The GSTC Destinations Program

Comprehensive Destination Sustainability Assessment of Sedona
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I. Executive Summary

The Sedona Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau ("Sedona Chamber") engaged the Global Sustainable Tourism Council ("GSTC") to conduct a sustainability assessment of Sedona’s state of tourism development to inform strategic initiatives for sustainable destination management.

The GSTC, backed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization ("UNWTO"), is the world’s leading standard-setting body for sustainability of tourism operations and destination development. The GSTC assesses destinations based on the GSTC Criteria for Destinations, which set recommended policies and systems that contribute to sustainable development and operations of tourism businesses and host communities.

This report includes a description of the methodology followed to conduct the assessment, along with a detailed description of each criterion and its corresponding major findings and recommendations.
II. Introduction

OVERVIEW OF THE DESTINATION OF SEDONA

Located in Arizona's high desert under the towering southwestern rim of the vast Colorado Plateau, the destination of Sedona is blessed with four mild seasons marked by abundant sunshine and clean air. The annual average high and low temperatures are 74.7 and 45.7 degrees, respectively.

Almost the entire world knows that Sedona, strategically situated at the mouth of spectacular Oak Creek Canyon, is a unique place. Characterized by massive red-rock formations, as well as the contrasting riparian areas of Oak Creek Canyon, the area surrounding this beloved community is considered at least as beautiful as many national parks.

The City of Sedona, one of Arizona's premier tourism, recreation, resort, retirement and art centers, was incorporated in 1988. Historically, it was a rural ranching community located far off the beaten path, but its unsurpassed natural beauty became nationally known through the motion picture industry. Today, commercials and television shows still are filmed in the unsettled areas surrounding this city, which annually attracts more than 3 million tourists from around the world.

Curiously, this 19-square-mile city is split between Coconino and Yavapai counties, and only 51 percent of its area is privately owned – the rest is part of the Coconino National Forest. The average age of Sedona's population, which totals approximately 10,000 within its incorporated limits, is 50 and the elevation generally is considered to be 4,500 feet, though well-known red-rock formations extend to more than a mile-high elevation. Even this city’s airport, high on a mesa, is situated at an elevation of more than 4,800 feet, and when airplanes zoom off the end of the runway, the term airborne takes on new meaning.
II. Introduction

IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY TO THE DESTINATION

The essence of the Sedona experience for residents and visitors alike arises from the extraordinary nature of the landscape. Nestled at the base of dramatic red sandstone cliffs, and with an ideal semi-arid climate, Sedona is a special and unique place that is considered by some to be equal or superior to many National Parks. The City is completely surrounded by the Coconino National Forest (National Forest), and half the land within the City limits is National Forest. This fact, coupled with the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Forest Service) planning policies, which provide additional protection for these lands, creates a unique limit to the physical growth of the community.

Between 2000 and 2010, the City’s year-round population remained essentially the same according to the 2010 U.S. Census, although the population of part-time residents nearly doubled during that time, reflecting continuing growth. In combination with the large number of annual visitors and limited traffic circulation options, the community often seems considerably larger than the 10,000 or so full-time residents.

In 2015, Sedona experienced record visitation, hosting 2.8 million visitors throughout the year. Many of these visitors stayed for multiple days, and when these overnight stays are taken into consideration, there were 4.7 million visitor days attracted to the area. This represents a 6.1% increase from 2014 and a 10% increase from 2012.

Other unique aspects of Sedona are the high median age of 56, and that 48 percent of the population is younger than 55, which includes families, children, and youth. These factors are important to understand in evaluating the sustainability needs, policies, and practices that should guide tourism development and growth for the future of this destination.
II. Introduction

INTRODUCTION TO THE CRITERIA
Sustainable tourism is on the rise: consumer demand is growing, travel industry suppliers are developing new green programs, and governments as well as international agencies are creating new policies to encourage sustainable practices in tourism. But what does “sustainable tourism” really mean? How can it be measured and credibly demonstrated in order to build consumer confidence, promote business prosperity, foster community benefits, and fight false claims?

