

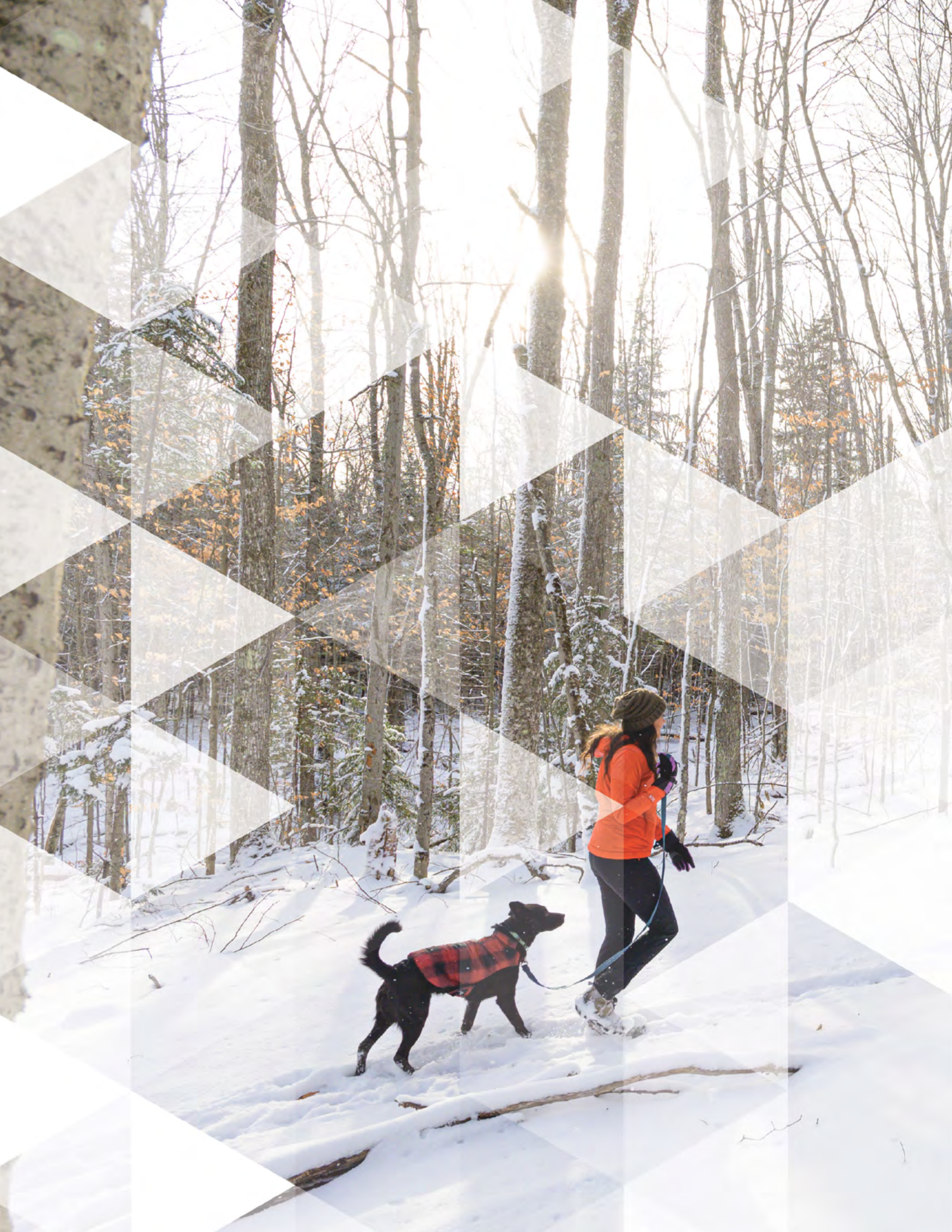


2021 MARKETING PLAN



REGIONAL OFFICE *of*
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Whiteface Region
v. 21.01.22



ROOST
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FOREWARD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Even though 2020 has been a year of unique and historic challenges, the Adirondack region has fared well. We have found our successes in working with community residents, businesses, governments, and visitors during this unprecedented time. ROOST reorganized staff, reconstructed the program of work, and adjusted budgets to increase efficiencies and productivity in 2020.

The ROOST 2020 program of work was appropriately reshaped for this unique year. The team created “Pathway Forward,” an initiative with the mission of reopening the tourism economy in a way that kept the safety of our residents the priority, while speaking to the traveler with appropriate messaging.

As we plan for 2021, we will start to move from a destination marketing organization (DMO) to a Destination Marketing and Management organization (DMMO). We will start the process to create a vision and a road map that will develop an overall positioning and implementation strategy for the future of the visitor economy in all of our regions.

We will continue to focus on the safety and economic health of our communities using new and creative marketing initiatives to speak to the newly reinvented travel market. Our outdoorsy, community-driven, fun, creative, passionate, and dog-friendly team are excited to tackle 2021!

Thank you for your support,



James B. McKenna, CEO
Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism

A person wearing a dark jacket and a blue beanie stands with their back to the camera, looking out over a body of water at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and purple. The entire image is overlaid with a geometric pattern of translucent triangles in various shades of blue and purple. In the top left corner, there is a small dark blue triangle containing the text 'RST'.

RST

ABOUT ROOST

The Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism/Lake Placid Convention and Visitors Bureau is a 501c6 not-for-profit corporation. ROOST is the accredited Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Essex County, Hamilton County, Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, and Tupper Lake in New York.

MISSION

“To enrich the lives of residents and visitors by creating a tourism economy that sustains itself over time - economically, socially, and environmentally.”

VISION

“Fostering connections between locals, visitors, and the world to elevate our communities.”

The Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism and its Board of Directors are united in their vision for the future of the region's visitor economy.

ROOST has continuously evolved to stay ahead of the changing destination marketplace. Our destination marketing focus is based on traditional advertising, digital marketing, public relations, and by harnessing the power of electronic media.

Looking to the future, ROOST is committed to partnering with communities to assist with destination management efforts. These efforts include community housing, workforce development, and tourism infrastructure.

INFRASTRUCTURE

ROOST is governed by a Board of Directors representative of the membership.

In-house staff manage all facets of our tourism marketing initiatives for the seven regions served, including website development, design, photography, videography, content development, media placement, and search engine optimization.

ROOST is also the NYS-designated Tourism Promotion Agency for Essex County and Hamilton County. Through this designation, the organization holds two board member seats on the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council (ARTC).



RST

ROOST TEAM

The Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism is driven by a team of dedicated individuals who are passionate about the Adirondacks and the communities they serve.

STAFF

James McKenna

Chief Executive Officer

Mary Jane Lawrence

Chief Operating Officer

Jasen Lawrence

Director of Digital Strategy

Michelle Clement

Director of Marketing

John Huttlinger

Finance and Accounting Consultant

Eric Adsit

Videographer

Jay Bennett

Data Analyst

Daniel Cash

Senior Designer

Savannah Doviak

Special Projects Coordinator

Whiteface Region Marketing Manager

Emilee Hazelden

Designer

Janelle Hoh

Content Developer

Communications Coordinator

John Huttlinger, III

Web Developer

Katie LaLonde

Tupper Lake & Hamilton Co. Regional Marketing Manager

Justin Levine

Content Developer

Saranac Lake Regional Marketing Manager

Suzanne Maye

Lake Champlain Region Marketing Manager

Sharron Miller

Visitor Service Manager

Angie Nevo

Visitor Specialist

Brooke O'Neil

Content Manager

Adirondack Hub Regional Marketing Manager

Glenn Pareira

Advertising Sales

Buzzy Rickard

Sales Coordinator

Kristin Strack

Office Coordinator

Bethany Valenze

Events Coordinator

Lake Placid Regional Marketing Manager

Aurora Wheeler

Content Developer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sarah Wilson

Chair

Chandler Ralph

Vice Chair

Marc Galvin

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Leslie Karasin

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James Lemons

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Hillarie Logan-Dechene

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Nick Politi

Member

Garrick Smith

Member



A LOOK BACK

2020...

The first step of developing our annual marketing plan is to review the activity, data, and industry trends from the previous year. As we embarked on this activity for the development of the 2021 plan, we had a flashback to one weekend in late January of 2020. On this specific weekend, part of the ROOST team was busy helping kick off the annual Empire State Winter Games torch run in both New York City and Buffalo, preparing to make their journey to the Opening Ceremonies at the Olympic Center in Lake Placid. Meanwhile, another part of the team was at the Javits Center for the New York Times Travel Show, where they were enticing potential travelers to plan a trip to the Adirondacks.

Winter marketing campaigns were running strong and the team was going full speed ahead on summer planning. Overall, things were looking good for the region as travel numbers were continuing to grow year-over-year and all indicators pointed towards another strong year for tourism in the Adirondacks.

What a lifetime ago that now seems. Just a little over a month later, we were meeting with community partners in the Conference Center at Lake Placid to discuss the status of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was here that many of us witnessed for the first time what chairs 6-feet apart looked like – while many others joined by phone. Within the next week, our communities came to what felt like a screeching halt.

As the days, weeks, and months unfolded, ROOST hosted regular “Community Update” meetings in coordination with our community leaders and health officials. We created the “Pathway Forward” strategy, an initiative with the mission of reopening the tourism economy in four mindful phases: Mitigation, Local Kick Start, Regional Movement, and Reinvented Travel Market.

When the North Country began to move through the phases of reopening, we initiated the “Politely Adirondack” campaign in partnership with our local communities to help step up compliance of the recommended health protocols using friendly Adirondack animals. Next, the team transitioned to highlighting safe regional travel focused on wide-open spaces and outdoor activities that could position the Adirondacks for recovery. Together along the way, we learned to pivot and adapt on a moment’s notice.

Even though 2020 has been a year of unique and historic challenges, we are proud of the work we have completed in partnership with our stakeholders, industry partners, and local communities. Throughout, we continued to be inspired by the hard work and ingenuity of our local businesses and community members as we faced ever changing situations. In 2021, we remained committed to working together with all of our partners to become an even stronger Adirondack region.

If there was one quote of the many cliché quotes that came out of 2020 that truly shaped our thinking as we developed the 2021 marketing plan it is “the only thing that is certain is uncertainty.” The plan needs to provide a strong roadmap of priorities, while still providing the flexibility to pivot on short notice as we navigate the coming year together.

PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

At ROOST we're focused on data-driven results, from tracking traveler spending and Return on Investment (ROI) to website and social media statistics. Additionally, we are following industry and regional data and information around the impact of COVID-19.

