environmental sustainability.
28. Investigate solutions to improve **food service** in the region, including the availability food service at all lodging establishments. Recruitment efforts should also be initiated to encourage the location of **quality coffee shops and restaurants** in the corridor to enhance the experience level of visitors.

29. Introduce **creative product enhancements** for guests staying in lodging along McKenzie River where they can immerse themselves in quality nature-based experiences.

Signage and Wayfinding

The I-5 and Highway 126 entrances and gateways to McKenzie River provide an excellent opportunity to make positive statements to thousands of motorists every day. The region's perimeters are well signposted with excellent arrival and exit ramp signage to McKenzie River found on the Interstate 5 as the Springfield area is approached. However along Highway 126 signage additions and improvements are desirable to enhance awareness of many of the specific tourism related attractions, activities, services and amenities. These signs can be enhanced through the installation of international activity and amenity symbols.

Many excellent experiences and activities can be accessed off Highway 126 but are not immediately apparent and the existing signs, while somewhat helpful, do not adequately generate sufficient awareness of their availability. The McKenzie River itself is only immediately viewable and accessible at certain points along the highway and too few roadside places either exist or are properly signed as prospective safe and excellent viewpoints at which to pull off the road and observe the river's great beauty and natural values.

Roadside signs advertising businesses that are no longer operating are a problem capable of causing confusion and annoyance to visitors. There also appears to be some possible examples of use of brown, blue and green highway signage in a manner that differs from normal highway signage color code principles.

Many tourism businesses do not have ODOT approved location and directional signs on Highway 126. It seems that a recurring fee for any ODOT highway signage applies annually. This recurring fee is a problem for some businesses. The missing official signs for relevant local tourism businesses in some instances have been compensated for by privately designed and erected signs of all sizes and quality off the highway. Eagle Rock Lodge Bed and Breakfast has installed one of the best examples of these, but consequently lacks a useful advance warning highway sign. Additionally, unless these private signs are adequately illuminated (as only a few are) and kept un-obscured by vegetation and clutter, people will easily get lost at night.

Recommended Actions:

30. Form a **signage review group** to evaluate the locations where signs to visitor attractors should be positioned. This planning exercise should be conducted by driving through the area using only the available brochures/maps and the signs, not by using the existing knowledge of participants in the exercise. This should be addressed by driving into the area from all directions. During this exercise consider the intermittent problem of inadequate advance and arrival road signs for key tourism facilities.

31. To enable visitors to interact more with the natural environment. Introduce **visitor gateways, interpretive bays, viewpoints, stopping bays**, even public artworks, at appropriate points along Highway 126. Where appropriate these should include thematic interpretation to provide insights into the wildlife, history and geography of the area. The best example along the corridor, which also included a restroom, interpretation and an osprey wildlife viewing opportunity, was at Silver Creek Boat Landing. Ensure that all are cross referenced in brochures, online and on maps.
32. **Standardize the Hwy 126 corridor's signage** to improve its consistency, look and status from makeshift and irregular to structured and coordinated with greater ease of visibility and stronger design qualities.
33. To heighten visitor awareness and assist drivers, make greater use of **international symbols for activities** and services. These may be either used as stand alone signs or attached below relevant existing signs. An excellent example includes the brown highway signage with the wording 'Entering Leaburg Lake Recreation Area' with symbols for fishing, boating and picnicking. Other examples include free standing hiking (trail) symbol signs in the Upper McKenzie. The use of symbols like these is of increasing importance because of the interest in the region by international visitors and the brand positioning of the county by CVALCO.
34. Remove all **obsolete or misleading business signage** along Highway 126, such as coffee shops that are no longer operating and McKenzie Bridge and Adventure River Center rafting and fishing signs e.g. Finn Rock area left on display from when the Center was open during the Summer tourism season.
35. Ensure that internationally and nationally recognized **color standards** are followed in relation to different colors for signage applications, such as for attractions, amenities, directions, place names, etc.
36. Ensure that all signs have adequate **illumination or reflectivity** for night time use and visitation.

4. Marketing Communications

This section outlines the approaches that should be taken to communicate McKenzie River's brand messages to prospective visitors. These actions may be enhanced in the future according to the scale of the budget available for these activities and the level of partner participation.

"What's in it for me?"

In order to ensure that all communications are customer-focused and convey enticing benefits, imagine that the customer is looking over your shoulder as you prepare the marketing materials. When you proof-read the copy, select an image, or complete the production, imagine that the customer asks you, "So, what's in it for me?" This technique helps to maintain a customer-centered approach and can counter the bias of locals. The approach becomes all the more relevant when trying to satisfy people with specific special interests such as river activities and hiking. Generalized statements are not effective with these people. They require specific, detailed information expressed using the terms that they recognize.

Wherever possible, all communications should be led by core experiences and benefits, and not by facts, member lists or information included mainly to please internal stakeholders. Marketing materials must portray how the place will make customers feel and answer their perennial question, "What's in it for me?" In doing this, it is important to recognize where the visitor is in their decision-making and total destination experience. Don't make the mistake of overwhelming the prospective visitor with too much information that is irrelevant to their immediate needs.

Publications

Despite the advances in online communications and the Internet, brochures continue to play an important role in marketing and visitor satisfaction (e.g. for use once in the area or if preferred, advance receipt and evaluation in the mail). However, they need to be well designed, thoughtfully written, and carefully distributed. Importantly, brochure should be designed so that they are aligned with the visitor's information needs at specific points in their decision-making as outlined on page 4.

Many localities and destinations try to promote themselves by using uninteresting lists of local attractions, businesses and services. While this information does have a role later in the decision-making of customers, it is rarely important at an early stage when visitors are developing their initial awareness and image of a destination. Lists of "where to eat," and "where to stay" alone do not achieve this. Prospective visitors first need to be convinced of what is appealing, special and memorable about the place.

McKenzie River Visitor Maps and Brochures

Visitor maps for the McKenzie River are not meeting visitor needs. They need to be more functional and achieve the right balance between too little practical information and too much. Accurate maps are essential for visitors to find their way around. They must be more than a mud map to make the best use of design and publication investments, while meeting the most important needs.

They must also identify all key visitor attractions and experiences without commercial considerations limiting the basis of such content. Such an approach places the focus on the fundamental necessity to first build sufficient appeal and reasons to draw visitors into the area, to the greater benefit of all businesses.

The current *McKenzie Valley 2007-08 Traveler's Guide* possesses some communication and 'product' strengths e.g. it highlights the McKenzie River National Scenic Trail and Byways, but its design is below competitor standards, it lacks sufficient visual impact, it the level of information needed by visitors . The publication is not of a standard to enable the region to compete with the higher production standards of other leading nature-based destinations.

The mix of advertising content and tourism content distracts from its central purpose. The standard of design is also not in keeping with the quality of many of the experiences available. Its map can be greatly improved. For instance, it is missing helpful distance and travel time indicators, amongst many other needs. And although the format is smaller than some brochures, it does not qualify to function effectively as a true 'pocket' guide.

Additional guides are available locally (in newspaper format) that list large and complex volumes of 'numbered' forest trails with no companion reference map or any indication of which are the best to choose. Useful guidance on likely duration of a hike, degree of difficulty, whether loops or whether backtracking is necessary for a return journey, wide or narrow, basic amenities and restrooms available, etc. is also missing from these guides.