The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria are an effort to come to a common understanding of sustainable destinations, and are the minimum undertakings that any tourism management organization which wishes to be sustainable should aspire to reach. To satisfy the definition of sustainable tourism, destinations must take an interdisciplinary, holistic and integrative approach which includes four main objectives:

A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management

B: Maximize economic benefits to the host community and minimize negative impacts

C: Maximize benefits to communities, visitors, and culture; minimize negative impacts

D. Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts

The criteria and indicators were developed based on already recognized criteria and approaches including, for example, the UNWTO destination level indicators, GSTC Criteria for Hotels and Tour Operators, and other widely accepted principles and guidelines, certification criteria and indicators. They reflect certification standards, indicators, criteria, and best practices from different cultural and geo-political contexts around the world in tourism and other sectors where applicable. Potential indicators were screened for relevance and practicality, as well as their applicability to a broad range of destination types.

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II. Introduction

WHY THE GSTC ASSESSMENT?
The GSTC Criteria aim to address “sustainability” from a holistic perspective—reviewing overall governance, economic benefits to the destination, cultural and heritage preservation, incorporation into the destination experience, and environmental performance. These factors all lead to a positive investment climate, strong sense of place, and high quality of life for both residents and visitors in the destination.

The GSTC destination assessment is not an audit, and does not constitute any kind of verification or endorsement of the destination’s policies, practices, or status by GSTC. Rather, the objective of the assessment is to provide the destination an overview of current good practices and risk areas, a demonstration of practical application of the GSTC Criteria for Destinations for stakeholder capacity building purposes, and a tool for internal use to improve destination policy and practice to align with international best practice and the GSTC Criteria.

In selecting the GSTC Criteria as a guide for Sedona’s tourism development, the destination joins an elite group of forward-thinking destinations that are prioritizing international best practices. As Sedona follows steps to adopt all of the GSTC Criteria, the destination can better market itself to the world that it is adopting the world’s leading sustainability Criteria for tourism development.

Based on the GSTC assessment, the destination is entitled to make no claims of GSTC endorsement of the destination or its policies. However, it would be appropriate for the destination to market that it participated in the GSTC assessment, and is committed, if true, to adopting the world’s leading sustainability criteria for tourism development.

It is recommended that findings and recommendations resulting from this GSTC Assessment be used:
- To inform action destination sustainability planning and project work
- To catalyze decision maker support for destination sustainability agenda
- As a training and education tool
- For monitoring and evaluation of destination performance
III. Assessment Methodology

OVERVIEW

Chris Seek (the “GSTC Assessor”) conducted an onsite evaluation of Sedona from June 6-10, 2016. The Sedona Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau (referred to as “Sedona Chamber” throughout this report) coordinated the GSTC assessment, with guidance from the GSTC Assessor. The Sedona Chamber identified stakeholders for consultation, arranged stakeholder meetings and site visits, and collected policy documents in the areas covered by the GSTC Criteria, for GSTC analysis. Jennifer Wesselhoff, President/CEO, and Michelle Conway, Director of Marketing for the Sedona Chamber, and served as Destination Liaisons throughout this assessment.

The Assessment included a Global Sustainable Tourism Council Destination Program Introduction meeting with diverse public and private sector stakeholders responsible for the policy areas covered by the GSTC Criteria. This opening meeting introduced stakeholders to the GSTC, the Criteria for Destinations, and the process and goals of the assessment. The GSTC Assessor, in consultation with the Destination Liaisons, then conducted a review of the policy documents addressing the GSTC Criteria, to understand the current policy landscape and identify gaps in the areas of overall governance, economic and investment climate, cultural and heritage protection, and energy and environment. The GSTC Assessor also conducted site visits to ascertain evidence of policy implementation.
III. Assessment Methodology

SCORING
To track performance along each policy indicator in the GSTC Criteria, the Assessor reviewed each criterion, evidence provided, and scored each criterion according to the following four-tiered system:

0 = no documentation or implementation
1 = documentation exists (e.g. policy, systems)
2 = documentation and evidence to verify implementation exists
3 = evidence of documentation and implementation exists, and rises to the level of good practice
IV. Assessment Summary