COVID-19 IMPACT

Beginning in late March of 2020, traveler data and positive travel indicators took an abrupt dive. The Adirondack region did see a slight rebound during the height of typical summer and fall travel, but with the increase in COVID-19 cases in the latter part of 2020, the area is experiencing a significant downturn in travel again.

According to data from Longwoods International, as of late November 2020, 77% of travelers will change their travel plans in the next 6 months due to COVID-19, and 44% do not plan on traveling until there is a vaccine available.

The impact of the pandemic can be easily seen when comparing various year-over-year data we track routinely.

Example COVID-19 Impact on Website Sessions

(TUPPERLAKE.COM)

	2019	2020	% Change
January	29,975	31,670	5.65%
February	21,510	22,690	5.49%
March	14,755	12,847	-12.93%
April	20,474	14,117	-31.05%
May	30,916	20,445	-33.87%
June	36,753	28,878	-21.43%
July	53,765	45,853	-14.72%
August	37,466	52,615	-21.43%
September	31,837	34,183	-14.72%

COVID-19 Impact on Occupancy Tax

(ESSEX COUNTY)

	2019	2020	% Change
January	\$138,169.02	\$170,312.10	23.26%
February	\$390,078.08	\$394,145.17	1.04%
March	\$135,632.94	\$42,536.49	-68.64%
April	\$78,442.68	\$4,168.43	-94.69%
May	\$193,415.33	\$90,764.11	-53.07%
June	\$169,990.36	\$201,458.12	18.51%

The background of the page is a collage of three photographs related to winter sports. The largest photo on the left shows a skier in a light blue jacket and purple pants in a crouched position on a snowy slope. To their right, a smaller photo shows a child in a blue jacket and dark pants standing on skis. Further to the right, a third photo shows a person in a pink jacket standing in the snow. The entire collage is overlaid with a pattern of semi-transparent, overlapping geometric shapes in shades of blue and white, creating a modern, abstract design.

NEW YORK STATE TOURISM ECONOMICS

Traveler Spend

	2017	2018	2019	2018/2019 %
Essex	\$470,902,000	\$494,822,000	\$508,000,000	2.7%
Hamilton	\$79,611,000	\$82,978,000	\$83,000,000	-0.5%

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Local Taxes

	2017	2018	2019	2018/2019 %
Essex	\$470,902,000	\$494,822,000	\$508,000,000	2.7%
Hamilton	\$79,611,000	\$82,978,000	\$83,000,000	-0.5%

Return on Investment (ROI)

Source: Leisure Travel Study

	2017	2018	2019
Traveler Expenditures	\$240,416,938	\$259,401,298	\$333,390,990
Marketing Budget	\$3,889,219	\$4,444,201	\$4,512,724
Conversion Factor	79%	77%	79%
Marketing Budget ROI	62:1	58:1	74:1

Social Media Performance

Includes followers from each of our seven regions, Adirondacks, USA, and VisitAdirondacks.

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Facebook	275,099	349,461	393,913	416,762
Instagram	53,654	77,912	103,731	125,000
Twitter	15,946*	18,350*	35,124	36,830

*Does not include @VisitADKs followers

Website Performance

Includes each of our seven regions, Adirondacks, USA, and VisitAdirondacks.

	10/01/2017 - 09/30/2018	10/01/2018 - 09/30/2019	10/01/2019 - 09/30/2020
Sessions	4,495,206	4,449,800	4,253,940



RST

OVERVIEW

PROGRAM GOALS

The goal of ROOST's programming is to not only attract travelers, but to also be an advocate for local tourism issues in order to reach a year-round tourism economy that aids in diversifying local communities.

In January 2020, the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism developed a new 3-year strategic plan for the organization. The purpose of this plan is to provide an updated vision and mission, new strategic goals and actionable initiatives, and new targets and timelines.

ROOST and its Board of Directors are united in their vision for the future of the region's visitor economy. As agreed collectively, the new vision and mission for the organization provide direction for the sustainable growth of the region, based on the shared interests of stakeholders, visitors, and the local community.

To achieve ROOST's vision, there are four new strategic goals for the organization:

INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT

Build stronger relationships across tourism, community organizations, and residents region-wide; establish better partnerships with workforce development organizations by advocating for career opportunities; and develop initiatives to increase full-time resident and youth retention.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Align with the region's public and private sector strategic planning initiatives; and develop an overall positioning and implementation strategy for the future of the visitor economy.

STRATEGIC SALES AND MARKETING

Drive midweek business and the average length of stay; expand and promote environmental cause marketing; and diversify the customer base by expanding a variety of content on destination experience.

SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION STRATEGY

Increase transparency around ROOST's initiatives and create partnerships that will align with the communities and organizational goals.

SWOT ANALYSIS

By evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of, opportunities for, as well as threats to, the region, we can develop a greater understanding of the market environment and how to most effectively position the region's marketing initiatives.



Strengths

- Recreation: Critical mass of varied outdoor recreational experiences.
- Amenities: Diverse blend of amenities, attractions, and unique experiences.
- The Adirondack Park: Largest publicly protected area in the contiguous United States.
- Mountains and water: Diverse and beautiful topography of mountains and lakes.
- Location: Within driving distance of major metropolitan areas in the Northeastern U.S. and Southeastern Canada.
- Space: 6-million acres and with low population density, the Adirondacks provide ample space to spread out and explore.



Weaknesses

- Seasonality: The natural seasonality of the Adirondacks poses challenges, everything from staffing to investment opportunities.
- Transportation infrastructure: Limited air service, mass transit, and ground transportation.
- Capacity: Some resources are over capacity during peak travel times and major events.
- Lodging: Limited availability of modern lodging amenities in some areas of the region.
- Workforce: Across the region, businesses are feeling the crunch from workforce shortages and workforce housing.
- Communications and Broadband Infrastructure: Gaps in cell phone coverage and high-speed broadband continue to exist.



Opportunities

- Transportation: New United/SkyWest connection between Plattsburgh Airport and Washington-Dulles. Work with regional partners to expand air connections.
- Mid-week: Room for growth mid-week throughout all four seasons.
- Cultural experiences: Increased awareness of Adirondack experiences beyond outdoor recreation, cultural attractions, arts, and agritourism.
- Diversity: By focusing on cultivating more inclusive destinations, the Adirondacks has the opportunity to reach and attract a new and growing audience.
- Seasonality: Through more focused efforts on cultural activities, groups/conferences, and events, the challenges of seasonality can be turned into an opportunity.



Threats

- Health and safety: As witnessed in 2020, a health crisis (i.e. the COVID-19 pandemic) can impact travel patterns.
- Economy: Factors like an economic downturn and U.S./Canadian exchange rates can impact travel patterns.
- Weather: With such a high concentration of tourism drivers being outdoor activities, the Adirondacks sees a large impact from unseasonable weather.
- Political: Shifts in political policy, border crossing regulations, and perception of the U.S. can impact travel patterns.
- Natural resources: Increased use of natural resources has a negative impact on communities, the environment, and the traveler experience (e.g. the High Peaks).

Performance Measures

Mechanisms over which ROOST has complete control that, when targets are applied, determine ROOST's success:

- Return on Investment (ROI) Leisure Travel Study
- Bookings: traditional, convention, events, tours
- Smith Travel Report (hotel occupancy)
- Leads generated
- Inquiries converted
- Media outreach, quality, and volume
- Social media followers, fans, and engagement
- Website performance analytics
- PR reach (Cision data tracking)

Performance Indicators

Mechanisms that determine the success of the tourism industry within a given destination and "indicate" the impact of ROOST's efforts:

- Economic impact of tourism (NYS ESD)
- Occupancy percentage
- Occupancy tax collections
- Length of stay and per party expenditures
- Attraction and event attendance
- Advertising, social media, and website analytics

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Strong community outreach and engagement is a critical component to successful strategy development and implementation.

As stated in our mission, ROOST leverages tourism to "enrich the lives of residents and visitors by creating a tourism economy that sustains itself over time - economically, socially, and environmentally." Additionally, a major goal of the 2020-23 ROOST Strategic Plan was "Intentional Community Alignment."

In 2021, ROOST will remain committed to:

- Continuing to build on regular communications with municipalities, community leaders, Chamber partners, and community organizations/groups to build strong partnerships.
- Collaborating with all local hospitality and business partners to set priorities and achieve goals.
- Hosting regular "community updates" and planning meetings.
- Strengthening relationships by developing opportunities to increase engagement with community residents region wide.
- Rebuild RoostADK.com to create a more efficient place for community members and partners to find important information and resources.

RESEARCH

While incorporating a variety of research into marketing planning and initiatives, ROOST also strives to be a source of research and information. Through a variety of annual and semi-annual in-house and partner research projects, we've been helping investors and small businesses understand the Adirondack tourism economy for decades. Additional data and sources regarding COVID-19's effects on travel have been, and will continue to be, a large part of the decision making process throughout 2021.

Leisure Travel Study

Each year, as part of our commitment to tracking performance, the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism conducts a conversion study. Known as the Annual Leisure Travel Study, this research is administered by an independent third-party research company. PlaceMaking consultants have been conducting this research for Essex County for 16 years.

The research includes poll results from visitors to the region through a survey designed jointly by ROOST and PlaceMaking consultants. The survey is distributed through ROOST's trackable leads database. Leads represent the contact information collected from individuals who have responded to ROOST's destination marketing efforts, such as online contest entries,

newsletter sign-ups, or engaged social media followers. The survey's goal is to measure detailed visitor information and estimated expenditures for both traditional lodging and camping, as well as short-term rentals and day-trippers. This data is then analyzed by PlaceMaking consultants and published for use by all regional tourism-related businesses.

ROVE - Mobile Location Data

New in 2021, in partnership with the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council (ARTC), ROOST will take advantage of a NYSTIA (New York State Tourism Industry Association) co-op program to gain insight on the Adirondack traveler through mobile location data.

The ROVE mobile location data service will provide a more granular lens on visitor behavior, helping us see where they come from, who they are, how long they stay, and where they go while in their destination. This data becomes a valuable source of insight for media planning, itinerary development, and developing strong regional partnerships. More specifically, this will help us have nearly real time data to help better understand shifts in travel patterns such as we experienced in the summer and fall of 2020 when, anecdotally, we saw a trend of first time visitors around the region.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Successful destinations need to balance economic development and sustainable tourism with resident quality of life.

