

# SHARING OUR TOURISM SUCCESS: THE MENTOR SERIES

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## DESTINATION EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

# SHARING OUR TOURISM SUCCESS: THE MENTOR SERIES

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**SPONSOR: VOICES OF MONTANA TOURISM**

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# VACATION MAKING EVENTS

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KALISPELL, MONTANA

# OVERVIEW

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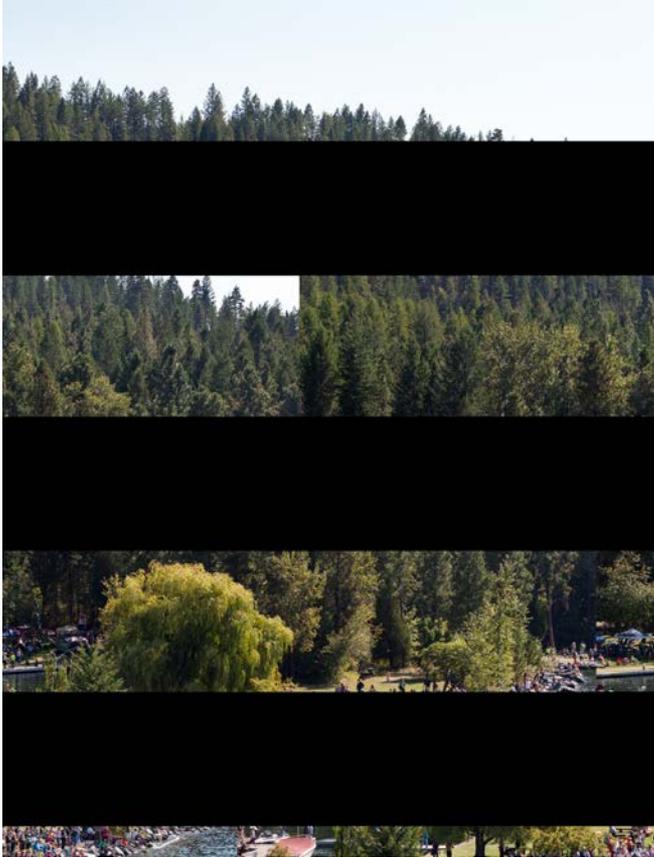
Events can have significant economic and social benefits on destinations.



# OBJECTIVES

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- Make a significant impact on visitations during shoulder and winter seasons
- Secure events that have a long term potential
- Position Kalispell as an adventure sports destination



# STRATEGIES

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- Align our destination with events that have an established national/international following
- Showcase events that highlight and respect our natural amenities
- Events embraced by local community (supports non-profits)

# RESULTS

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## Montana Dragon Boat Festival:

Year 1 = 56 teams, 34% OOM, \$770,788 impact

Year 2 = 93 teams, 43% OOM, \$2,049,277 impact

## Montana Spartan Race: 4200 participants,

64% OOM, \$1,147,612 impact

## Montana Pond Hockey Classic: 51 teams, 90% OOM





# LEARNINGS

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- Money, Volunteers, Sponsors, Vendors
- Prepare for the unexpected
- Manage by committee
- Event supports and enhances the community



# RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. Work with the best promoters
2. Know your competitive set
3. Identify partnerships early
4. Establish an effective website and online registration process

# THANK YOU

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# HELENA, MONTANA GEOCACHING

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CACHING THE BEST



# WHAT IS GEOCACHING?

# OVERVIEW

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- Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunt that people can participate in with a smart phone or GPS unit.
- Prior to our project, Helena had a strong geocaching community and was primed for exposure with over 800 caches in a 30-mile radius.
- With Helena's existing geocaching base, we were an ideal location for a GeoTour.

# OBJECTIVES

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- Bring geocaching tourists to Helena and make geocaching accessible to all tourists with GPS rentals and language translations.
- Gain national recognition in the geocaching world.
- Develop a geocaching brand for Helena.



# STRATEGIES

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- Educate people on what geocaching is.
- Build a geocaching tour (aka GeoTour) highlighting Helena's history, recreation and attractions.
- Market to the geocachers – trade items, travel bugs, geocaching.com ads, google word buys



# STRATEGIES

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- Build relationships with cachers, state, federal and private property owners.
- Enlist social media outlets for votes – Rand McNally Best of the Road





*Best for Geocaching*

**2013 ★ WINNER**

# RESULTS

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- Received #1 geocaching title from Rand McNally, Best of the Road
- Trackable cache activity & room nights
- Community buy-in (retailers, artists, attractions, etc.)
- Regional & national media coverage





# LEARNINGS

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- Be prepared to be the “expert.”
- The true power of social media.
- This is just the beginning.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

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- Be patient, be kind.
- Don't reinvent the wheel.
- Love where you live.

# THANK YOU

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Heidi O'Brien

*Executive Director*

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# HELENA, MONTANA MOUNTAIN BIKING

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**SO YOU'VE GOT GREAT TRAILS, NOW WHAT?**

# OVERVIEW

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- South Hills Trail System began development 20 years ago
- Grown into extensive network of singletrack trails adjacent to Downtown & residential neighborhoods.
- Helena's vast trail network offered a unique tourism asset

# OBJECTIVES

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- Gain Helena national mountain biking recognition
- Keep the local community in support of the project
- Develop a mountain biking brand, Bike Helena



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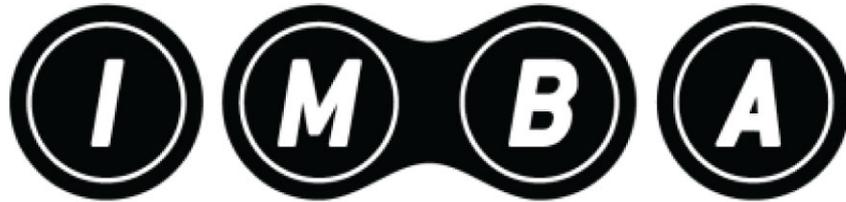
# STRATEGIES

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- Reach out to Helena's mountain bike community and the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA)
- Develop Marketing Campaign for Bike Helena
- Work on developing Helena's mountain biking infrastructure.

# RESULTS

- Helena has been designated as Bronze Level IMBA Ride Center, one of 17 Ride Centers in the World
- The Bike Helena Brand carries momentum and respect as a mountain biking leader in the community and on a national level
- Helena has received numerous articles in regional and national publications, both in print and online
- With increased exposure, Helena is poised for an increase of mountain biking tourism this season



*INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLING ASSOCIATION*



*RIDE CENTER*

**HELENA**  
**BRONZE LEVEL**



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# LEARNINGS

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- Always keep the community behind you and up to speed on your current and future plans.
- Be conscientious of the authenticity of your brand.
- Buying someone a \$3 beer can pay dividends.



[www.wideeyedworld.com](http://www.wideeyedworld.com)

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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- Promote what you know. Don't promote something that you cannot stand behind.
- Don't make it rocket science.
- Love where you live.

# THANK YOU

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**Pat Doyle**

*Community Outreach Director*

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