Recommended Actions:

37. In addressing the brochure needs of the city, the Chamber should take advantage of CVALCO resources and information distribution strategies. Produce a **McKenzie River Activities Guide** in the form of a pocket guide or rack brochure having its sole focus on what to see and do, highlighting the key experiences. It should be designed to entice people from one hundred miles or more from the city. The idea is to get them to take the next step. Don't overwhelm them with information that is irrelevant at this point in their decision-making. To simplify travel within and understanding of the McKenzie River area, have the brochure break the destination into Upper and Lower zones - as reflected by its interconnected maps, information, trails, images, 'mile by mile' content and more.

Care should be taken to ensure that advertising in the publication does not dominate the design and detract from its effectiveness. Do not include businesses that are not directly relevant to visitors e.g. insurance agencies. This publication should not be used as a device to publicize all members of the Chamber as this is counter productive.

38. Design a detailed **map of the McKenzie River** that is responsive to the needs of visitors. This map should then be widely used in publications and web sites by various organizations including CVALCO. A less detailed version of this map may also be required for some applications.
39. Ensure that McKenzie River **lodging brochures** use the most enticing and relevant copy and images when describing the destination.

Co-operative Marketing

Tourism businesses in Lane County have a variety of marketing opportunities at their disposal. Among the most effective are often the opportunities presented by CVALCO and Travel Oregon because they produce material that is integrated into wider marketing communication programs, including advertising. These provide exposure in applications that may not normally be accessible to small budget advertisers. Other co-operative marketing opportunities include public relations activities, database marketing, online marketing and direct mail. Importantly, these county and state organizations are generating interest in Oregon and Lane County as destinations.

Recommended Actions:

40. Consult with CVALCO to optimize the city's participation in the **co-operative marketing and free publicity** activities offered by CVALCO and Travel Oregon.
41. Collaborate with CVALCO to ensure that **advertising** by the Chamber and local partners is targeted toward the most appropriate targets and media outlets, and most likely to generate the best results.

Information Distribution

Access to visitor information in the form of brochures, maps and personal advice is critical to visitor satisfaction and extending a visitor's length of stay in the community and whether they return to the area. In the case of McKenzie River strategically located information can assist in encouraging people to stop, visit and extend their stay in the area.

Leaburg Chamber of Commerce Visitor Information Center

This Center was not open at the time of our visit and was difficult to locate once within the parking lot that highway signage directs travelers toward. In the parking lot there is a dilapidated McKenzie River Chamber of Commerce 'visitor information kiosk', with seemingly haphazardly maintained tourism brochures. Team members

traveling separately assumed that this was the Visitor Information Center indicated on the directional signs.

The impression also gained is that visitors will pay to park while they visit this center because the Lane County Park sign conveys that paying is necessary. Apparently when the main information center is not operating or open, visitors are referred to the supporting visitor information brochure racks located at Blue River's General Store (middle McKenzie) and Harbicks Country Store (Rainbow area), with a further brochure stand found at Belknap Hot Springs Resort. Overall, our difficulties found in trying to locate and access the 'main' information center at Leaburg do not create a positive first impression for a visitor.

Our previous attempts to reach the Chamber by phone had also experienced difficulties with one number provided on their website not responding.

Our experiences indicate that there is a lack of consistency in meeting basic tourism information service standards, creating the impression that the McKenzie corridor does not take tourism seriously. It is likely that the best location for visitor information distribution for the McKenzie River area would be when entering from the west, at an attractive gateway point on the Hwy 126 corridor beyond Springfield or at a practical point on the I-5. This need may well be fulfilled by the proposed CVALCO center at or near the Springfield junction point of I-5 and 126. However, given that the wild and scenic character of the river and its mountain surrounds most vividly occur toward the river's upper end, the relatively well signed Leaburg/Vida highway 126 location also possess some merits for information distribution.

Recommended Actions:

42. Review the various factors creating **visitor confusion over the exact location** of the Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center once on site in the parking lot and introduce solutions, including more prominent directional signage in the lot.
43. Improve the quality of the presentation and content of the **information kiosk** to function as an after hours outlet. Introduce a well-sized area map and relevant up to date brochures.
44. Review the future role and location of the **Chamber's visitor center** to determine its best operational practices. It should either be open for consistent, visitor appropriate hours of operation or seek an alternate outlet in addition to the kiosk in the car park.
45. Lodging establishments should be encouraged to **display McKenzie River brochures** separate from brochures for other regions at their information points. Other businesses, especially restaurants should be encouraged to display local brochures. All such businesses should also feature the local brochures promoting the area's key soft adventure activities.
46. In collaboration with CVALCO, work with **brochure distribution companies** to ensure that Lane County community and operator brochures are visible and

organized together (possibly on the top shelf) in brochure racks. This task may eventually rest with the management of lodging to ensure that this local information is prominently and conveniently displayed because it can directly add to their guest's length of stay.

McKenzie River Ranger Station (US Forest Service)

This high standard facility represents the most significant fully operational visitor information and interpretation center along the McKenzie River corridor and Highway 126. Observations on its many strengths follow but there is an issue with its name. On site at the Center itself the main sign says 'McKenzie River Ranger Station' and does not state its visitor center role which could confuse some travelers, particularly international visitors. The Station is open on weekends in peak season for visitors - and closed on weekends for those periods that their own visitation analysis says are their least busy times.

Traveling from the east along 126, the advance signage (1/4 mile ahead of arrival) reads 'McKenzie River RS Scenic Byway and Recreation Info' - this is at least accurate because its information does apply to the McKenzie Pass Scenic Byway and the nearby McKenzie River National Recreation Trail and more. However to many visitors the meaning of "RS" may not be understood.

The station features very relevant and a highly professional approach to its interpretation content on the McKenzie Pass, the area's history, geology, wilderness, wildlife, etc. In many ways this is exemplary in its simple, well focused principles. It creates interest and conveys informative insights, yet it is not overwhelming in scope and depth, thereby encouraging visitor engagement.

The center also provides a particularly well designed and functional video viewing area with a menu of short topics to choose from. The videos themselves are extremely well made and feature great imagery of the area's experiences and beauty. The station's brochure stands are well organized and feature very relevant information to their main role, including the West Cascades Scenic Byway brochure.

The station provides a helpful and comparatively easy to follow 'Forests and Wilderness' map which identifies the local natural gems such as Blue Pool and the McKenzie River National Recreation Trail, and Proxy Falls. A simple and useful companion 'Trail Guide' for the Ranger District is also available. It highlights the length in miles, difficulty rating, usage levels, type of trail and much more of genuine interest and value to intending visitors.

The counter was staffed by a courteous and helpful woman who lives in the area and was able to answer most local questions very ably. The current policy is that they don't carry local visitor brochures, as they leave that to the McKenzie Bridge Harbick's Country Store and its sub-Chamber of Commerce brochure display rack. The issue of too many brochures being produced was also raised and which ones and on what basis to choose to accept them. However, the impression was gained that the Service would

possibly be open to carrying an 'official' comprehensive McKenzie River visitor guide, if one was created with the support of all communities and industry.

Recommended Actions:

- 47. In order to communicate more easily with international visitors, the service should consider adding "Ranger Station and Visitors Center" to its name make use of a highway and onsite international "i" symbol to convey its major visitor information role more clearly. The Service should consider using the appropriate highway signage symbol on advance signage to advise of the availability of restrooms, a most valuable service given the area's location and comparatively low level of visitor amenities. Given its position at the uppermost end of the McKenzie River corridor, it is very desirable for the station to carry the essentials for Upper and Lower McKenzie River corridor visitor information in the form of good maps for key trails, drives and experiences.
- 48. To match the high standards so evident within the station, have the Service refresh and renew the **interpretation and information materials** found within the external display board stands. These are currently severely faded (sun damaged) and detract from the high quality of the Station's content and services in general.