Destination management is the means by which communities and regions can build support around a shared vision for the destination. ROOST will continue to assist in identifying and implementing programs within the communities it serves that balance community and tourism stakeholder goals. Destination management is an important tool that can unify a community/region towards a sustainable tourism economy beneficial to both residents and travelers. Please reference regional destination management sections for specific destination management programming.

Additionally, we will continue to leverage our destination marketing efforts to address destination management issues. A few examples of this can be found in programming such as #ShopADK, Love Your ADK (Leave No Trace education), and Politely Adirondack. By dovetailing together both destination marketing and management efforts, we can maximize resource utilization as we work to achieve the shared goal of strengthening our community/region.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI)

ROOST is committed to a greater focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and considers them essential to our organization and Adirondack communities. We are determined to foster an environment of inclusion, diversity, openness, and respect for the many differences that enrich our regions, including race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, socioeconomic status, national origin, language, sexual orientation, and disability.

In 2020 ROOST partnered with Travel Unity as a member of the first cohort for Travel Unity's DEI Standards for Travel and Tourism certification program. ROOST will continue to work with the Travel Unity team into 2021, working through their list of standards to ensure that our organization fosters an open and inclusive work environment, promotes and welcomes a diverse traveler, and ultimately, creates a more diverse Adirondack community.

The three sections outlined in the DEI Standards include Management and Workforce, Visitorship, and Community Impact. As we work through these sections some of our goals for 2021 and beyond include:

- Host regular DEI staff training covering a variety of topics.
- Work to bring educational programming to our regional marketing partners.
- Build relationships with and pitch stories to travel writers and influencers that appeal to a diverse audience.
- Foster relationships with diverse travel ambassadors to help create authentic content (images, stories, etc.) for the regional websites.
- Explore developing translated landing pages for key languages.
- Identify and develop website resources that more clearly display accessible amenities.

DM

DESTINATION MARKETING

TARGET MARKET

The target market contains those most likely to choose the Adirondacks as their vacation destination. The information in this section consists of a mix of previous year's data combined with emerging pandemic travel data available.

DM

REGIONAL TRAVELER

The safety of our residents and travelers remains our highest priority. During this time we have adjusted our target audience to focus on the “regional traveler.” This consists of New York state residents within a 2-3 hour drive of the destination. We will continue to monitor the impact of the pandemic via the New York Forward dashboard and adjust accordingly throughout the coming year.

THE ADIRONDACK TRAVELER

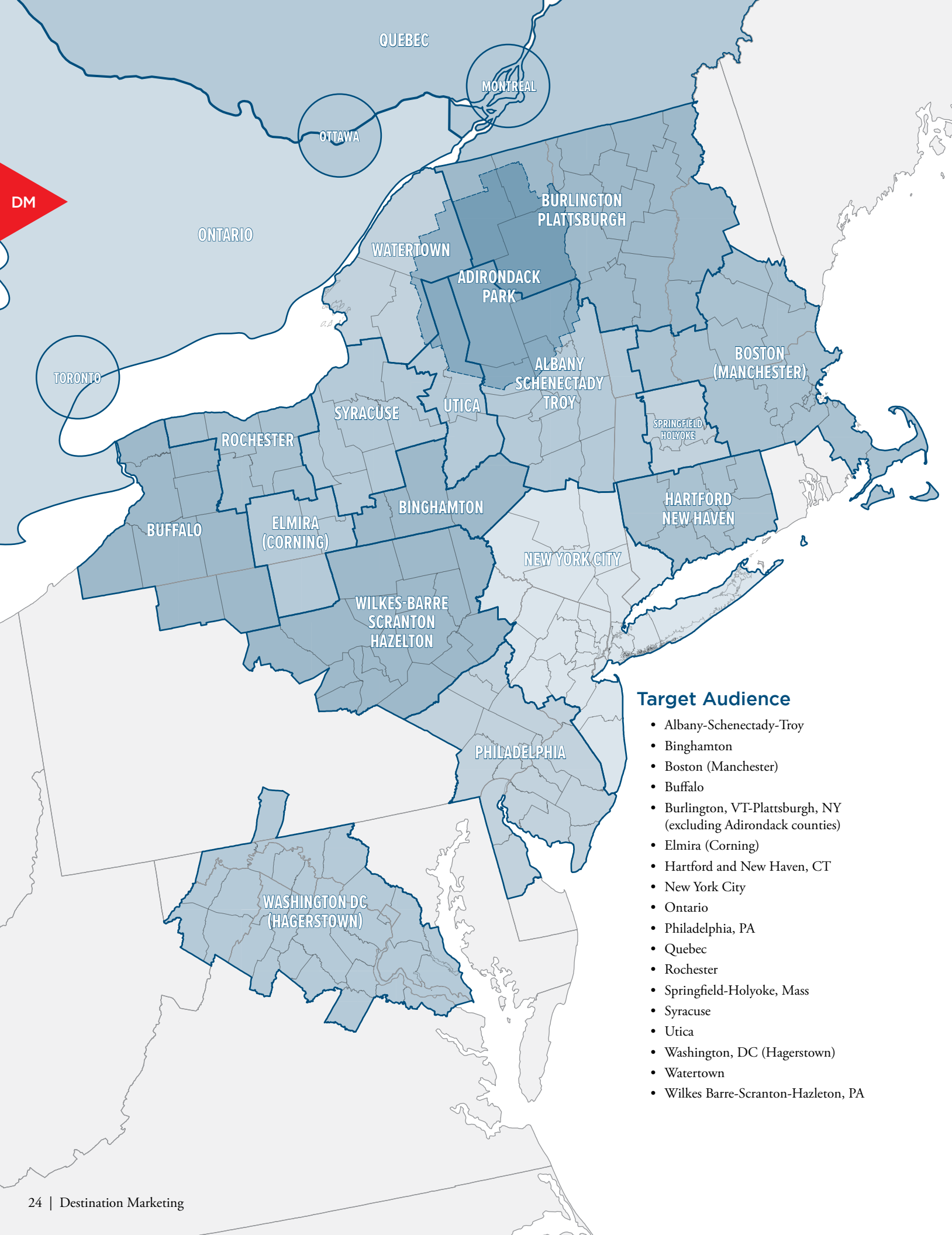
The Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism employs a data-driven strategy. In addition to following the latest industry trends, referencing tourism research (regional, state, and national), and tracking campaign metrics, ROOST conducts an annual Leisure Travel Study to help gain a better understanding of the target market and the impact that ROOST's efforts have on visitor's travel decisions. We are also making strong efforts to include emerging pandemic travel pattern data from sources like Longwoods International.

PlaceMaking researchers have been conducting the Leisure Travel Study for ROOST for 16 years. This survey, in conjunction with other metrics, provides a comprehensive picture of the Adirondack traveler. While variations certainly exist among regions and are explored in some detail within each region's individual marketing plan, the Adirondack traveler is generally:

- Primarily from New York state.
- Secondarily from other northeastern states.
- Canadian visitation is around 5%, but skews much higher in the Northern Adirondacks. This share has been steadily increasing over the past few years.
- Average age is 56, with strong populations in the 39-54 range and 55+ range.
- Average income is typically around \$100,000.
- Most reach the Adirondacks either by rental vehicle or a vehicle they own.
- Typically within a 2-8 hour drive.
- Average length of stay is 3 nights, with a party size of about four people.
- The 2019 Leisure Travel Study also included a comprehensive breakout of day-trippers. This additional data reinforced some key differences in this traveler type.

DAY TRIPPER

- Approximately a 17% lower average income than the average overnight traveler.
- Less likely to participate in outdoor recreation.
- While average expenditures were around 20% of those of overnight travelers, they are strong repeat visitors.
- Typically within a 1-3 hour drive.



Target Audience

- Albany-Schenectady-Troy
- Binghamton
- Boston (Manchester)
- Buffalo
- Burlington, VT-Plattsburgh, NY (excluding Adirondack counties)
- Elmira (Corning)
- Hartford and New Haven, CT
- New York City
- Ontario
- Philadelphia, PA
- Quebec
- Rochester
- Springfield-Holyoke, Mass
- Syracuse
- Utica
- Washington, DC (Hagerstown)
- Watertown
- Wilkes Barre-Scranton-Hazleton, PA

SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Short-term rentals have seen significant growth over the last 3 years with the explosion of online booking sites like Airbnb. Travelers making use of short-term rentals tend to:

- Have 1/3 higher average trip expenditures than other overnight travelers.
- Tend to stay longer, average of 4.9 nights.
- Tend to have higher average income, over \$110,000.

DM

CANADIAN TRAVELER

The border with Canada is currently closed through the start of 2021. As such, there is currently no scheduled advertising to the Canadian market other than regular email communications. However, once the border re-opens to non-essential travel, the following data should remain relevant for targeted marketing to Canadians.

- The Adirondack region has a strong image and visit conversion level as an outdoor recreation destination for Canadians.
- Most Canadian customers indicate visits to multiple communities within the region.
- Canadian customers are equally willing to consider a fall visit to the region as a summer visit.
- According to 2019 data, cross-border shopping is viewed as a secondary reason to visit by 44%, while only 7% noted shopping as the primary reason for a trip.

REINVENTED TRAVELER

As we move through 2021 and emerge from the pandemic, we anticipate the new traveler may not be exactly the same as the pre-pandemic traveler. Changes are anticipated in expectations of the traveler, tourism drivers, and new markets may emerge or shift. To best understand and target the “reinvented traveler,” we will use a combination of existing data, new data collection sources, and new industry travel information. All of this information will help us better market our region to those who will choose the Adirondacks as their vacation destination.

TRAVELER CYCLE

Travel marketing doesn't simply begin when someone is looking to book a trip — it starts with a dream.



The overall leisure travel marketing strategy that ROOST implements focuses on the five stages of travel: Dreaming, Researching, Booking, Experiencing, and Sharing. As travel marketers, it's important for us to target potential customers at each point in that travel funnel.



Dreaming

THE STIMULUS

Travelers love to dream about their next vacation or weekend getaway. During the initial dreaming phase of travel, the audience is made aware of the general product and experiences the Adirondacks has to offer.



Researching

ZERO MOMENT OF TRUTH

As the traveler moves from the dreaming to the research or planning phase of the travel journey, they begin to explore what travel experiences meet their desires, budget, etc. ROOST employs a significant amount of resources to ensure that the information the traveler is looking for is easily accessible as they plan their trip.



Booking

FIRST MOMENT OF TRUTH

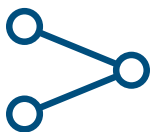
As consumer travel behaviors continue to demonstrate, consumers want transactions that are as smooth and seamless as possible. As a result, simplifying the user's booking process will continue to be a high priority. Younger travelers in particular would rather book online at their convenience than by speaking with someone on the phone.



