

Destination Stewardship Council (DSC) Meeting #37

Thursday, April 23, 2026

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Teton County Library and zoom

MINUTES

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Visit Jackson Hole** to look into options for additional data collection on parking usage in downtown hotspots.
- **DSC members** to amplify the Town's parking communications ([press release](#); [listserv](#); [website](#)) by disseminating policy information and the reasoning behind changes.
- **DSC members** to review list of [fire resources](#) from Lesley Williams Gomez with BTNF. Top links include National Interagency Fire ([nifc.gov](#)), [Teton Interagency Fire](#), and the [wildfire mitigation checklist](#).

1. Welcome of new/substitute/guest members

- a. Lesley Williams Gomez, BTNF North Zone Fire Prevention and Education Specialist and Teton Area Wildfire Protection Coalition member

2. SDMP implementation action items

a. Governance

i. DMMO update/questions

1. The JHTTB hired Crista Valentino as the DMMO Executive Director. The remaining staff positions will be hired in the next few months.

b. Transportation

i. Amplifying communications on why parking policy has changed

1. Refer to Town resources for details ([press release](#); [listserv](#); [website](#)).
2. Respondents ranked parking as a top priority area for improvement in recent visitor and resident sentiment surveys. The Town of Jackson is proactively taking steps to manage parking and public assets (such as the parking garage) for public benefit through policy modifications. The Town will continue to collect data to assess the effectiveness of policy changes in consideration of long-term major structural adjustments.
3. The Home Ranch parking lot now has a three-hour time limit. Local workers and carpoolers are asked to use the parking garage and areas outside the three-hour zone. By freeing up spaces at the previously full Home Ranch lot, the Town aims to enhance visitor experience and reduce downtown traffic due to drivers circling to find parking.
 - a. **ACTION ITEM:** Visit Jackson Hole to look into options for additional data collection on parking usage in downtown hotspots.

- b. **ACTION ITEM:** DSC members are asked to amplify the Town’s parking communications by disseminating policy information and the reasoning behind changes.

3. Resilient tourism

- a. The tourism industry faces numerous uncontrollable challenges including economic downturns, global pandemics, infrastructure failures, and weather patterns. Developing a resilient tourism industry involves thoughtful preparedness and willingness to adapt. The DSC examined this past winter as a case study to better understand the impacts felt and our destination’s capacity to respond.
- b. Winter ‘25/’26 impacts
 - i. Jackson Hole benefited this year from having more snow than peer destinations. The weather pattern of rain in the valley with snow in the upper elevations is expected to continue in future decades. This provides both a messaging challenge (in combatting the notion that “the West has no snow”) as well as a competitive advantage (that the GYE may continue to act as a climate refuge with more snow than nearby locales).
 - 1. The rain at lower elevations severely impacted in-town locations such as Snow King Mountain. Certain activities, such as snowmobiling, were highly impacted with tours and events (Hill Climb) canceled.
 - ii. Many multi-resort pass (Ikon, Mountain Collective) visitors still chose to travel out West despite the East Coast having a great snow year. Although the majority reported skiing as a major driver for their visit, many visitors expanded their activity choices.
 - 1. In GTNP, January visitation was up 18%, and February was up 9%. However, the park is set up for passive visitation and does not currently have capacity to facilitate additional winter options.
 - iii. Higher average daily rates (ADR) for lodging may have constrained budgets and subsequently impacted the number of activities that visitors selected.
 - iv. Visitor dispersal may have helped reduce overcrowding on afternoon Teton Village START bus routes. This level of ridership seemed to positively impact bus drivers’ morale and visitor experiences.
 - v. The unusual weather patterns resulted in compounding social and economic impacts. The reduction in dining spending caused financial challenges for some hospitality workers. Some residents changed their own spending habits as a result of lower income—furthering impacting local businesses. Many residents experienced mental health challenges with the unsettling weather pattern.
- c. Current assets/strengths
 - i. Collaborative marketing and leadership
 - 1. A group of organizations including Visit Jackson Hole, Jackson Hole AIR, the Chamber of Commerce, and Jackson Hole Mountain Resort came together to develop tactics such as air fare sales and specific marketing strategies to address low occupancy projections. The significant cohesive effort and leadership resulted in occupancy, enplanements, and tax receipts increasing over last year.