Official Visitor Information Outlets

A short drive from Springfield, motorists come to an easy to see official Visitor Information sign at Waltherville. However, none of the buildings have a sign out front to indicate which one is the Visitor Center. TDM team members traveling separately through the area had the same thoughts and experiences at this location. We took a guess between the 'McKenzie River Mercantile' and the 'Waltherville Feed & Tackle', and entered the latter. We could see no evidence of any visitor information. When asked for a brochure of the McKenzie, the woman behind the counter was unaware that there was such information and that the store had such a role. Then a small stock of brochures caught his eye, largely out of the way, at the back of the counter. There they were but the staff member seemed totally unaware of their existence.



The distribution of information needs to be more readily available at key locations.

Recommended actions:

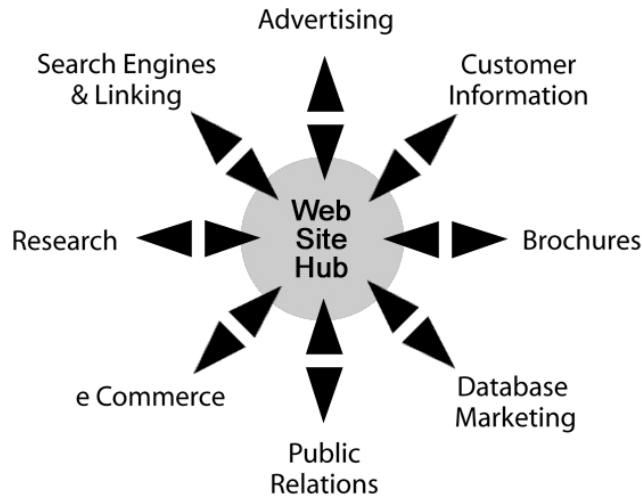
- 49. In conjunction with CVALCO, conduct an evaluation of visitor information outlets along Highway 126 with the view to determining the best outlets, and the criteria to which they must conform in distributing brochures and advice.

Web Marketing

The McKenzie River web site should be the central hub for all external marketing and communications programs conducted on behalf of the McKenzie River. It should provide the focal point for consumers, media, and travel trade to easily access information and interactive experiences. People searching online for travel information are generally seeking four important benefits:

- 1. They want to find the site they are looking for quickly,
- 2. They want the site to be very easy to navigate,
- 3. They want comprehensive and credible content, and
- 4. Assistance in taking the “next steps”.

The following diagram illustrates the marketing activities that can be integrated into the McKenzie River web site.

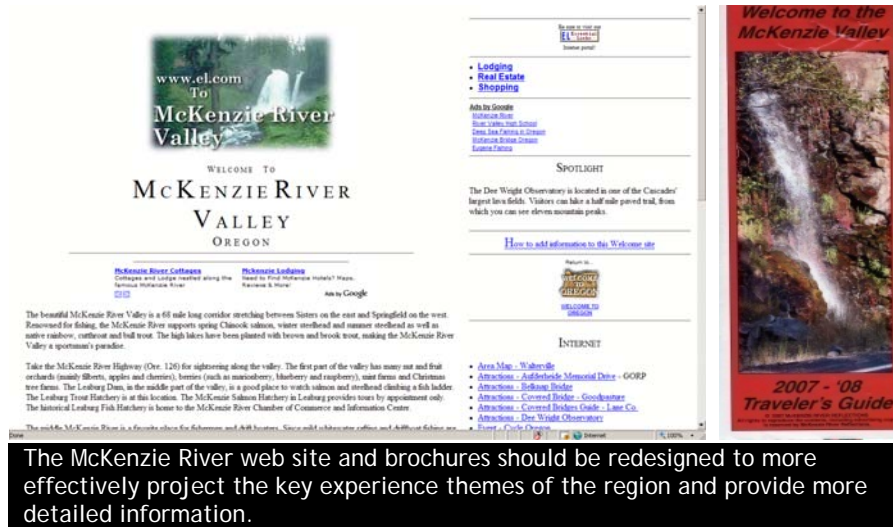


McKenzie River Web Sites

The internet allows destinations like McKenzie River to project their message globally at a fraction of the cost of a decade ago. However, simply having a web site does not guarantee that online visitors will access the site nor guarantee that once there they will spend time exploring it.

Chamber and tourism association web sites are frequently the front windows for their communities and play essential roles in their marketing and economic development. They are also important to the self image that residents hold of the place where they live. At present the Chamber web site is not effectively projecting the distinctiveness or attractiveness of the region.

When an internet search using the words 'McKenzie River' is entered in Google, the top listing given is that of www.el.com/To/McKenzieRiverValley. It is the official web site for the Chamber of Commerce and the destination. This site is unattractive and is almost totally comprised of links to other pages and web sites, many of which are extremely slow or do not work. It does not contribute toward projecting the identity of the region as attractive place to visit. The link to the Chamber of Commerce is one of those broken links and directs visitors to a page that says "Hometown Has Been Shutdown". What message does this send to a prospective visitor? What is the next step for them to get information if they are still interested?



Fortunately the McKenzie River Resort, rafting trips and some lodges and cabins can be easily found in Google and Yahoo searches. But the challenge here is that prospective visitors must firstly know the name of the river, the lodges, the area to conduct the internet search.

Landing on local web sites for many people can be the result of searching on many other web sites, such as Travel Oregon, CVALCO and Oregon.com. These people are possibly near the end of their search and are wanting detailed, accurate, relevant and easy to read and navigate information on specific subjects. Now is the time to sell McKenzie River by expressing why it's special, how to experience it and sufficient detail to close the sale.

The CVALCO web site has an important role in the search for information. The McKenzie River information on this site must be more specific and also align with the brand identity that the destination must develop. Again, the information needs to be focused around the key experiences and project the "must do's" of the wild and scenic adventure activities and the complementary nature/riverside retreat lodgings.

Search engines regularly visit web sites and filter their content to analyze, record, and file every word on every page. After thoroughly analyzing the site, algorithms are assigned to these words and phrases and a value assigned to the overall site. The web site's content and ease of navigation are instrumental in determining the priority that

it is allocated by search engines and their ranking when visitors are searching for information. Additional elements which enhance the profile of web sites for search engines are key words, meta tags and meta descriptions that make it easier for online visitors to find their way around. It would seem that many of the techniques mentioned here have not been practiced.