Experience

SECOND MOMENT OF TRUTH

The customer has chosen the Adirondacks as their vacation destination. While marketing is important, the outcome of the Experience Stage is largely reliant on the experience the traveler has while staying in the region. A great customer experience is critical to ensuring the person leaves happy and shares this positive experience. With sharing now happening in real-time, travelers are sharing both positive and negative experiences while they are on their trip.



Sharing

ULTIMATE MOMENT OF TRUTH

Even though the trip is over, the journey through the travel cycle is not. Now the traveler is not only telling the world what they did, but they are also stimulating the dreaming phase for others. This is our chance to make them our ambassadors.

Crossover

Researching/Booking: According to Google, “over 40% of travelers say they bounce back and forth between dreaming and researching their next trip, zooming in on the details for one destination and then zooming out to reconsider all the options again.”

Experience/Sharing: With the growth in popularity of social media and travel review sites, sharing now begins while travelers are in the Experience Stage of travel, and can even begin in the early stages of the travel cycle.

MARKETING METHODS

From inspiring travel through authentic stories, videos, and social media posts, to data-driven and targeted ad placements with a strong call to action, ROOST employs a wide mix of marketing efforts to reach our intended target audience. These methods are driven by industry standards and research, which are then adapted and closely monitored to provide the greatest return for the region.

CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

A strong content strategy is about building relationships with your customers. Taking a trip is a personal experience and authentic content that builds relationships with potential travelers matches that sentiment. Furthermore, blog posts are compounding, meaning organic search increases their traffic over time.

With changes in search engine algorithms and display tactics over the last several years, organic search traffic has seen flat or declining growth for business and other generic site pages. However, search traffic directed to story content has continued to grow despite these changes. As such, a strong content strategy focused around stories and personal experiences remains effective for both the traveler and as a method to garner more organic search traffic.



AUTHENTIC STORIES



Authentic stories, also known as blogs, continue to be powerful vehicles for destinations to stimulate the dreaming phase of travel and build good relationships with potential visitors. Story content has been and will continue to be a major component of the overall marketing strategy that ROOST employs.

As a result, story content continues to play a major role in the leisure travel marketing strategy for 2021. This will include a blend of the following first person narratives, photo essays, listicles, itineraries, human interest stories, FAQ, and UGC (User Generated Content).

- New long-form content (800-2,000 words)
- Even with people reading less, and Google adjusting their algorithms to be mobile-first, the average content length for Page 1 search results is still around 1,900 words.
- New short-form content or “micro-moments” (500-800 words)
- With more than half of travel inquiries now coming from a mobile device, having short, digestible content that answers their inquiries is imperative.
- Refreshed Content for SEO

Along with writing new story content, ROOST will also continue to leverage past efforts by conducting a comprehensive review of existing content and identifying resources that can be adjusted and updated to improve

their search rankings. See the Search Engine Optimization Section (SEO) for additional details.

PAGE CONTENT



Page content is a critical part of the research phase of travel. A good, persuasive landing page grabs the attention of the user and compels them to convert from a website user to a traveler. Since page content is often an inbound landing page for targeted paid advertising efforts, it is essential that the landing pages feature a clean layout, boast vivid images, display information in an easy-to-navigate manner, and answer any questions the potential traveler may have.

Continuously updating and improving page content will continue to be a high priority in 2021, as it not only ensures that the most relevant content is available to travelers, it also triggers search engines to reindex the pages, resulting in higher SEO rankings. Additionally, new pages will be created on many of the websites in order to better meet the needs of the traveler.

ADKDATA.COM



Business and Activity Listings

ROOST maintains a database of all known travel-related businesses and activities in the region. Across all ROOST

DM

regions, these businesses and activities receive a free basic listing. In some regions, businesses can purchase an enhanced listing on their respective destination websites to increase their visibility in marketing programs. In other regions, long-standing agreements have been made in which ROOST supports the Chamber of Commerce by providing enhanced listings to their business members.

Events Listings

ROOST maintains one of the most comprehensive databases of events, virtual experiences, and notices in the region. This calendar, and “Insider” email which is populated from it, continues to be a popular resource. Traditionally geared toward the leisure traveler, in March of 2020 during the initial days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the calendar took a quick pivot toward being a resource for local residents and business owners to find information that is relevant to them. These modifications have allowed us to continue to not only use the event listings to get details out about traditional and digital events, but also on information such as public notices, restaurant take-out, business offerings, etc.

The database is accessible to anyone from the public who wants to enter content into it. ROOST ensures quality control of this database and continuously monitors the events listings to make sure all major events are listed with the most up-to-date information.

PHOTOGRAPHY



Compelling and inspiring photography increases engagement across all media applications, whether it is increasing the click-through rate on a display ad, improving the view rate of an article, or strengthening social media engagement.

Great photography that captures the beauty and uniqueness of the region will continue to be a priority in 2021. As a result of this continued effort, ROOST has accumulated and indexed more than 79,000 professional images of the region. These images are being used in all facets of our marketing efforts. Additionally, these resources are made available to marketing partners upon request for use in enhancing their efforts.

The priorities for photography in 2021 are as follows:

- Fill in identified gaps in the media library (see regional sections for specific details).
- Continued effort to increase diversity in images.
- Assist marketing partners with improving the photo assets.
- Incorporate high-profile influencers into photos for use in content and paid campaigns.
- Increased incorporation of user-generated content.

VIDEO



In an era in which video consumption continues to grow at a staggering rate, ROOST is positioned to continue to deliver strong video content to inspire the Dreaming and Research phases of travel. Our 2021 digital video strategy aligns with our overall strategy of continuing to build awareness of the destination by leveraging our unique assets to position the Adirondacks as a premier travel destination.

In 2021, the following initiatives have been set with regard to video:

- Increase brand awareness through video content by developing one signature four-season promotional video per region.
- Continue to fill in identified gaps in the media library (see regional sections for specific video acquisition and production details).
- Production of raw material gathered previously.
- Continued effort to increase diversity in video.
- Follow industry trends and implement best practices for video content.

SOCIAL MEDIA



Social media continues to be a key component in almost all facets of the Travel Journey, from stimulating the Dreaming Phase and carrying the traveler through their experience, travel is one of the top topics shared across social media. As a result, ROOST will continue to engage our growing audience by sharing unique content via social platforms.

Guided by numbers

- 30% of U.S. travelers turn to social media to find trip inspiration.
- 74% of travelers use social media while on vacation.
- 52% of Facebook users say their friends' photos inspire their travel plans.

The goal for our social channels will be to continue to create and share captivating and informative content that focuses on encouraging followers to participate and engage in the brand as opposed to only receiving static messaging. Additionally, in 2021 ROOST will continue to leverage influencers and ambassadors to continue to build brand awareness in the marketplace with a younger and more diverse travel demographic. As part of this strategy, we will revamp the ambassador focus from an event and general Adirondack awareness focus to tighter alignment with specific campaigns.

EMAIL MARKETING



The direct email marketing strategy grew considerably in its scope and complexity in 2020. This growth was driven by both the implementation of the Acoustic marketing platform, and as a result of the reduction in available paid advertising dollars in 2020. We saw great success with remarketing campaigns based on data from website traffic and user email behavior throughout the year.

2021 will also see the advent of a new round of region branded emails. These emails will primarily highlight individual experiences through the use of new and existing story content, and will be sent to a smaller send size of travelers who have interacted with the region brand either by providing their email address directly or by interacting with the website. The send size will be further narrowed down to individual interests of the specific traveler receiving the content - e.g. only travelers who have visited regional website hiking pages.

The "Community Insider" emails became a valuable asset during the COVID-19 pandemic as a way to reach locals effectively and disseminate vital information about businesses. These email lists saw increased growth during this period and this program will continue for the foreseeable future.

PAID MEDIA



Paid media continues to be a component of our strategy in 2021. We anticipate that in the coming year, we will need to continue to ensure that media placements take into consideration the ability to be adjusted quickly based on the current fluidity of travel due to COVID-19 and its impacts.

The main tactics that ROOST will consider employing in 2021 include:

NATIVE ADVERTISING

Native advertising continues to be a strong performer in ROOST-driven efforts. In particular, it is a useful tool for attracting a specific audience to a specific piece of targeted content. When placing native content advertising, we will primarily use pieces written by our in-house content team; however, at times (depending on the platform, as well as the size and scope of the media buy) it may also include pieces written by third-party contributors.

Some of the native content platforms that ROOST will employ in 2021 include, but are not limited to: StackAdapt, Google, Facebook, and Instagram.

DIGITAL DISPLAY

Display ads are helpful for remarketing as well as for targeting a specific website audience. The majority of display ads placed will be retargeting ads, reaching out to individuals who have previously engaged with our website or social media content and/or have expressed a recent interest in travel. They will typically have a stronger call to action aimed at conversion. Additionally, we often partner with specific websites that have an audience which aligns well with the specific product we are trying to market. The latter form of display ads is usually part of a larger media mix that also may include other forms of paid media, such as print and sponsored content.

SPONSORED CONTENT

Depending on the audience we are trying to reach, sponsored content with a source trusted by the audience is an opportunity to gain awareness and credibility. ROOST will seek out partnerships with travel and activity-based platforms that align well with the Adirondack brand.

VIDEO DISTRIBUTION

Video is only as good as the audience it reaches. With video being an integral part of the overall strategy, ROOST will amplify its effectiveness by disseminating these assets to a target audience through pre-roll and mid-roll video placement and native placements.

PRINT

Print continues to be a strong component for building destination awareness. Typically, we seek out print opportunities that also carry a digital component to retarget the distributors' audience.

INFLUENCERS

Personal recommendations are considered the most effective form of advertising, especially when it comes to travel recommendations. As a result, influencer marketing will continue to be an avenue to expand awareness. When choosing influencers to work with, a detailed vetting process will be undertaken to ensure that the right audience and values align with the particular destination's brand. Additionally, a focus will be placed on building relationships with influencers that can speak authentically to diverse audiences.

Beyond the primary tactics, ROOST may continue to include a mix of television, radio, and paid search as part of the overall paid strategy.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS



Third party validation provides “social proof” from trusted sources and experts that the region is a premier travel destination.

As part of its overall proactive communications strategy, ROOST pursues earned media exposure to elevate brand awareness and enforce key messages for the Adirondacks. To acquire earned media, the team develops and maintains relationships with media to gain publicity through various channels. This includes mass media outlets such as newspapers, television, radio, and the internet, as well as publishers and contributors for a variety of formats such as television/radio shows, travel editorials, blogs, vlogs (video blogs), podcasts, etc.

