

MONTANA

2015 GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE
ON TOURISM AND RECREATION

Where the Locals Go – Montana – Custom Partnership with National Geographic Traveler Presenter Bios

Dan Westergren, National Geographic Traveler

Dan Westergren took up photography after being taught how to develop film by an indulgent science teacher in the eighth grade. That early experience instilled in him a reverence for the classic, timeless feel of a wonderful photograph, a reverence that he continues to feel even with his job as Director of Photography for National Geographic Traveler.

In addition to photo editing for National Geographic Traveler magazine and Natgeo.com/travel he has photographed a variety of stories, including expeditions up Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa and Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn in the European Alps. Dan also went on and photographed an expedition to ski the last degree to the North Pole.

Over the years, he's shot some of the world's most intriguing people, places and experiences. But, one of his favorite experiences is soaking in the Boiling River in the dead cold of winter.

Steve Carlson, VP, Strategy Director, Spark SMG

Steve brings over a decade of media experience to the mix and is considered a craftsman when it comes to creating media plans that move the consumer as well as the clients' bottom line. Recent client work includes Montana Office of Tourism, Northwestern Mutual's Rose Bowl Sponsorship, Ace Hardware, and Delta Faucet with their HGTV Dream Home Sponsorship.

His work is innovative and award winning including multiple honors for Montana Office of Tourism including a 2015 Creative Media Award, 2011 Effie, 2011 OAAA Outdoor Award and 2010 Creative Media Award. Steve was also recognized in 2010 by the Chicago Magazine Association as a Vanguard/Bill Harmon award winner.

Before joining Spark, Steve worked at sister-agency, Starcom USA where he worked on the launch of the new Disneyland Resort and California Adventure Park and implemented all national and local sports media on behalf of client Allstate in areas such as NCAA football and basketball, March Madness and MLB.

Steve earned his B.A. in advertising from Western Michigan University and graduated Magna Cum Laude. Originally from Michigan, Carlson currently resides in Buffalo Grove with his family. When not working at Spark, you can find him in the outdoors running, hiking, skiing and taking his sons camping. He considers one of his top trips when he brought his middle son Jack to Montana for a short boys'trip which included the Lewis and Clark Caverns and time in West Yellowstone and Yellowstone.

Riana Davidson, MT Office of Tourism, Consumer Marketing Manager

Riana's love for travel and background in journalism led her into the marketing world of the Montana Office of Tourism. She spent two years building up Montana's social media program before transitioning into overseeing the strategy and execution of Montana's advertising and promotional campaigns, which positively and uniquely brand Montana, while differentiating the state as a travel destination, and increasing tourism from domestic and Canadian travelers.