Recommended Actions:

50. The Chamber of Commerce web site should be redesigned as the official web site for the McKenzie River to project a stronger identity for the region as an outstanding and exciting place to visit. The Chamber should address its web design needs in close consultation with CVALCO to ensure that the site embraces the latest techniques appropriate to online tourism marketing. It needs to be clearly focused on satisfying the needs of visitors and integrated into other marketing and information distribution programs, including those of CVALCO. The site should include high quality images, provide detailed information and more categories of information to navigate based on the area's key experience themes and newly refined positioning. The web site should instantly convey that McKenzie River is one of the leading places on the west coast for **easy access to wild and scenic river adventures including nature-based lodging** and the images, copy and content should show that the destination makes it easy for you, even if you have limited time in the area. This should include a PDF map of the Upper and Lower McKenzie areas, descriptions of the key features (attractions/experiences/activities) and the distance and likely traveling time between each. The features on the renewed/redesigned McKenzie River web site should include:

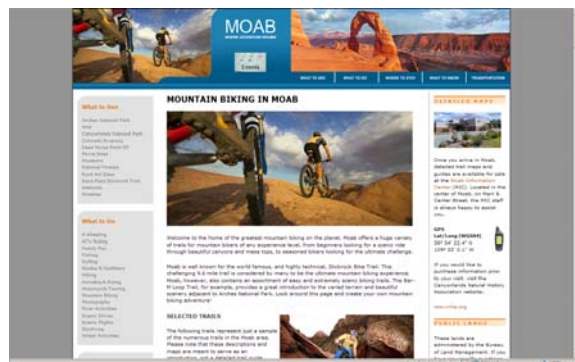
- Adventures on Land
- Adventures on water
- Distances to Other Places
- Events
- Find Outfitters and Guides
- Group tour information
- Home Page - establishing the identity as "wild and scenic river adventures" based on the key experience themes
- Key visitor hubs or zones - description, history, PDF map, proximity to key attractions, trails, etc.
- Links
- Maps
- McKenzie River National Recreation Trail - descriptions of each key feature, distance, approximate time required, trailheads, international activity symbols, PDF of Trail, important sites on the route, location
- Media Room
- Nature-based lodging
- Scenic Byways - the McKenzie Pass/Santiam Pass Byway

- Seasonal information
- Soft adventure operators and outfitters
- Testimonials
- What to See and Do
- What's Happening
- What's New Feature on Home Page
- Where to Eat and Drink
- Where to Shop and Refuel
- Where to Stay

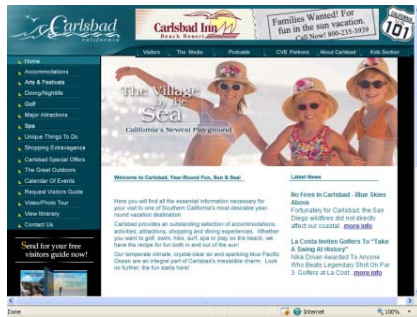
51. Investigate the possibility of the CVALCO and McKenzie River sites sharing a **common database** of information. This will contribute to more relevant, accurate and comprehensive information being distributed and avoid the duplication of this task by both organizations.
52. In conjunction with CVALCO, engage the services of a **search engine optimization specialist** to test all aspects of the web site to ensure that it is operating at optimal performance levels and that meta tags, meta descriptions, links, and key word density are reviewed.
53. **Maximize links** to the site from partners and other appropriate organizations. It is particularly important for local lodging partners and dining establishments, to provide links from their web sites for prospective visitors to the area.
54. In conjunction with CVALCO, investigate the addition of a mapping tool such as **NAVTEQ or Google Maps** to the web site.
55. Ensure that the web design is focused on projecting experiences and emotion to really connect with prospects. Those destinations that orient their web site content and images around **experiences and emotion** have found that they are able to generate stronger impressions with prospective visitors and this leads to a higher conversion rate to travel and positively influences the length of stay of their guests. Some examples of sites effectively using experiences and emotion are:



<http://breckenridge.snow.com/home>



www.discovermoab.com/



www.carsbad.com



http://travelwales.org

56. Ensure that **web copy** has a balance between being motivational and informative and strikes a chord with the reader. It should not speak in generalities, lists or features that are common to most places. Use copy that speaks directly to the reader and connects with them by addressing how the place will make them feel and how this place meets their particular needs like no other. The copy on the Travel Wales web site (www.travelwales.org) is a good example of these techniques. The same techniques should be employed in preparing the copy for brochures and other collateral materials.

Public Relations

Allocating resources to generating increased media coverage can be highly effective in reaching key markets. The dissemination of materials to the media, efficiently handling their enquiries, and coordinating their visits can generate positive coverage of McKenzie River area in ways that are of interest to prospective visitors. Public relations should play a dynamic role within the Chambers and the region's marketing strategy to attract more visitors. The objective is to gain synergy from the collective efforts of local partners as well as those of CVALCO and Travel Oregon to maximize media exposure.

Recommended Actions:

57. In conjunction with CVALCO, develop a **basic media kit** to promote the area's wild and scenic adventure options and the complementary nature/riverside retreat lodgings, it should be available online.
58. In collaboration with CVALCO, continue to explore how to assist them and Travel Oregon to **publicize** the area's key experience themes.
59. Actively communicate with media outlets during winter to ensure that accurate information regarding the **conditions of roads and snow levels** is disseminated.

Images

McKenzie River is competing against destinations that are well financed and use highly sophisticated marketing techniques. It is essential that high quality images be used to project the wild and scenic river experiences of the region. The nature-based lodging

retreats also need to be presented at their absolute best to powerfully portray their special qualities and distinctive differences to conventional accommodation outlets.

Recommended Actions:

60. In conjunction with CVALCO, develop an image library of evocative and **high quality images** of the area's key experience themes including the nature/riverside retreat lodgings. Wherever possible these should include people enjoying themselves in the natural surroundings.
61. At the first opportunity, create or obtain the rights to **high quality video imagery** of the area's key positioning themes, experiences and attractions. This video footage should at least match the high standards already evident at the McKenzie River Ranger Station with its outstanding use of aerial shots, and be applied in all relevant marketing, e.g. with media, visitor center videos and web video.

Partners and Third Party Marketers

Destination marketers rely on a wide variety of organizations and partners to distribute information about their attractions and travel products. McKenzie River is no exception and in this regard there are several organizations such as CVALCO, Travel Oregon, AAA and a variety of others that are in touch with prospective visitors to the area.

A short time spent using online search engines, browsing guide books and reviewing the brochure racks in Visitor Information Centers may reveal opportunities for additional exposure for the area. It is possible that McKenzie River and its key attractions have been inadvertently omitted or incorrect copy in important publications, articles and web sites. The focus of the copy and images may be detracting from the area's desired market positioning and designated leading experiences.

Bookstores offer dozens of guidebooks relevant to travel in the Northwest and Oregon. These guide books cover a wide variety of interests from traveling with children and pets, to driving, hiking, camping, bird watching and weekend escapes. These guides are widely distributed in the USA and overseas and are highly influential in assisting readers, particularly interstate and international visitors with their travel decisions and where to visit.

There are several third party web sites that are prominent in Google searches which are not controlled by the Chamber or leading McKenzie River tourism businesses. These may not be highlighting information and attractions that are a priority for the Chamber and the area.



A short time spent using online search engines, browsing guide books and reviewing the brochure racks in Visitor Information Centers may reveal opportunities for additional exposure for the city.

Another important area that now requires constant monitoring by tourism organizations (and businesses) is the realm of social networking. Over the past decade, we could not have imagined the power that is now at the fingertips of our customers because of this new online technology. We seem to be leaving the information economy and now entering a conversation economy. Everyone can now be a journalist, travel writer, documentary-maker, promoter, opinion-leader, travel advisor, or food critic. These are low cost, yet high impact sources of opinion. The most powerful medium today for enticing customers isn't advertising - it's the conversations that we have among our family, friends and colleagues - and increasingly these are digital conversations through a screen of some sort.

Visitors to destinations have the tools to instantly blog about their experiences (good or bad) from anywhere in the world at any time, find their friends using mapping technology, use Flash applications to make their arrangements, subscribe to information sources using RSS, access someone's video of their vacation on YouTube, see pictures and comments on MySpace, and read the critiques of past visitors on sites like TripAdvisor. All of these applications are available outside of the control of DMOs - and will have a profound impact on destination branding.