2021 PR STRATEGY:

- Continue to review and update the media kit.

- Develop story pitches that differentiate the destination and align with region priorities.
- Search national media databases for relevant media outlets to pitch story ideas to, send press releases to, and develop relationships with, in order to meet the goal of securing regional and national press coverage.
- Work with our PR firm, JMCPR, to secure regional, national, and international press coverage on new development, seasonal offerings, and specific differentiators for each region.
- Fulfill media inquiries from partner entities such as ILNY (Finn Partners) and other sources.
- Attend press events such as ILNY Media Nights, ATTA (Adventure Travel Trade Association), and Elevate Conference. For 2021, should in-person events not be available, ROOST will work with JMCPR to host virtual Adirondack media nights.
- Host travel writers and organize FAM (familiarization) tours based on vetted leads acquired by above listed activities.
- Focus on building relationships with travel writers and influencers that appeal to a diverse audience.
- Leverage paid media strategies through earned PR programs such as in-kind editorial content.
- Write and distribute press releases for regional promotions, seasonal “what’s new” pieces, and events.
- Amplify regional and partner PR efforts.
- Use Cision and Google Analytics to measure traffic and engagement generated by media coverage and influencer content.

CONSUMER SHOWS AND EVENTS



In past years, ROOST has participated in a number of strategically positioned industry shows and activation events. Examples of these activities include, but are not limited to: Adirondack Day at Saratoga Race Course, The New York Times Travel Show, ATTA Elevate (Adventure Travel Trade Association), and the Ottawa Travel and Vacation Show. We plan to evaluate these opportunities and types of events again in the future as they become available.

ORGANIC SEARCH



SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Trends continue to show that travelers are using online search as they look for travel ideas and plan their trips.

Each of our websites employ a particular keyword strategy specific to that region's products and differentiators. By creating content that's focused on these targeted keywords and phrases, we improve search engine visibility. While the overall strategy is decided upon in advance, to keep up with shifts in market demand, individual pieces of content may be adapted or developed to target emerging trends.

Since 2014, ROOST has employed an aggressive content creation strategy, with an especially high focus on stories, producing at least 400 new stories per year across all regions. Many of these old stories are highly trafficked, resulting in compound organic search traffic over the life of the story. Unfortunately, some of these older stories are out of date. In 2020, ROOST cut back new story production by about 35% to put a focus on refreshing and improving existing content for search engine optimization.

CHANGES IN SEARCH

In recent years, organizations have faced increasing challenges with regard to growing their organic traffic due to a few key factors. Examples include:

- Ongoing changes in search algorithms.
- Top search results continue to fall farther down the page as the pay-to-play market increased with more ads at the top.
- Emerging technologies such as voice search.
- Local listings became more prominent, pulling attention away from organic results and again resulting in lower positioning of the top-ranking organic results.
- Google, similar to other platforms, is trying more and more to keep users on their platform, especially on mobile, where they are pulling information from other websites and displaying that information in search results.
- As a result, research shows that 40% of organic traffic is answered by Google rather than resulting in an organic click.

MANAGING ONLINE REPUTATION

With these changes, DMOs need to pay more attention to how their destinations are represented across Google and other third-party platforms. To offset the challenges, Google has created the Google DMO Content Program.

ROOST will continue to put a further emphasis on evaluating and ensuring that the destination is displayed in a good light. An increased effort to improve the completeness, quality, and accuracy of content across Google Maps, Destination and Travel Guide Pages, Google Trips App, and more.

Similarly, we will continue to ensure the listings are up to date with partners such as I Love New York, Visit Adirondacks, and other third-party platforms.

BOOKING



ROOST continues to offer the Inntopia booking engine to partners interested in adding or expanding online booking efforts. The system is available for lodging and for activity/event booking. The system is offered at no monthly fee and only requires a small commission on behalf of participating partners for completed bookings. Currently, Inntopia serves as the primary booking platform for several regional partners and events, and as a supplementary sales channel for many more partners.

Inntopia also offers opportunities for packaging and ROOST is exploring other improvements which partners can use to promote any packages they offer.

IN-MARKET SERVICES



VISITOR SERVICES

Visitor services continue to be an integral part of our operations, either through ROOST-managed visitor service offices or through the support of continued partnership with local chambers of commerce and/or community-based tourism departments. Additionally, having Regional Marketing Managers/Representatives on the ground in each region further encourages the collaborative effort between our marketing partners' front line staff and the overarching tourism program.

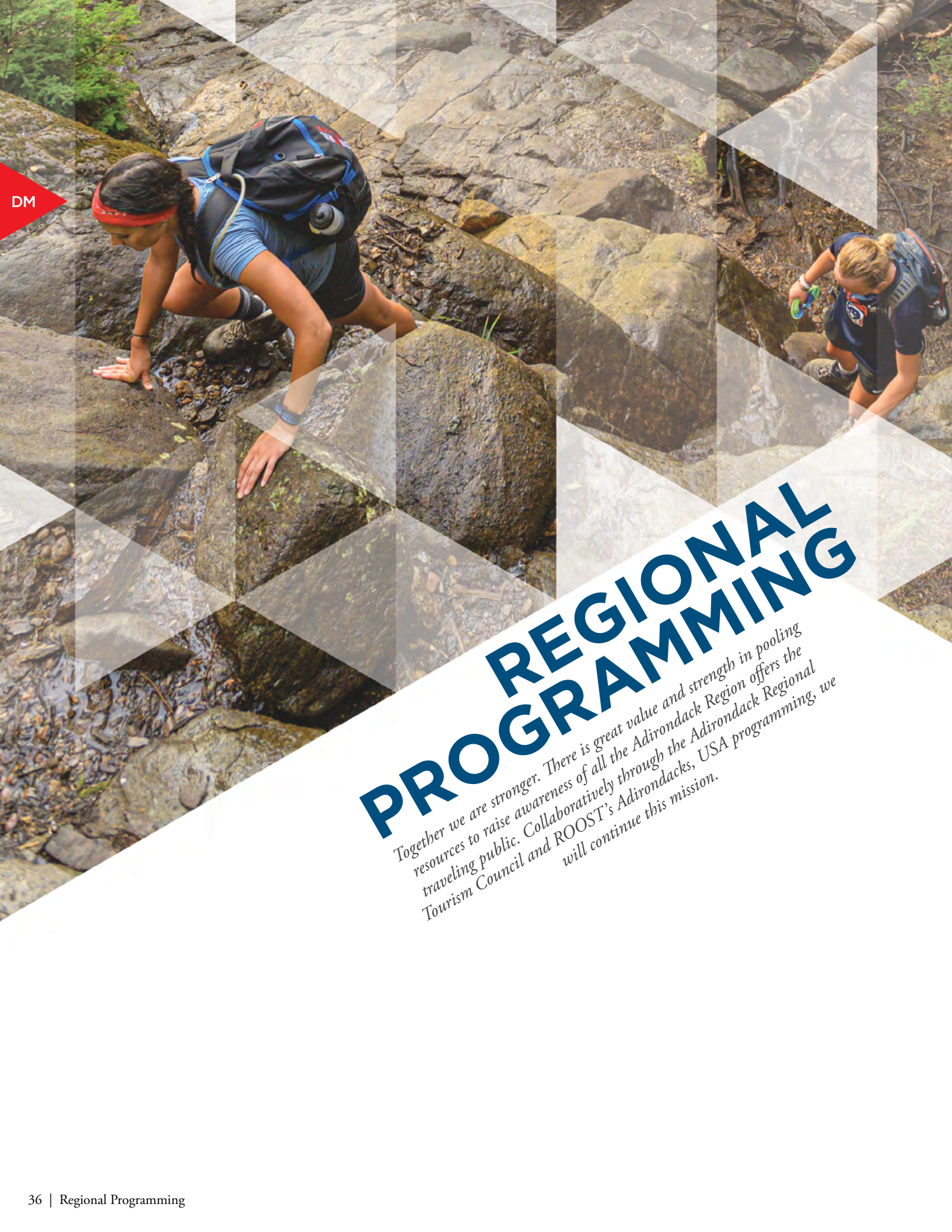
PRINTED GUIDES

While printed guides are no longer used to the scale that they once were — as a fulfillment piece to aid in the research phase of travel — today's traveler still appreciates maps and guides while in the area. ROOST will continue to evaluate the need for and produce a select number of printed materials as needed.

For a detailed outline of the planned print projects for each region, please visit the specific region sections.

SIGNAGE

ROOST has often assisted communities with the development of welcome signage, event information signage, etc. In 2020, as the North Country began to move through the phases of reopening, a need arose for informational signage on the health guidelines and expectations within our communities. ROOST anticipates that in 2021 we will need to continue to evaluate signage needs as they arise, and assist with development on a case-by-case basis.



REGIONAL PROGRAMMING

Together we are stronger. There is great value and strength in pooling resources to raise awareness of all the Adirondack Region offers the traveling public. Collaboratively through the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council and ROOST's Adirondacks, USA programming, we will continue this mission.

ADIRONDACK REGIONAL TOURISM COUNCIL

The Adirondack Regional Tourism Council (ARTC) is made up of the seven counties in the NYS Empire State Development-designated Adirondack Region: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Lewis, St. Lawrence, and Warren counties. ARTC is overseen by a Board of Directors made up of the Tourism Promotion Agent (TPA) from each of the seven counties. ROOST holds two seats on the ARTC Board:

- Essex County: Mary Jane Lawrence
- Hamilton County: Michelle Clement

Together, ARTC executes the marketing program “Visit Adirondacks.”

ILNY MATCHING FUNDS

The New York State Department of Economic Development has traditionally awarded counties with I Love NY (ILNY) Tourism Matching Funds. The purpose of the I Love NY Matching Funds Program is to provide county funding for the planning and execution of marketing programs designed to stimulate and increase the economic impact of tourism for New York state. All efforts administered using ILNY funds must follow the ILNY Matching Funds requirements. The program also encourages TPAs to participate in regional, multi-county, and thematic-based programs that are aligned with those of the state. Additionally, ILNY encourages TPAs to base their plans on consumer research that identifies marketing opportunities for sustainability and growth.

ROOST has annually applied for and been awarded matching funds on behalf of Essex County and Hamilton County. Once each county has matched their award amount, the funding was used to support the Visit Adirondacks regional program, as well as the Adirondacks, USA supplemental program themes.