- ii. Messaging
 - 1. Due to our substantial snowpack, our destination could show actual storm shots in marketing whereas some peers may have had to rely on less timely footage. This increased our perceived authenticity.
 - 2. Visit Jackson Hole created a variety of lever ads that could be adjusted quickly to market fresh powder during storms and more cultural/wildlife options during low-snow periods. Our destination has a strong diversity of activity and cultural options to showcase.
- iii. Visitor profile
 - 1. The luxury clientele market remained strong throughout the winter. More analysis is needed to understand the role of the economy and mid-range tiers and how consumers and hoteliers reacted to market factors.
- d. Resources and strategies to prepare for future events
 - i. Diversification and product development
 - 1. Focus on diversifying the experience options. Many visitors are looking at the value of their entire trip including accommodations, airfare, activities, and cultural events.
 - 2. Look into product development to support capacity in areas such as activities in GTNP.
 - 3. Consider adaptations such as changing major event dates for more reliable weather patterns.
 - 4. Enhance product offerings for market segments such as skier families.
 - ii. Infrastructure
 - 1. Invest in season-extending infrastructure such as snowmaking equipment.
 - a. Some lodging could require plumbing infrastructure upgrades to prevent freezing if use is extended into shoulder seasons.
 - iii. Messaging/marketing
 - 1. Continue to leverage partnerships and one community/destination voice to drive the narrative.
 - 2. Consider our comparative advantage as a winter snow refuge.
 - 3. Consider expanding into markets such as skier families who are less weather-dependent.
 - 4. Ensure shoulder season conditions info is easy for visitors to find so they can plan activities despite less predictable weather patterns.
 - a. Stage information online to help visitors make informed decisions through AI searches.
 - iv. Collaboration
 - 1. Continue to proactively engage the winter messaging collaborative team formed in winter '25/'26.
 - 2. Form specific action teams to address and prevent major event losses such as Snowmobile Hill Climb (*in progress*).

4. Summer 2026 wildfire outlook

a. Guest speaker: Lesley Williams-Gomez from [TAWPC](#)

i. Summer 2026 fire outlook and preparedness measures

1. Our destination's fire season is expected to be at an average risk level. Many nearby areas are experiencing severe drought and higher fire risk, so we may see above average smoke.
2. Teton Area Wildfire Protection Coalition (TAWPC) is working collaboratively with public, private, and nonprofit sectors on fuels reduction, outreach and communications, fire response preparedness, and funding. TAWPC's work aligns with the Community Wildfire Protection Plan ([CWPP](#)).
3. TAWPC is prioritizing certain high-risk businesses and organizations (such as the hospital and Senior Center) to receive free wildfire mitigation assessments. Businesses may contact Teton Conservation District for more information on their [Wildfire Risk Reduction Program](#).
4. The Greater Yellowstone Fire Action Network coordinates consistent messaging and data collection throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Visitors can better understand smoke/fire impacts with access to data from outdoor smoke sensors paired with indoor air quality monitors.

ii. Tourism industry involvement/asks from TAWPC

1. DSC members are asked to help disseminate fire prevention messaging. Residents and business owners should review [mitigation steps](#) and obtain a wildfire prevention assessment if available.
2. **ACTION ITEM:** DSC members to review list of [fire resources](#) from Lesley Williams Gomez with BTNF. Top links include National Interagency Fire ([nifc.gov](#)) and [Teton Interagency Fire](#).

5. Logistics – plan future agendas

a. Future meeting topics (*proposed*):

i. May 28, 2026:

1. DSC/JHTTB/DMMO strategy, goals, communications led by Crista Valentino, Executive Director

ii. June 25, 2026

1. Indicator Report – results and community outreach
2. Transit convening and advocacy (5.3.2)
 - a. Airport shuttle – outcomes, next steps (*if available*)
 - b. Summer transportation/traffic action items (*if timely*)
3. DDP funding recap