The challenge for places like McKenzie River is to remain relevant when so much communication is taking place through informal channels. The marketing team, even in small cities will have to be more actively engaged in these social networking formats to monitor and assist the user-content that is being created. Places now must pay even more attention to the experiences that they are delivering and explore how to play a meaningful role in social networking applications.

Recommended Actions:

- 62. Review the coverage of the McKenzie River area in **third party brochures, maps and web sites**. Check for accuracy, whether they project the destination in the best light, and if they conform to the identity that the community wants to

project. Contact these organizations immediately because harnessing the distribution power of third parties through their web sites, maps, and brochures can provide considerable leverage and added credibility for a relatively unknown or underappreciated destination such as McKenzie River and help get the area on the visitor “shopping list”.

63. Annually review the coverage of the McKenzie River area in travel **guidebooks** such as Fodors, Lonely Planet, Moon, Rough Guide, and the many special interest guides for camping, hiking, birding and kids etc., and their online versions. Check for accuracy and whether McKenzie River is projected accurately and favorably. Ensure the coverage conforms to the identity that the community wants to project. When appropriate, approach guidebook publishers with suggested additions or corrections.
64. In collaboration with CVALCO develop a plan (that is constantly revised) to actively monitor and be engaged in **social networking applications** to ensure that the McKenzie River is accurately represented and provide clarification when needed. This should be closely integrated with CVALCO’s own social networking strategy because visitor comments in most cases will relate to local attractions, lodging and services.

Research

Research does not have to be an expensive proposition. There are many cost effective options. Gaining an understanding of visitors and their motivations, attitudes and behavior can lead to greatly improved performance and contributes greatly to gaining a superior and more strategic return on marketing investments.

It is important to constantly monitor visitor satisfaction and seek ways of improving the experiences that are extended to them. This can be achieved by making a simple survey form or card available. The objective of this survey is not necessarily to register a high number of responses, but to monitor the specific issues that visitors raise in regard to the quality of their experience and identify where improvements might be necessary.

Recommended Actions:

65. In conjunction with CVALCO and appropriate local partners, initiate **customer surveys and research** to gain insights into the demographics, behavior, motivations and satisfaction of visitors. Provide ongoing opportunities for visitors to provide feedback on their experiences by making a **simple satisfaction survey** or feedback form readily available through lodging, dining, Visitor Information Centers and online. It is particularly important to conduct these surveys during major events.
66. **Discuss visitor satisfaction** results at every tourism committee meeting.

5. Soft Adventure Operators and Outfitters

The diverse topography of Lane County makes it an ideal location for soft adventure activities. The region has an increasing number of soft adventure operators and outfitters offering activities and services such as sandboarding, rafting, fishing, mountain biking, and sea kayaking. These are generally small businesses that do not have broad distribution and sale of their products. However, when their role in the visitor experience is fully understood and acknowledged, they do represent many benefits of importance to those communities in which they operate.

The Benefits of Adventure Operators and Outfitters

These businesses enable communities to develop a more professionally based tourism industry and capture many benefits that may otherwise elude the community.

The simplest way to illustrate this point is that when such experiences are available and made known to visitors, they not only increase the reasons to make a visit, but also extend the time and spending of visitors.

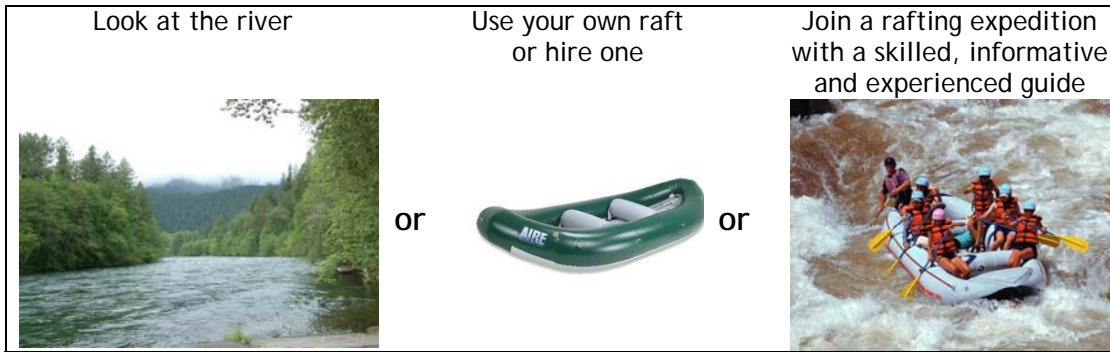
Having something to do for a half or full day, rather than say an hour, can mean the difference between a visitor either 'driving on' or returning home, without the need for an overnight stay - and depriving the community of valuable income.

The range of benefits to communities includes:

- Attracting incremental visitors that the community may not have otherwise welcomed
- Attracting high yield visitors who usually buy other local services
- Increased length of stay
- Promoting the community through their marketing, thus complementing the Chamber's marketing
- Increased economic and employment opportunities for the community
- A more personalized and authentic experience for visitors
- Increased interest from interstate and international visitors
- More small and micro businesses for small communities

Adventure Operators and Outfitters Add Value

A challenge for places that rely on nature-based tourism is one of generating economic benefits for their community. Forests, rivers, lakes and trails are usually free of charge or may involve a small parking, entrance or use fee, as in the case of County Parks, State/National Parks and some other categories of Federal/State land management agencies.



The river in its natural form can be considered a commodity and not generate any direct economic benefit. A visitor might bring his own raft from home and in this case makes no direct, local economic contribution through the use of river. When the visitor hires a raft from a local outfitter, an economic contribution is made. However, when the visitor joins a rafting expedition that may include a mini-bus transfer, a meal, seat on the raft, the personal involvement of a skilled and experienced guide, and a fascinating and informative commentary about the river, he is purchasing a value-added experience. He has purchased more than a ride on the river, he has purchased a sense of security, an adventure he might not attempt without expert assistance, and a level of engagement that has created a memorable experience.

Adventure operators and outfitters not only add value to the visitor's experience, but also add to the greater economic well-being of their communities. The added economic value is generated through the local payments for supplies, services, equipment, and the payment of wages to local staff.

The Power of Networking

Adventure operators and outfitters are small, independent businesses that must be highly targeted in their marketing activities. *Cross selling* may provide the synergy to generate increased distribution and sales by providing existing or potential customers with the opportunity to enjoy complementary or similar experiences. The idea is to capture a larger share of the consumer market by meeting more of their needs and wants and successful destinations deliberately set out to make this process as seamless or effortless as possible for the visitor. Within the region this concept most readily applies to soft adventure operators and outfitters who can boost business for each other, as well as their communities and other tourism businesses, (e.g. lodging and dining establishments, general stores, etc.) by adopting a more collaborative approach.

Some of the cross selling techniques that can be employed include:

- Displaying brochures of other attractions
- Providing information and advice on other activities whenever possible
- Packaging and bundling of the products of different operators

- Pricing incentives such as discounts or two-for-ones, e.g. take a kayaking trip and get a 10% discount on a mountain bike rental
- Recommendation and selling the product of others to consumer, trade and media
- Web and brochure coverage and links to other operators
- Staff training in products of other operators

Recommended Actions:

67. Meet with operators from around the region on a quarterly basis to explore ways to collaborate and address priority issues of importance to all.
68. Operators from around the region should identify and activate appropriate cross selling techniques.
69. Operators should participate in appropriate CVALCO and Travel Oregon co-operative marketing opportunities that are directed toward their target audiences.
70. Ensure that soft adventure operators are given prominence in the Chamber's destination marketing and not treated as "just another member". They are attractors in their own right, just like a Broadway show is to New York. They can provide a competitive edge over other places and may attract visitors who may not otherwise visit the area.
71. Work with appropriate local and regional lodging to encourage them to actively promote operators to guests, develop packages and include operators in web and brochure copy.
72. Ensure that the services of local operators are easy to book via phone and internet.
73. Investigate the need for and feasibility of a regional reservations system.
74. Ensure that all McKenzie River soft adventure opportunities are included in CVALCO's adventure tourism brochures and online marketing.