In 2020 the ILNY Matching Funds Program was placed in a holding pattern due to budget constraints created by the COVID-19 pandemic and it is unclear as to their status in 2021. Unfortunately, without ILNY funding, the ARTC board has had to make some challenging decisions with regard to the Visit Adirondacks program. As a result, it is anticipated that the Visit Adirondacks program will be continuing to operate on a much scaled back capacity, however the board has prioritized the following action plan to keep the program alive until funding has been stabilized:

- The launch of a new traveler based website at VisitAdirondacks.com. The fresh layout will be focused on helping travelers become acquainted with what the Adirondacks offer and help travelers narrow in on the different destinations within the greater Adirondack region. (Paid in full with 2019 funds.)
- Managing the Visit Adirondacks social media channels by rotating weekly takeover among the 7 counties that make up ARTC.
- ROVE Mobile Tracking Data. (See research and development section.)
- Coordination of a regional email campaign to leads generated through years of collaboration.

THE ADIRONDACKS, USA INITIATIVE

In addition to the ARTC regional program, the Adirondacks, USA initiative provides the flexibility to efficiently pool together resources from 7 ROOST regions in order to have a larger reach and make a greater impact. The Adirondacks, USA programming touches and enhances many aspects of the overall marketing strategy, from PR and communications to content development and email marketing to media placements.

Along with using Adirondacks, USA for general Adirondack awareness and seasonal campaigns, over the years the Adirondacks, USA brand has been leveraged to promote some specific regional themes and priorities. The following section outlines some of these recurring campaigns.

Love Your ADK

LEAVE NO TRACE EDUCATION

Outdoor recreation continues to be a primary tourism driver for the Adirondacks. Like many outdoor destinations, the increased interest and use of our trails, waterways, and backcountry has brought over-use challenges. In an effort to protect these natural resources, educate travellers, and sustain our outdoor recreation economy, ROOST partnered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Adirondack Council, and the Adirondack Mountain Club and together launched the Love Your ADK website and pledge on April 22, 2020. So far 1,000+ people have signed the Love Your ADK Pledge and learned more about Leave No Trace. The pledge and Love Your ADK site will continue to be promoted in 2021 through organic social posts, a display at the Northbound North Hudson High Peaks Rest Area, web banners, emails, and other print and digital materials.

GOALS/PROGRAMMING NOTES:

- Educate travelers on how to minimize their impact on our natural resources.
- Inform travelers on how to be prepared for their backcountry experience.
- Align our efforts with the nationally recognized Leave No Trace Seven Principles.
- Maintain our Community Partnership level with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics.
- Help disperse hikers from high use areas by raising awareness for other great areas to explore and encouraging hikers to have a 'Plan B' in case trailheads are full.

Ski ADK (Ski the Adirondacks)

ALPINE SKIING / CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Beginning in the fall of 2017, regional alpine ski mountains started working on a collaborative marketing effort to raise awareness of the quality and availability of the great skiing within the Adirondack Mountains. We started off small with the focus on the consistent use of the hashtag #SkiADK and a small amount of physical in-market advertising such as stickers, banners, and flags.

The following season we began to create a larger awareness of the #SkiADK message with partnerships with Ski Magazine, Powder Magazine, Ski Canada, and a variety of both traditional and digital ad placements. During the 2019-20 ski season, we expanded this program to include Nordic ski areas.

As we move forward in 2021, a continued effort will be placed on building awareness for the #SkiADK message through a collaborative partnership with Adirondack ski areas.

GOALS/PROGRAMMING NOTES:

- Increase awareness of the Adirondacks as a ski destination.
- Promote mid-week skiing/riding.
- Help connect skiers/riders with important information they need to “know before they go.”
- Increase tickets sold at area mountains (Note: this ongoing goal may meet challenges due to capacity restrictions for the 2020-21 season).
- Increase visitation to area Nordic ski centers.
- Generate leads for remarketing.



Adirondack Wayfinder

INSPIRING THE ADIRONDACK ROAD TRIP

Adirondack Wayfinder is a theme-based approach to connecting communities and a tool to help travelers be inspired, dream, and plan. The premise of the program is to create road-based itineraries that are curated based on theme, traveler interests, and/or travel party make-up. The itineraries are mapped, can be modified to start from any address, and can be used for navigation. This allows the tool to follow the traveler from the dreaming phase and research phase through to the experience phase in their travel journey.

In 2020, as New York state navigated from “NY Pause” to the “NY Forward” reopening strategy, so did the demand for safe and “close to home” travel experiences. As a result, in fall 2020, a new and improved Adirondack Wayfinder was launched to help meet that demand by inspiring the Adirondack road trip. For the initial launch, the content was focused around themes and itineraries that were timely for travel in 2020, highlighting outdoor wide-open spaces as well as attractions, businesses, and experiences that were open and could safely accommodate travelers at the time.

In 2021, we look forward to working with our community partners to continue developing itineraries and creating thematic connections. Additionally, we will leverage Adirondack Wayfinder as part of our overall communications strategy to help showcase seasonal offerings that are relevant to media inquiries and pitches.

GOALS/PROGRAMMING NOTES:

- Increase awareness of the Adirondacks as a touring destination.
- Increase visitation to unique amenities and attractions.
- Discover lesser-known communities throughout the region.
- Work with communities and businesses to leverage Adirondack Wayfinder to create and promote thematic tours and itineraries.

Upper Hudson Recreation Hub

THE FIVE TOWNS INITIATIVE

The Upper Hudson Recreation Hub consists of the tourism assets surrounding and including the Essex County towns of Minerva, Newcomb, North Hudson, and the Hamilton County towns of Long Lake and Indian Lake. Several years ago, following the state acquisition of several large tracts of lands within these communities, an alliance was formed. As part of this alliance, these five towns identified the opportunity of combining efforts to market and promote the unique geographical surroundings and world-class recreational experiences the area offers.

Recently, the Upper Hudson Recreation Hub has seen significant commitment from New York state with the construction of the new Frontier Town Campground and Equestrian Center in North Hudson, as well as significant trail build-out over the last several years. Long term, the Upper Hudson Recreation Hub strives to position itself as an interconnected hub of multi-use trails that include activities such as hiking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, and biking.

RECENT UHRH ACHIEVEMENTS

- Rebranding of the two regions that fall within the Upper Hudson Recreation Hub
 - Adirondack Hub (Essex County)
 - Adirondack Experience (Hamilton County)
- Development of a new logo mark for the Upper Hudson Recreation Hub.
- Website design development for the Adirondack Hub and UHRH.
- Relaunched new and improved Adirondack Wayfinder with dedicated section for Upper Hudson Region Hub itineraries.



DM



2021 PROGRAMMING GOALS

- Continue to build awareness of recreational opportunities available in the Upper Hudson Recreation Hub.
- Acquire additional photo and video assets to use for promotional purposes.
- Increase UHRH itineraries on Adirondack Wayfinder that interlink the assets between the five communities.
- Leverage the Upper Hudson Recreation Hub to create cross-promotion campaigns between Essex and Hamilton County.
- Work with our community partners in the 5 Towns to identify ways we can further support their initiative of positioning the region to be an interconnected hub of multi-use trails.

Adirondack Snowmobile App

SNOWMOBILING IN THE ADIRONDACKS

Snowmobiling continues to be a strong activity throughout the Adirondacks. A recent survey of snowmobilers completed by ROOST found that snowmobilers have a higher average income and spend more on average than other leisure travelers per party. Snowmobilers are also very likely to tour multiple communities throughout their stay, spreading their economic impact throughout the Adirondacks. These travel patterns make this demographic a prime target for multi-region campaigns and marketing efforts.

During the 2018-19 snowmobile season GPS data of the snowmobile trails was collected throughout the region. In the fall of 2019 a new snowmobile app was launched to help travelers learn about snowmobiling in the area and navigate the trails/amenities once they are here. In 2020, we invested in making additional upgrades to the app to improve its functionality.

In preparation for the 2020-21 season we have been working with community partners to help create signage and other materials to help connect snowmobilers with the information they need to “know before they go.” In the coming year, a focus will be placed on building awareness of snowmobiling in the area and encouraging users to download the app. Additionally, we will continue to work with community partners to ensure the accuracy of trail and amenity information.

GOALS/PROGRAMMING NOTES:

- Continue to work with community partners to ensure all trail information is accurate and remains up-to-date.
- Increase visitation by snowmobilers.
- Leverage snowmobiling to boost the economy during a slower season.

#ShopADK

SHOP SMALL AND MAKE A BIG IMPACT

Supporting locally-owned businesses is a critical component to building and maintaining vibrant communities. During the 2020 holiday season we introduced the #ShopADK messaging as part of our regional holiday shopping campaign. While the #ShopADK message will extend year-round, the first component focused on holiday shopping with the goal of:

- Supporting community based holiday shopping events hosted by our regional partners.
- Promoting the importance of supporting our local communities by shopping local.
- Highlighting the unique variety of one-of-a-kind gifts and experiences you can find locally this holiday season.

The #ShopADK message was developed strategically so that it could speak to both local community residents, regional residents, and travelers who love the Adirondacks. It is Adirondack focused, and allows a way to promote the “Shop Local” message to all three of these audiences who consider “local” to be a different location based on where they are geographically.

In 2021, the #ShopADK messaging will expand year-round and will continue to focus on the unique retail opportunities. Additionally, we will work to incorporate additional industries such as restaurants.



GOALS/PROGRAMMING NOTES:

- Foster a buy local, support local, state-of-mind in our communities.
- Support community-driven initiatives by regional partners (i.e. Chambers, Business Associations, etc).
- Raise awareness with visitors of the unique shopping and dining opportunities in the Adirondacks.

Politely Adirondack

CONVEYING IMPORTANT INFORMATION IN A KIND, FRIENDLY, AND ADIRONDACK WAY.

In 2020, the “Politely Adirondack” campaign was born from necessity. The goal was to heighten awareness and compliance with the required health and safety protocols (face masks, social distancing, etc.) in a friendly and engaging way. The solution came in the form of the popular “Politely Adirondack” animals.

ROOST has continued to develop signage, digital materials, handouts, and other materials to use throughout the region to create a cohesive message of what is expected when people are in our communities. These resources have been made available to businesses via downloadable resource toolkits and deliveries of printed copies. They have also been updated seasonally and leveraged for community shopping events such as the Community Jumpstart (during initial reopening), and #ShopADK Holiday Edition.

We anticipate that the “Politely Adirondack” campaign will continue to be relevant in 2021 as we continue to navigate through these unique times.