Destination Assessment Scoring

- 0 = No Documentation or Implementation
- 1 = Documentation Exists
- 2 = Documentation + Implementation
- 3 = Evidence of Good Practice

- Destination Management: 9
- Social & Economic: 2
- Community & Culture: 6
- Environment: 3

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## IV. Assessment Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A. Sustainable Destination Management</th>
<th>B. Social and Economic</th>
<th>C. Community and Cultural</th>
<th>D. Environmental</th>
<th>Total # of Indicators</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0 - no documentation or implementation</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - documentation exists (e.g. policy, systems)</td>
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<td>3 - evidence of documentation and implementation exists, and rises to the level of good practice</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Number of Criteria Assessed</td>
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<td>9</td>
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V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Assessment & Criteria Defined
The following section introduces each criterion of the GSTC Destinations Criteria around the 4 major categories of sustainable tourism management

A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management

B: Maximize economic benefits to the host community and minimize negative impacts

C: Maximize benefits to communities, visitors, and culture; minimize negative impacts

D. Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts

For the purposes of this assessment there are 2 pages in this report related to each criteria. The first page defines the criterion and provides suggested indicators for measurement developed by the GSTC.

The second page for each criteria provides a summary of the criteria assessment for Sedona based on the documentation provided and criterion from the GSTC’s field assessment.
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management

**A1: Sustainable destination strategy:** The destination has established and is implementing a multi-year destination strategy that is publicly available, is suited to its scale, that considers environmental, cultural, quality, health, and safety, and aesthetic issues, and was developed with public participation.

Rationale:
Sustainable tourism benefits everyone involved—the destination, its residents, and the traveler. A strategic plan is essential to guide a destination’s vision for long-term sustainability and success.

**Suggested Indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN-A1a</th>
<th>Multi-year tourism strategy that includes a focus on sustainability and sustainable tourism and includes environmental, economic, social, cultural, quality, health and safety issues</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IN-A1b</td>
<td>Multi-year destination plan or strategy that is up-to-date and publicly available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-A1c</td>
<td>Multi-year destination plan or strategy that was developed with public participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-A1d</td>
<td>Political commitment to implement the multi-year destination plan and evidence of implementation</td>
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</table>
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

A1: Sustainable destination strategy

The destination of Sedona is fortunate to have a number of forward-thinking organizations and government agencies with their respective long term plans to guide their constituents and managed land.

Some of these long term plans were developed with the fundamental goal of sustainability—such as the Sedona Community plan, which is an expression of the community’s goals and policies for its future growth and development but isn’t completely focused on tourism. While these plans are strong and incorporate sustainability, the destination could benefit from a coordinated sustainable tourism strategy that incorporates all elements within the destination and inputs from environmental, economic, social, cultural, quality, health and safety issues within the tourism space.

In developing a comprehensive sustainable destination strategy, we recommend a similar public process that was followed for the Sedona Community Plan that involves all relevant tourism stakeholders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IN-A1a. Multi-year tourism strategy that includes a focus on sustainability and sustainable tourism and includes environmental, economic, social, cultural, quality, health and safety issues</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-A1b. Multi-year destination plan or strategy that is up-to-date and publicly available</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-A1c. Multi-year destination plan or strategy that was developed with public participation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-A1d. Political commitment to implement the multi-year destination plan and evidence of implementation</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Rating

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | N/A |

Documentation Provided:
- Sedona Community Plan
- The Coconino National Forest Plan (under revision)
- Recreation Strategy
- Sedona Chamber Annual Marketing Plan
- Sedona Chamber 5 Year Plan
- Airport Master Plan
- City Land Use / CFAs
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management

A2: Destination Management Organization: The destination has an effective organization, department, group or committee responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism, with involvement by the private sector and public sector. This group is suited to the size and scale of the destination, and has defined responsibilities, oversight, and implementation capability for the management of environmental, economic, social, and cultural issues. This group’s activities are appropriately funded.