McKenzie River Operator Issues

An important concern raised by the area's adventure operators relates to the security issue arising when visitors, locals and operators leave their vehicles behind at hiking trails, and boat launches while they are on rafting, boating and fishing trips. Many vehicles are being broken into, in the knowledge that the owners are definitely away for some hours. This issue requires attention by the tourism industry, local communities and authorities if it is to be contained and not become detrimental to the destination's reputation and tourism income. One operator has successfully addressed this problem by bussing patrons to the sites from Eugene and other points.

Operators also expressed concern regarding the congestion and delays caused at launch sites along the river by inconsiderate boaters.

Advice on and knowledge of available adventure operator activities must be far more visible when traveling through the area. Success here readily translates into success into extending visitor's length of stay.

Recommended Actions:

75. Convene operators, and community, County and State interests to **develop solutions to security concerns** to reduce theft and damage to vehicles. A bussing option, possibly undertaken in a more coordinated or cooperative way (to help reduce costs), could be considered as part of this process.
76. In collaboration with County and State interests develop **solutions to congestion** at boat ramps at critical times.
77. Convene a meeting with industry and other stakeholders to provide feedback on issues related to **fee and license requirements** and enforcement issues.
78. The **promotion and the ease of booking** river-based and other adventure activities must be evident to a far greater extent than at present.
79. Adventure operators should be subject to **more promotion** as important elements of the region's product. It is important to treat these operators and outfitters as more than "just another local business". They must be considered as attractors in their own right because they are capable of bringing more visitors to the area and encouraging them to stay longer, thus benefiting the entire community.
80. Ensure that the regions wild and scenic adventures and the McKenzie River National Recreation Trail and the experiences that it represents are featured in **CVALCO's proposed soft adventure guide**.

6. Leadership and Organization

Successful tourism requires a seamless delivery of tourism experiences and an integrated approach between public, private and non profit organizations.

Tourism is about generating added income and jobs for communities. It is an important form of economic development. However, the McKenzie River has a number of important shortcomings in the way that it presents itself to visitors. Underpinning these is what could be described as an apathy or “anti-tourism” disposition among some residents. Tourism does not seem to be understood by many locals for the positive role that it can play as a form of economic development, and the contribution that it can make to small business development and entrepreneurship, community revitalization and the viability of the area.

The area’s comparative lack of focus in marketing and need for a more unified and strategic approach to visitor communications, information distribution and signage appears to be reflective of a lack of tourism leadership amongst the region’s tourism interests.

Recommended Actions:

81. **Leverage the experience and expertise of CVALCO and Travel Oregon** to strengthen the area’s tourism marketing.
82. **Establish a McKenzie River Tourism Development Advisory Group.** It is recommended that this group comprise representatives of a variety of local, county, state and national organizations with an interest in tourism and the wild and scenic river adventures infrastructure and products. It should not be dominated by members of any one local organization category. The objective is to facilitate the development of tourism by optimizing access to marketing, funding, and governmental agencies at county, state, and national levels.
83. Identify the most **appropriate local lead organization** to coordinate tourism marketing for the McKenzie River. If necessary, create one.
84. Convene a **tourism committee** to implement recommendations from this report and to optimize the economic benefits of tourism for the community.
85. The tourism committee should review the recommendations in this Visitor Readiness Report with the view to developing an **Implementation Action Plan**. After considering the actions required, the budgets, timeline and organizations responsible for each recommendation, they should all be prioritized according to their importance/impact, urgency and resources required. In developing the Action Plan it is important to ensure that there are some quick and easy early successes. Consider 30 day/90 day/ six month and one year action goals.
86. Develop an annual **Tourism Action Plan** in consultation with CVALCO to ensure that all opportunities are being optimized.

87. Participate with other **Lane County destination marketers in regular meetings** by CVALCO in order to optimize integration of web marketing, brochure production, information distribution and the optimization of cooperative marketing opportunities.
88. Increase awareness among residents of the **economic and social benefits** of tourism to the area, particularly as it relates to the McKenzie River's key experience themes. The target audiences here should be residents, community opinion leaders and government officials.
89. In conjunction with CVALCO. conduct **Tourism 101 workshops** for local tourism partners to ensure that they are familiar with the tourism marketing, distribution and product development best practices.

The Spirit of Hospitality

Oregon's visitors are becoming more experienced and discerning in what they expect from the places they visit, where they stay, shop, eat and relax. Generalized conclusions about the extensive McKenzie River area's customer service standards would neither be practical, advisable or accurate given the range of possibilities and variables arising. So observations on this issue must be limited to the 'secret shopper' experiences encountered as a visitor at those establishments.

Virtually all of the lodging, dining and store and gas purchasing service experiences encountered by the TDM team were of a good, appropriate and satisfying standard. By way of example in one instance a lodging manager, and in another a general store operator, offered ready, focused, generous and truly helpful information/advice on tourism related matters, such as the best places to eat or the best places and times to try to see wildlife. Bar and waiter service was also friendly and meeting expectations. However, these cannot be taken for granted and need to be a focus of ongoing attention. During interviews and discussions, locals readily indicated that they felt that service standards were below acceptable levels in some tourism-related businesses.

Recommended Actions:

90. Introduce the "**Q Customer Service Training Program**" to McKenzie River. Note: this is only a start and is part of a never-ending focus required for quality assurance programs. The "Q Program", developed by Travel Oregon, is an excellent primer for communities to refresh and refocus their service standards.
91. **Front line staff** in lodging and restaurants should be kept informed about things to see and do locally for their guests, particularly those related to key experience themes. This can be achieved by visits to the attractions and familiarizations designed for them.
92. In conjunction with the local media, introduce an educational program to **encourage local residents** to become familiar with the area's trails, attractions and recreational opportunities.

Appendix 1: McKenzie River Community Survey

The following are results from the online survey for local residents and stakeholders conducted by Total Destination Management between October 13 and November 30, 2008. A total of 14 people completed various questions in the survey. Note that the responses in this report are verbatim and may include typographic and grammatical errors which were in the original responses.

1. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about tourism and destination marketing in McKenzie River.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. As one of a number of industries, tourism is important to the economic mix of the McKenzie River	11 84.6%	1 7.7%		1 7.7%	
B. The overall benefits from tourism in McKenzie River outweigh any negative impacts	4 30.8%	3 23.1%	3 23.1%	3 23.1%	
C. McKenzie River presents a distinctive and attractive image of itself	6 46.2%	2 15.4%	1 7.7%	3 23.1%	
D. The levels of service by hospitality and tourism businesses along the McKenzie River are of a high standard?	1 7.7%	5 38.5%	4 30.8%	1 7.7%	1 7.7%

2. Would you like to add any comments in regard to any of the above questions or issues? Be sure to identify what issue you are commenting on.

