

Dear Recreation and Tourism Provider:

Over the past two months a number of local land managers and community leaders have been discussing the future of recreation and tourism in Northeast Washington. Out of this conversation has grown an interest to work together in a more integrated way with communities and recreation/tourism providers to deliver benefits to our communities. To this end we are hosting a Community Visioning Workshop as described on the reverse of this document.

To prepare for this Community Visioning Workshop, we are gathering information from as many recreation and tourism providers as possible in the three-county area. We would very much appreciate your insights and information to help us understand visitors and their interests for recreation and tourism in Northeast Washington. Any information you share will be used to help shape a presentation for the vision workshop on recreation and tourism assets and demand in Northeast Washington.

We are interested in information about your organization and your knowledge of visitor use and desires. Please see the enclosed question sheet for more information.

Three ways to participate:

1. Provide answers to the questions and send to PORTA, PO Box 1182, Newport, WA 99156 in the enclosed envelope or via e-mail at susan@porta-us.com
2. Join a Focus Group as outlined on the reverse of this letter.
3. Join in a dialogue about these questions with other recreation and tourism providers from the three counties also described on the reverse of this letter.

In addition to the questions, if you have any research studies, data or interesting stories about visitor desires for recreation and tourism in our areas, we would appreciate receiving those as well. Our intent is to gather up as much existing information as possible to prepare for the Community Visioning Workshop.

We very much appreciate your valuable time and interest. It is our sincere desire to create a more integrated and community based approach to recreation and tourism in Northeast Washington.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Susan at 509 447-5286 or on email at susan@porta-us.com.

Sincerely,

The Newstart Team

Background

Local land managers have come together with economic development and tourism groups from the tri-county area to sponsor a community-based recreation and tourism planning effort. This group of sponsors, operating under the name Northeast Washington Sustainable Tourism and Recreation Team (NeWSTaRT), hope to draw on the success of on-going community-based recreation and tourism planning efforts and welcome involvement and input from recreation and tourism providers, recreation enthusiasts, and others who are committed to the continued success of recreation and tourism in Northeastern Washington. This effort features community dialogue that enhances common understandings of the variety of recreation and tourism trends, needs, and opportunities in the area. The sponsors hope the communities will work together to develop and implement a recreation and tourism vision for Northeast Washington through a series of stakeholder discussions, community focus groups, and workshops.

The organizers of this effort hope to address many community goals by developing strategic direction and a marketing strategy for recreation and tourism for the area. A key objective of this effort is to provide and promote quality recreation and tourism opportunities while enhancing the environment, responding to changing user needs, increasing community benefits, and addressing economic concerns. Working together to better integrate public and private recreation programs and assets, this effort will help recreation and tourism providers create and strengthen partnerships, refine roles and strategies, and increase opportunities to leverage available resources for larger community benefits.

Key Dates and Milestones

- Stakeholder Discussions ▪ On-going
- Community and Recreation Providers Focus Group Meetings:
 - Ferry County ▪ February 25, 2010 ▪ 6:30-8PM ▪ K-Diamond-K Guest Ranch, Republic, WA
 - Pend Oreille Co. ▪ March 1, 2010 ▪ 6:30-8PM ▪ Kalispel Tribe Camas Center for Community Wellness, Usk, WA
 - Stevens County ▪ February 23, 2010 ▪ 12-1PM ▪ Valley Café, Valley, WA and
February 25, 2010 ▪ 12-1PM ▪ Kettle Falls Regional Information Center, Kettle Falls, WA
- Horizons Regional Tourism Workshop ▪ Friday March 5 ▪ 8-4:30PM ▪ Chewelah Civic Center, Chewelah, WA (RSVP to Krisan LeHew at WSU Extension 509-690-8400 krisan@wsu.edu)
- Pre-Workshop Meeting for Recreation Providers ▪ Thursday March 11, 2010 ▪ 10AM - 3PM ▪ Stevens County Sheriff's Ambulance Training Center, Colville, WA
- Northeast Washington Recreation and Tourism Vision Workshop ▪ Saturday April 10, 2010 ▪ 9AM - 3PM ▪ Chewelah Civic Center, Chewelah, WA

Talking Points

- With the struggling economy, recreation and tourism has become of vital importance for rural communities.
- Northeast Washington could benefit from a common recreation and tourism vision and regional marketing strategy.
- This effort will be one of dialog, listening, and collaborative learning. We will accomplish this through a series of stakeholder discussions, community focus groups, and workshops.
- This will help area recreation providers and land managers to better understand the recreation and tourism priorities of our various stakeholders and to help target specific recreation needs.
- Enhancing coordination across communities will reduce duplicity of efforts and competition between recreation providers leading to more efficiency and economic gain. Participants in this effort will gain a better understanding of each other's role as recreation providers and land managers while building on existing relationships.
- This effort will assess the role of recreation on community sustainability, seek to enhance the connection of recreation benefits to communities, and encourage community enrichment through recreation and tourism.
- Shared stewardship strategies developed as a result of the forum could help recreation providers move toward system sustainability, reduce the effects of recreation on natural resources, and assist in the maintenance and restoration of recreation settings, thereby improving recreational experiences.
- Partnerships developed through the forum will allow us to respond more nimbly and wisely as social, economic, and ecological changes occur.

Recreation and Tourism Providers

Community Visioning Workshop Input

Organization Name _____ **Location** _____
Contact – Name: _____ **E-mail:** _____
Address: _____ **Phone:** _____
City, Zip: _____

Questions:

1. What are the primary recreation services, facilities and experiences that you provide?
2. What are the top three things that visitors expect of you?
3. What do you do well?
4. What else would your organization provide if you could?
5. In your experience, what are the top five demands for recreation and tourism in the area?
6. Who can best provide those visitor demands?

If possible, please provide information, such as synopses of customer use surveys, that helps us understand your recreation users and visitors.

. PLEASE RETURN THE SURVEY EITHER ON-LINE TO susan@porta-us.com OR VIA USPS TO P.O. BOX 1182, NEWPORT, WA 99156. THANK YOU!