Empire State Winter Games

POSTPONED UNTIL 2022

Each winter, Empire State Winter Games (ESWG) is a multi-day sporting event hosted in Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, Tupper Lake, Wilmington, Brighton, and Paul Smiths. The games bring together athletes from across New York and beyond to compete in over 30 winter sports events.

In 2020, the games celebrated their 40th anniversary as they hosted more than 2,700 athletes of all ages, including master divisions.

We look forward to the return of ESWG in 2022. In the meantime, we intend to keep the spirit of the games alive as we stay connected with the athletes through virtual experiences.



MARKETING REGIONS







GET CLOSE
WHITEFACEREGION.COM

**WHITEFACE
REGION**

SUMMARY

The Whiteface Region comprises Wilmington, Jay, Upper Jay, and Au Sable Forks in Essex County. In recent years, much work has been accomplished to advance the region as a destination for travelers. Most notably, this includes community beautification including new signage and curb appeal, and major developments and improvements to the mountain biking trail network.

In 2021, we look forward to continuing to build relationships with community leaders, business owners, and residents to support on-the-ground initiatives to advance the region.





ONLINE PERFORMANCE

Website Performance

WhitefaceRegion.com Traffic (10/01/19-09/30/20)	
Pageviews	249,344
Users	114,783
Sessions	145,144
Paid	21,720
Organic Search	50,727
Direct Traffic	16,392
Social Referrals	4,097
Adirondacks, USA Newsletter	10,488
Adirondack Experience Insider	421
Avg Session Length	1:14
Avg Pages/Session	1.72

Top Website Content

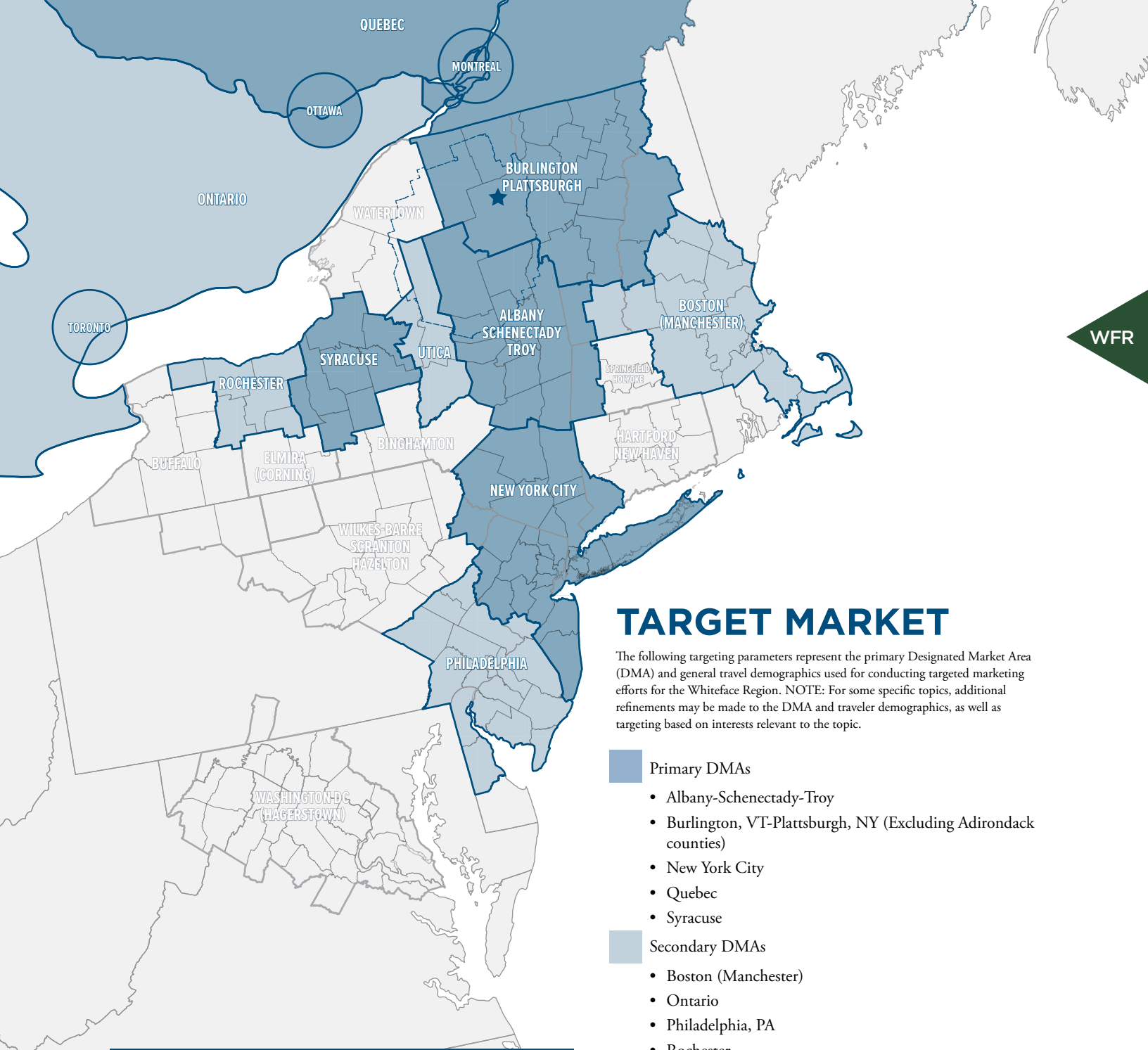
Page	Pageviews	Share
Contest	27,529	11.04%
Homepage	15,029	6.03%
High Falls Gorge	7,358	2.91%
Hiking	5,873	2.36%
Cabins and Cottages	5,672	2.27%
Whiteface Mountain Uphill Bike Race	4,981	2.00%
Fishing	4,599	1.84%
Foliage Report	4,309	1.73%
Fishing Holes	4,154	1.67%
Attractions	3,446	1.38%



23,822 followers (3,538 increase)



1,757 followers (185 increase)



TARGET MARKET

The following targeting parameters represent the primary Designated Market Area (DMA) and general travel demographics used for conducting targeted marketing efforts for the Whiteface Region. NOTE: For some specific topics, additional refinements may be made to the DMA and traveler demographics, as well as targeting based on interests relevant to the topic.

Primary DMAs

- Albany-Schenectady-Troy
- Burlington, VT-Plattsburgh, NY (Excluding Adirondack counties)
- New York City
- Quebec
- Syracuse

Secondary DMAs

- Boston (Manchester)
- Ontario
- Philadelphia, PA
- Rochester
- Utica
- Major interests: travel, adventure travel, family travel, outdoor enthusiasts, outdoor recreation.
- Highest interest in mountain biking of all of our regions.
- Highest level of interest in skiing and riding among travelers participating in outdoor activities.

Pandemic Travel Restriction

The safety of our residents and travelers remains our highest priority. During this time we have adjusted our target audience to focus on the “regional traveler.” This consists of New York state residents within a 2-3 hour drive of the destination. We will continue to monitor the infection rate via the New York Forward dashboard and adjust accordingly throughout the coming year.

When the time comes that we can safely expand marketing efforts beyond the “regional traveler,” we will review interest based and other demographic priorities at the campaign level from emerging data sources such as Longwoods International, ROVE mobile tracking, and the annual Leisure Travel study to identify any relevant changes in travel patterns.

2021 PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

Region Recovery

In 2021 the focus will remain on cultivating a travel demand that stimulates the economy for the Whiteface Region, while keeping the safety of our residents and travelers the highest priority. As noted in the target audience, during this time the strategy will remain focused on the “regional traveler.”

In March of 2020, “traveler alerts” were added to the top of WhitefaceRegion.com. Additionally, all facets of our marketing efforts, from emails and social media to seasonal landing pages, link travelers directly to what they need to “know before they go.” This information will remain at the forefront of marketing efforts.

The promotion of the region will remain focused on positioning the region as a destination with activities that are open and available, and align with what travelers are looking for during this time. This will include, but not be limited to, a focus on:

- Outdoor activities (skiing, mountain biking, road cycling, fly fishing, attractions, etc.).
- Affordable destination.
- Avoid the crowds and get close to attractions and outdoor recreation.
- Continued support of businesses including a focus on take-out, curbside pick-up, and other offerings.

First Time Visitor Page

In 2021, a first time visitor page will be created for WhitefaceRegion.com. This landing page will provide those visiting the website for the first time with easy access to resources that answer basic questions they may have about visiting the Whiteface Region. The page is designed to be visually heavy and copy light in order to easily guide the visitor and inspire them to delve deeper into the site. The goal is to connect them quickly to the information they are seeking in order to increase their move through the travel sales funnel.

Region Specific Emails

The email marketing strategy grew considerably in 2020. In addition to the refresh of the Adirondacks, USA weekly email, welcome emails and retargeting emails were added to the email strategy. These new emails are branded specific to the Whiteface Region, and are triggered based on the behaviors of people visiting WhitefaceRegion.com.

In 2021, a targeted email strategy will include sending segmented interest-based emails directly from the Whiteface Region. These interests are determined by both the information provided when someone signs up for an email as well as the content they engage with once they have signed up.

Additionally, the “Whiteface Region Insider” emails will continue to be a way to reach locals to disseminate information about events and other happenings in the region. During the COVID-19 pandemic the “Insider” also became an effective way to share important information about business offerings, COVID-19 testing sites, and other important information for locals. As a result, the lists saw increased growth during this period and we will continue to leverage this tool for the foreseeable future.

Public Relations/Communications

As part of its overall proactive PR and communications strategy, ROOST pursues earned media exposure for the Whiteface Region. The strategy includes developing story pitches, writing press releases, and hosting familiarization tours (FAM) that focus on elevating key messaging that heighten interest in the region.

More specifically, PR pitches and press releases will highlight new developments, seasonal happenings, and unique travel opportunities that differentiate the region. In 2021, we will focus on targeting family travel writers to highlight all of the family-friendly activities and affordable lodging in the area. We will also continue to work with writers who contribute to mountain biking publications to showcase the expanding trail networks and other biking amenities. Lastly, we will seek fly fishing writers who can highlight the world-class fishing on the Ausable River.

Photo/Video Summary

A large quantity of photo/video assets have been successfully acquired over the last few years to highlight the beauty and charm of the Whiteface Region. In 2020, our videographer/photographer was able to focus on editing raw video footage acquired in previous years as well as acquire landscape photos for use throughout the year. For 2021, photo and video acquisition priorities will be: cross country skiing, hiking, lodging, and leisure travel activities. Having more diversity in the image collection for the Whiteface Region also remains a top priority in 2021.