- It's a fine line between protecting the environment, the solitude, pristine nature of the area which is what draws folks here, and having it turned into a overcrowded, overbuilt and thus changing the important dynamic which makes it so special. "A lot of folks that work or even run businesses in the area need to take a class on how to act and interact with the tourist to make their (tourists) visit a memorable one.
- Potential conflicts between residents and development. There is strong opposition to the new Goodpasture boat landing and probable opposition to BLM's development at Eagle Rock in Nimrod.
- It used to have a more attractive image years ago, when the McKenzie was known around the United States, the parades, president coming, Log Cabin Inn, etc.
- Question B: The nine rural communities would rather be seen as individual areas.
- Service level is good but on "rustic" side
- The key words here are "any negative impact." Of course that's unacceptable, however, minor negative impacts can be dealt with, ie more people at tourist attractions (parking), long lines at businesses, not enough lodging available, and so on There is no one distinctive image of the valley - there are different images in each of the 7 communities along the corridor - some attractive and some unattractive. Levels of service & hospitality depend on a lot of variables: new untrained employees, tired/overworked employees, lots of burn out at the end of our short summer season.
- There are always negative impacts from tourism development on atl non operate sites

- There can be several negatives from overuse of the river... trying to do raft trips for 200 people in the same day for instance.
- Too much emphasis on tourism - conflicts with greater value derived from renewable resources.

3. What do you consider to be the TWO greatest STRENGTHS of McKenzie River from a visitor's perspective?

- 1, The river, views and proximity to Eugene and Bend. 2, Activities and unique outdoor experiences.
- All weather highway. Located 1/2 way between Eugene & Bend.
- Having tourist development mostly within the development nodes Friendliness of merchants and people in general
- It's a absolutely gorgeous scenic and it's a direct route to Eastern OR as well as the metro area of Spfld. ;Eug.
- McKenzie River, the Hot Springs
- recreation and scenic
- scenic
- Scenic beauty and friendly
- Summertime outdoor recreation/scenic byways/river/beautiful scenery in all seasons
- The high quality of the water in the river the scenic corridor
- The recreation and the scenic beauty.
- The River and the Forest
- The Scenic Byways & the River.

4. What do you consider to be the TWO greatest WEAKNESSES of McKenzie River from a visitor's perspective?

- 1, Dining, and night life 2, Lack of direction in finding out what there is to do for activities such as rafting, where to hike, bike or go to see...
- bathrooms food
- Inconsistent events and activities
- Lack of activities for children/families. Lack of sufficient lodging in summer and nothing to do in winter.
- Lack of activities other than golf, fishing & sightseeing. Bureaucratic roadblocks to development of new activities - USFS vs. alpine slide & zip line.
- Lack of quality dining establishments and
- Lack of year 'round activities and lack of shopping opportunities
- Limited places to shop or spend money. High prices compared to metro area.
- No "high end" lodging and eating.
- Not much for people to do on raining days, but the hot springs. All bars and restaurants shut down by 9pm and no place to get something to eat and get together. They will keep going on to Oregon where something is open.
- traffic on a dangerous roadway lack of motels
- We need a restaurant in the town of Blue River We need outdoor equipment rentals in Blue River

5. From time to time you may hear complaints or negative comments from visitors to McKenzie River. What is it that you are most likely to hear?

- "That's all there is to do here!"
- Blue River is scary at night because of drugs and alcohol. I don't know. I haven't been there at night. Want some shopping - like Sisters. Some place open until midnight - restaurant, bar, big TV etc.
- Hard to find things to do; Nothing to do;
- Not enough good restaurants.
- Not enough information on what to do & where
- Nothing to do.
- quality of service received at restaurants seems there may be enough help but no one pays attention as well as the food being over cooked
- Same as #4
- See answer from above
- See comments in #4
- the dangerous roadway
- Why does this cost so much? (Groceries, gas, etc.)

6. Considering your replies to question 5, what do you think needs to be done to address these issues?

- Better and more signs. Better networking between business to learn and teach what everyone has to offer as well as to better understand each-others needs.
- Better marketing of activities, more community activities & events;
- Businesses working together to better all McK. Businesses - also developing events/activities with an advertising/PR plan. Unfortunately, our volunteer base is aging and younger people aren't replacing them.
- Co-op purchasing by area stores & restaurants.
- Federal investment.
- improve the road, more passing lanes, wider shoulders
- more information widely distributed and better trail recreation planning
- More private investments
- Promote activities visitors don't know about.
- qualified help, training, living wage not minimum wage, qualified cooks not tire changers or truck drivers
- Wish I knew

7. How can McKenzie River capture more business from passing motorists?

- Better business visibility & signage.
- BETTER SIGNS - Have talked to Odot - have explained that people miss us at night. Sometimes people come in to Belknap and say they have been coming by here for years and didn't stop with such a small sign and now will come a lot. Get a lot of those people. I'm sure that isn't the only one. Camp Yale has big Mt. Homes, RV park, laundry and shower facilities and a real small sign that says camping and people don't even notice. Have some people that heard about us in Arizona in the winter and live in Bend. The McKenzie River is not advertised in that county much they say.
- Cut trees so resorts are visible - many people don't know they're here.
- exceptional service would spread the word and those who have been here would be more willing to return
- I think Roadside signage is what pulls people off the highway; Although I think it would also make the corridor pretty ugly. Maybe a Information Kiosk that is easier to access.

- Location, location, location. Utilize Hwy. frontage businesses to attract motorists to events/activities. In specific: the community of Blue River is located off the highway on a loop road. The hwy. sign says Blue River. Visitors don't know that is a community and commercial business area.
- Market it as a unit including all the attractions and ownership classes. Forest service, BLM, private County etc.
- non offensive signage and such things as business loop information
- Organized events and activities to draw more overnight visitor stays and improve visibility of existing businesses.
- Signs, Signs, Signs, better networking with Eugene and Bend (Sisters) business.

8. Would you like to comment on how McKenzie River can improve its visitor experiences in regard to the following? NOTE: It is not necessary to respond to all questions.

a. Visitor Attractions (Heritage and Cultural)

- Better brochures
- better signage
- Better signage and slower speed limits leading to and from attractions and all communities.
- Common signage to ID attractions - like the ones in front of businesses on Springfield's Main St.
- Forest Service assistance in connecting public to history of CCC projects in area. Support McKenzie River Guides Assoc. museum at Old McKenzie Fish Hatchery, More Forest Service promotion of Fish Lake Compound
- More Educational Walks, tours and activities. Either self guided brochures or guide. Trial signage is not the best unless short and sweet.
- More information on what there is to do, signage, history, just like fishing regulations, seems tourist do not know this is a catch and release of the native fish they have no clue what's legal
- Point out the actual points of interest, offer local educational seminars to teach locals about the area to then better share with guest.
- Support River Guides Museum.

b. Natural areas (e.g. Forests, parks, coast, rivers, trails etc)?

- Better signage announcing entrances to scenic sites, hiking trails, lakes and campgrounds. Most motorists have already passed the entrance when they notice the sign.
- Hiking trails could be better maintained. Work more cooperatively with Forest Service by opening discussions about increased mountain biking opportunities and guided tours,
- No shortage here
- Signage improvements.
- Signs, Signs and information
- There are enough - no need for more wilderness designations.
- Travel to Washington state, seems their boat landings are paved, parking is paved, toilets flush, they have appropriate signage, even Alaska does a better job
- Visitor information centers with maps and other information

c. Lodging Facilities?