6. DSC communications and outreach

a. Public Engagement

i. Visitor Management

1. The WY Office of Outdoor Recreation's Teton County Outdoor Recreation Collaborative meeting on **April 21, 2026**, from **5:00 - 7:00 pm** at the library and online.
- ii. Workforce
 1. [Welcome JH](#) and volunteer coordinators event; Workforce Pro course release: **May 6, 2026**, from **4:00 - 7:00 pm** at the Chamber.
- iii. Transportation
 1. Clean Commute Earth Day electric vehicle event: **April 22, 2026**, from **8:00 - 9:00 am** at Poppy.
- iv. Data/Reporting
 1. Visit Jackson Hole's Hospitality Partners Update: online on **May 21, 2026**, from **12:00 - 1:00 pm**.
- v. Governance
 1. Chamber's Business Over Breakfast with a legislative update and budget session recap by Teton County legislators: **May 7, 2026**, from **7:30 - 9:00 am** at the fairgrounds.
 2. Chamber's Business Development Luncheon with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce/WOT Director/WYDOT/JHTTB Director: **May 14, 2026**, from **12:00 - 2:00 pm** at the Lodge at Jackson Hole Conference Center.

Invited:

- DSC Members:
 - Chip Jenkins, GTNP Superintendent
 - Bekee Hotze, BTNF Deputy Forest Supervisor
 - Mary Cernicek, BTNF Public Affairs Officer (sub)
 - Jay Pence, Caribou-Targhee National Forest Teton Basin District Ranger
 - Wes Gardner, Teton County Commissioner
 - Arne Jorgensen, Town of Jackson Mayor
 - Rick Howe, JH Chamber of Commerce President/CEO
 - Alex Lemieux, JH Chamber of Commerce Board Chair (sub)
 - Kari Cooper, JH AIR Executive Director
 - Annie Riddell, Community Foundation of JH Director of Grants and Nonprofit Outreach
 - Ned Wonson, JHMR Marketing Director
 - Mary Bess, JHTTB DSC Representative
 - Jeremy Barnum, Jackson Hole Airport Chief Communications Officer
 - Julien Hass, Community at Large
 - Ryan Stolp, Community at Large
 - Piper Singer, Wyoming Office of Tourism Communications Senior Manager (ex-officio)
 - Johanna Holbrook, JHTTB Sustainability Committee Chair (guest)
- JHTTB Contractors:
 - Crista Valentino, JHTTB Executive Director
 - John Bowers, JHTTB Marketing Director

- Lindsey Ehinger, JHTTB Destination Management Coordinator
- Britney Magleby, JHTTB Communications Manager
- Guest:
 - Lesley Williams-Gomez, BTNF North Zone Fire Prevention and Education Specialist and Teton Area Wildfire Protection Coalition member

Attended:

- DSC Members:
 - Chip Jenkins, GTNP Superintendent
 - Mary Cernicek, BTNF Public Affairs Officer (sub)
 - Jay Pence, Caribou-Targhee National Forest Teton Basin District Ranger (virtual)
 - Wes Gardner, Teton County Commissioner
 - Arne Jorgensen, Town of Jackson Mayor (virtual first quarter)
 - Alex Lemieux, JH Chamber of Commerce Board Chair (sub)
 - Kari Cooper, JH AIR Executive Director (virtual)
 - Ned Wonson, JHMR Marketing Director
 - Mary Bess, JHTTB DSC Representative
 - Jeremy Barnum, Jackson Hole Airport Chief Communications Officer
 - Julien Hass, Community at Large (virtual)
 - Ryan Stolp, Community at Large
 - Johanna Holbrook, JHTTB Sustainability Committee Chair (guest)
 - Piper Singer, Wyoming Office of Tourism Communications Senior Manager (ex-officio; second half)
- JHTTB Contractors:
 - Crista Valentino, JHTTB Executive Director
 - John Bowers, JHTTB Marketing Director
 - Lindsey Ehinger, JHTTB Destination Management Coordinator
- Guest:
 - Lesley Williams Gomez, BTNF North Zone Fire Prevention and Education Specialist and Teton Area Wildfire Protection Coalition member

Not Present:

- DSC Members:
 - Arne Jorgensen, Town of Jackson Mayor (unavailable for latter portion)
 - Annie Riddell, Community Foundation of JH Director of Grants and Nonprofit Outreach
- JHTTB Contractors:
 - Britney Magleby, JHTTB Communications Manager