Itinerary Building

As the popularity and demand for “close-to-home” road tripping continues, in 2021 the focus will continue on leveraging the newly redeveloped Adirondack Wayfinder to create “trails” that showcase the unique amenities and attractions in Wilmington, Jay, Upper Jay, and Au Sable Forks. Additionally, Adirondack Wayfinder provides the opportunity to connect the Whiteface Region to the greater Adirondacks via thematic trails and itineraries.

See Adirondack Wayfinder in the Adirondacks, USA Initiatives section for additional details.

Branding

Much discussion has been held about whether the term “Whiteface Region” is appropriate for Wilmington, Jay, Upper Jay, and Au Sable Forks. In 2021, the priority is to work with these communities to evaluate the current branding and outline an appropriate scope of work should a new brand be needed to position the region as we look to the future.

Community Engagement

While ROOST may lead the region’s promotion efforts, it is the numerous business owners and community members that make the region a special and successful destination. In 2021, we are committed to continuing to build relationships with community leaders, business owners, and to work closely with the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce to support their initiatives.

REFERENCE: GENERAL TOPIC DESCRIPTION

The following is a list of topics that have been outlined and refined over years of community collaboration developing marketing priorities for the region. While the weight of promotion of these priorities will need to be flexible to accommodate the impacts of travel restrictions and business operations, the topics themselves will not change. As a result, this list will continue to be referenced on a regular basis as we outline the specific seasonal campaigns.

Agritourism

With new cuisine trails, great farming events such as cheese tours, maple weekends, and lodging at farms, agritourism is an increasingly important part of a traveler's experience.

Alpine Skiing/Riding

Home to Whiteface Mountain, Wilmington is positioned to leverage skier/rider traffic that the East Coast's largest vertical drop attracts. By tying the mountain to the amenities available in the region, there are opportunities to move the dial during the softer winter season.

Attractions

Whiteface Mountain, Whiteface Veterans' Memorial Highway, High Falls Gorge, the Adirondack Wildlife Refuge, Santa's Workshop, and natural attractions such as the Flume Trail System are some of the many things that enrich the travelers' experience in this region. The Whiteface Region is full of adventure and enjoyment at these attractions in every season.

Camping/Lodging

The Whiteface Region offers many choices when it comes to lodging, including backcountry and campground camping, glamping, cabins complete with fireplaces and cozy interiors, and hotels with outdoor recreation in mind. There are many family-friendly lodging properties with outdoor swimming pools and great gift shops on site. The Whiteface Region also has rentals for large groups and private spaces.

Dining

The Whiteface Region offers many styles of dining, from romantic, upscale options in cozy atmospheres to pubs and pizza places that are perfect after a day exploring. A growing nightlife scene is evident with craft beer and live music.

Events

Events such as the Wilmington-Whiteface Whiskey Run, Uphill/Whiteface 100k, Whiteface Mountain Oktoberfest, Wilmington/Whiteface Bike Fest, annual Festival of Colors, Kidding Day at Asgaard Farm, and the Ausable River Two Fly Challenge are just some of the events that draw travelers to the region.

Fall Travel

Leaf peeping along the scenic byways, past the covered bridge, and up the Whiteface Veterans' Memorial Highway makes for a perfect fall trip. Mountain biking, fly fishing, hiking, camping, and fall events are great activities to highlight this time of year. Attractions such as High Falls Gorge, gondola rides at Whiteface, and the Adirondack Wildlife Refuge add unique experiences that differentiate the region from other fall destinations.

Family Travel

A variety of lodging and outdoor recreation opportunities make the region ideal for family travel. With close proximity to great hiking, excellent mountain bike trails, unique natural attractions, Santa's Workshop, and Whiteface Mountain's Adventure Zone.

Fly Fishing

The region is a popular destination for anglers, especially when it comes to fly fishing. While the West Branch of the Ausable River offers trout, there are several other species of fish nearby, including landlocked salmon, pike, splake, bass, walleye, perch, and sunfish.

Hiking

The Whiteface Region offers hiking trails for a variety of skill and fitness levels across all seasons. Many of the trails in this region are less traveled than those found in some of the other areas of the Adirondacks, making the region a great escape with stunning views. There are over 2,000 miles of designated hiking trails in the Adirondacks, and

the Whiteface Region offers immediate access to many of them.

Mountain Biking

Recently, mountain biking has seen significant growth in Wilmington. Trails range from beginner to expert over a wide variety of terrain. The Wilmington/Whiteface Bike Fest is an annual event celebrating biking in the region, bringing bike enthusiasts from all over to enjoy the area.

Road Cycling

From Ironman to the Whiteface Uphill Mountain Bike race, there are a number of endurance events geared toward road cyclists in the Whiteface Region. In addition to these more extreme events, scenic byways offer beautiful roads for more relaxed touring.

Snowshoeing

The Whiteface Region offers plentiful backcountry snowshoeing opportunities. There are a wide range of trails with easy access. Snowshoeing is a great way to experience the Adirondacks and enjoy the region in the winter months. The Whiteface Region is the ideal place to blaze the trails, whether for a short walk or all-day adventure.

Summer Travel

Summer in the Whiteface Region is full of outdoor adventure, unique attractions, and lively events. The region offers a wide variety of outdoor activities, like hiking, world-class fly fishing, mountain biking, cycling, and more. Summer also attracts travelers to the region's numerous attractions, scenic drives, summer concert series, family beach, and more!

Weddings

From iconic locations such as Whiteface Mountain, High Falls Gorge, and Asgaard Farm, to more traditional venues such as the area's historic churches, the area offers a wide variety of wedding opportunities. Due to the continued restrictions on large gatherings, there is a growing popularity for elopements and micro weddings. The locations in the Whiteface Region can help fulfill this new demand.

Winter Travel

The Whiteface Region is home to Whiteface, the Olympic Mountain. The region also has trails for winter mountain biking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing. Nature is easily accessed in the region and there is winter fun for all ages.

GLOSSARY

Adirondack Regional Tourism Council (ARTC)

The Adirondack Region is one of eleven designated vacation regions promoted through New York state's I LOVE NEW YORK brand. It is not defined by the Blue Line; instead it is made up of Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Lewis, St. Lawrence, and Warren counties. The Adirondack Regional Tourism Council (ARTC) oversees the official regional program for the Adirondack Region under the Visit Adirondacks brand. Structure for ARTC includes an executive director and Board of Directors made up from the Tourism Promotion Agent (TPA) from each of the seven counties.

Ambassador

Ambassadors are simply people who represent and share the story of your region in a positive way, preferably in front of a lot of potential customers (i.e. their friends, family, and social media followers). A brand ambassador is someone who embodies the brand he or she is endorsing.

Boomer

The Baby Boomer generation includes all Americans born between the years 1946 and 1964.

Content Marketing

Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content (stories/blogs, press releases, photos, videos, infographics) to attract and retain a clearly defined audience and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.

Designated Marketing Area (DMA)

A defined geographic area of varying size and/or combination of town, city, and state jurisdictions representing a core marketing area that can be reached with advertising. The industry standard often used is the DMA list provided by Nielsen Media Research.

Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)

A destination organization, often referred to as a destination marketing or management organization, convention and visitors bureau, or tourism board, is responsible for promoting a community as an attractive travel destination and enhancing its public image as a dynamic place to live and work.

Earned Media

Different than paid media, earned media is defined as exposure that is not bought or owned; it can only be gained organically, when content receives recognition and a

following through communication channels such as social media and word of mouth.

FAM

A FAM trip is a Media Familiarization Tour, offered to media on behalf of an organization to get the media familiar with the destination. They are also called Press Trips. They can be either a group or an individual Media FAM trip.

Influencer

An influencer is an individual who has the power to affect purchase decisions of others because of his/her authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with his/her audience. Influencer marketing is a form of marketing in which focus is placed on influential people rather than the target market as a whole. It identifies the individuals that have influence over potential customers, and orients marketing activities around these influencers.

Infographic

An infographic, also known as an informative graphic, is a representation of data presented in a format that is more engaging than usual written copy. People use infographics to quickly communicate a message or to simplify the presentation of large amounts of data.

Millennial

The Millennial generation includes all Americans born between the years of 1981 and 1996.

Native Advertising

Native advertising is the use of paid ads that match the look, feel, and function of the media format in which they appear. Native ads are one of the fastest growing digital ad formats, more likely to get clicked compared to display ads, achieving greater cost efficiencies.

Page Content

Page content refers to landing pages that have been developed to display one specific topic. For example hiking, dining, shopping, historic attractions, and events each have designated pages on individual websites. These pages house the database listings discussed in the previous section.

Pageview

Each time a user visits an individual page on a website it is called a pageview. Pageviews are recorded whenever a full page on a website is viewed or refreshed. A user can have multiple pageviews during one session if they click on multiple pages. Unique pageviews only count a single user's pageviews once, even if they view the same page multiple times within a given time period.

PR

PR is the abbreviation for public relations. Public relations represent a unique way of promoting a destination by building a higher visibility in the public space. Public relations represent a strategic form of communication that focuses on gaining the audience's understanding and acceptance, as well as on the process of building a good relationship between an organization and the public. In the tourist sector, public relations includes everything from traditional press releases to pitching and/or hosting travel writers.

Sponsored Content

Sponsored content is a piece of brand journalism that lives on a publisher's website. It's usually written by the publisher's staff so the article matches the tone and the voice of rest of their content.

Stimulus

Factors that influence or stimulate a person's consumption choices.

Tourism Promotion Agent (TPA)

The individual who has been officially designated by the county to be the official state contact for all matters relating to tourism promotion and marketing. Additionally, the Tourism Promotion Agent represents the region on the board of directions of the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council (ARTC).

Tourism Promotion Agency (TPA)

Any not-for-profit corporation or other nonprofit organization, association, or agency designated by resolution of the county legislature or other governing body of any county, or upon designation of the mayor of the city of New York, as the agency authorized to apply for and receive Tourism Matching Funds.

Umbrella Brands

Umbrella brands are brand names that are utilized by a range of different related products; sometimes this is referred to as family branding. An umbrella brand strategy is a marketing practice that involves marketing many related products under a single brand name.

ZMOT

The ZMOT (Zero Moment of Truth) refers to the moment in the buying process when the consumer researches a product prior to purchase. The Travel ZMOT Journey is defined by five steps: Dreaming, Research, Booking, Experience, and Sharing.