- Better promotion of lodging that we now have and attract new lodging to be built here.
- Expensive but plenty of places to camp
- Update - many are too "rustic" for the prices charged.
- Visibility & signage.

- We need more lodging rooms and better signage before reaching the roads or driveways to them.

d. Shopping?

- Local support is waning. Need to expand beyond summer season for them to survive.
- More of it.
- Signage
- Variety.
- We don't have enough resident customer base to support existing businesses and in the winter season our shopping areas and restaurants suffer lack of revenue and begin shorter hours until the spring or early summer.
- We need more shopping experiences and more variety in restaurants.
- Who needs Shopping

e. Signage, Wayfinding, Parking, City Gateways / Welcome?

- At this point this area is not very informative nor is it user friendly to new guest!!
- Common signage to ID attractions - like the new ones in front of businesses on Springfield's Main St.
- Community gateways need Welcome signage with what's available in each community. Possibly a map display with recreation sites would also help.
- No.
- Signage on Hwy. of what's available in each community: Businesses, rec opps., post office, activities, social gatherings, churches and other amenities.
- This does need worked on

f. Events, Festivals and Performances?

- Bring back the Whitewater Parade.
- I think our Events and Festival and even performances need to be more consistent, professional and better marketing. It'd be nice to get a professional events coordinator to help with the Home and Garden tour and Arts Festival and additional events.
- More organized events and festivals like McKenzie Arts Festival and Home and Garden Tour.
- Not well marketed - again no networking between competitive business owners.
- These have been in decline due to shrinking volunteer pool.
- We have no events planners as our volunteer base has shrunk. We need financial and/or help in that area.

g. Outdoor Recreation and Soft Adventure Activities?

- Better advertised, better education to employees to teach what all the area has to offer.
- Businesses working hand in hand with Forest Service
- Develop better corporation with the Forest Service
- Need improved support from USFS.
- We have outdoor recreation. "Soft Adventure" is the same thing said in buzzword language.
- We have plenty, might need to work on marketing.

h. What marketing or visitor information initiatives would you like to see McKenzie River improve or introduce?

- Better advertising in Bend, Portland and Eugene about how special this area is.
- Cut back on government regulations - can build seven 1,000 sq. ft. buildings but not one 7,000n

sq. ft. building. Irrational.

- Help and/or funding for events and festivals
- Help and/or funding for organized events and festivals
- Seems the local printed guides come out in November, they should come out in spring
- Signage.
- We've tried alot of different things; I think it's time to get a professionals point of view.

9. What additional businesses, services or activities do you think are needed to supply the necessary experiences and products for increased visitor satisfaction in McKenzie River?

- Expand the McKenzie Bridge Airport.
- Extended season.
- More food options, creating and or prompt something unique which would distinguish the area from other areas.
- Shopping opps, medical services, better customer service knowledge for front line employees.
- The visitors should be asked this question so we can determine what they're looking for here. Otherwise it's the cart before the horse approach to reaching our goals

10. CVALCO is going to increase its focus on soft adventure activities. What does McKenzie River need to do to capitalize on this?

- Actually help push the initiative and not just rely on CVALCO!
- Increased federal involvement/support.
- Let them do it.
- Money and experienced folks for marketing. I think the businesses are here.
- Take advantage of what CVALCO has to offer businesses and be more proactive in their programs. Encourage increased rec. opps by the Forest Service
- Work in partnership with CVALCO rather than being advised about what the organization is doing after the fact.

11. What can be done to enable soft adventure / outdoor recreation related businesses in McKenzie River and in other parts of the county to improve their tourism performance?

- Advertising/signage/knowledgeable customer service. Also need Forest Service support for new rec. activities on federal lands like guided tours that are currently restricted
- Exposure, it's not obvious where to go to raft or fish the same day, most need to make bookings
- Govt. entities could loosen bureaucratic restrictions and provide staff support to new business ventures and/or growth.
- Have local Soft adventure / outdoor rec. business actually begin to network and work together with CVALCO, local business to advertise to area better as a whole.
- Increased federal involvement/support.

12. Which of the following descriptions best describes your organization or relationship to tourism in McKenzie River? Please check ONE answer only.

Lodging	1
Visitor Services - Restaurant, Retail, Transport, Entertainment, etc.	2
Other business	3
Non profit	3
Interested resident	1
Skipped question	3

13. Would you like to make some additional comments?

- It would be helpful if this survey allowed respondents to indicate where they reside. Short timeline to respond could limit the numbers of people to this survey.
- Thanks
- This is a strange survey because it's often unclear in the way questions are phrased. I feel a survey of visitors would be much more beneficial in ways to serve customers.
- This seems to be a quite generic survey.
- We are sure glad you are looking into this & I wish it were more widely known
- Why is this survey so poorly written? Seems the outcome was already determined.

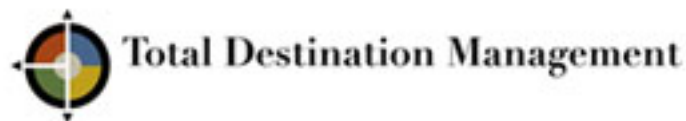
14. It is NOT necessary to identify yourself. However, if you would like to identify yourself, please do so here.

- Georg Adelt - Owner/Guide High Country Expeditions www.HighCountryExpeditions.com
541.822.8288 McKenzie Bridge, OR
- Jim Baker Blue River Community Development Corporation
- Ken Engelman McKenzie River Reflections Newspaper
- McKenzie River Chamber of Commerce Officers and Board of Directors

Appendix 2: McKenzie River Naming Issues

Naming issues:

- Confusion over multiple usage of names (in signage, brochures, marketing materials) with *up to a dozen* competing to describe the McKenzie River destination/area itself:
 - McKenzie River
 - McKenzie River Valley
 - McKenzie Valley
 - McKenzie River Highway
 - McKenzie River Recreation Area ('Next 60 miles' - Highway 126 sign)
 - McKenzie Pass Scenic Route (on brown highway 126 directional signs)
 - McKenzie Pass/Santiam Pass National Scenic Byway
 - Upper, Middle and Lower McKenzie
 - Wild and Scenic McKenzie River - Wild and Scenic River
 - Wild and Scenic McKenzie River Corridor
 - McKenzie River 'corridor'
 - McKenzie Bridge
 - McKenzie River National Recreation Trail
 - McKenzie River National Scenic Trail
 - Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail
 - West Cascades National Scenic Byway (Misleadingly signed as Hwy 126 near McKenzie Pass turnoff)
 - Robert Aufderheide Memorial Drive
 - McKenzie River Drive
 - National Forest Scenic Byway (different sign in use for West Cascades Byway)
- The multiple occurrence of 'McKenzie' in so many different competing contexts is the foremost communication and marketing challenge arising here, but in some other instances there is also more than one name being promoted for the same regional route - e.g 'West Cascades Byway' and 'Robert Aufderheide Memorial Drive'.
- How do these all fit with one another? Can a visitor easily achieve a simple and workable 'mind map' with all these key elements readily understood in terms of (functional) relationships and more?
- Further unfortunate examples of dual names being used for what seem to be the same place include - 'McKenzie River National Recreation Trail' (official name used in on site interpretation and signage) and 'McKenzie River National Scenic Trail' (name for same trail as used by the widely available 'McKenzie Valley 2007-08 Traveler's Guide'). Also "McKenzieFishHatchery /McKenzieSalmonHatchery/McKenzieHatchery" near Leaburg, and "EwesPublicPark/Water Board Park" (are they one and the same or different?) at Leaburg.



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