Rationale:
Destination Management Organizations (DMO) are often the best advocates for the collaborative management of tourism in a place. In this role they can ensure the mitigation of tourism’s negative impacts to the environment and local communities. A DMO can help facilitate a dialogue among various groups and help avoid a duplication of efforts.

Suggested Indicators

IN-A2a. An organization has responsibility for a coordinated approach to the management of sustainable tourism

IN-A2b. The private sector and public sector are involved in the organization and coordination of tourism

IN-A3c. The tourism organization is suited to the size and scale of the destination

IN-A4d. Individuals within the tourism organization have assigned responsibilities for sustainable tourism

IN-A5e. The tourism organization is appropriately funded
### V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

#### Criteria Evaluation

**A2: Destination management organization**

The leadership of the Sedona Chamber has coordinated the tourism management and marketing of Sedona for many years. Their contract with the city of Sedona to conduct the destination marketing ensures regular dialogue with the city council and mayor’s office to address tourism issues and needs while leveraging public-private collaboration opportunities.

In addition, the Sedona Chamber Leadership Team is involved in various other destination management initiatives in the region to support sustainable tourism.

To improve upon its leadership as the coordinating body for destination management and marketing within the region, it is recommended that the Sedona Chamber appoint an individual within their organization with the responsibility for ensuring tourism is managed sustainably.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IN-A2a. An organization has responsibility for a coordinated approach to the management of sustainable tourism</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-A2b. The private sector and public sector are involved in the organization and coordination of tourism</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-A3c. The tourism organization is suited to the size and scale of the destination</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN-A4d. Individuals within the tourism organization have assigned responsibilities for sustainable tourism</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>IN-A5e. The tourism organization is appropriately funded</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</table>

**Documentation Provided:**
- Sedona Chamber By-laws & Board Policy Guidelines
- Sedona Chamber Organizational Chart
- Sedona Chamber Employee Policy & Procedures Manual
- FAA
- Community groups like Keep Sedona Beautiful
A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management

**A3: Monitoring**: The destination has a system to monitor, publicly report, and respond to environmental, economic, social, cultural, tourism, and human rights issues. The monitoring system is reviewed and evaluated periodically.

### Rationale:
Tourism markets and destinations are continuously changing. Monitoring is critical for managing change to help destination leaders understand the effects of tourism and identify where improvement is needed to enable their destination to remain competitive.

### Suggested Indicators

- IN-A3a. Active monitoring and public reporting of environmental, economic, social, cultural, tourism and human rights issues
- IN-A4b. Monitoring system is reviewed and evaluated periodically
- IN-A4c. Tourism impact mitigation procedures funded and active
Criteria Evaluation

A3: Monitoring

While there is monitoring taking place, various public agencies within Sedona are doing this in isolation (i.e. the Fire Department, USFS, etc.) and this information is not aggregated and shared with the Chamber to use for sustainable destination management.

As a best practice, it is recommended that an overarching and holistic monitoring system be designed and implemented for monitoring and reporting environmental, economic, social, and human rights issues as they pertain to sustainable tourism management. This system should be reviewed and evaluated periodically with the data utilized for tourism planning and decision making.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
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<tr>
<td>IN-A3a. Active monitoring and public reporting of environmental, economic, social, cultural, tourism and human rights issues</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-A4b. Monitoring system is reviewed and evaluated periodically</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN-A4c. Tourism impact mitigation procedures funded and active</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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Documentation Provided:
- The Coconino National Forest Plan
- USFS National Visitor Use Monitoring - every 5 years
- USFS Spot Monitoring on various trails/roads (internal)
- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Monitoring
- Oak Creek H2o Monitoring
- USFS Recreation Site Monitoring Report
- Sedona Fire Department Annual Reports
- Sedona Fire Department Report Management System for Hazardous Materials, events, etc.
- National Fire Protection Association/SFD - Firewise Program
- ICMA Metrics - City of Sedona [www.gstcouncil.org](http://www.gstcouncil.org)
A4: Tourism Seasonality Management: The destination dedicates resources to mitigate seasonal variability of tourism where appropriate, working to balance the needs of the local economy, community, cultures and environment, to identify year-round tourism opportunities.

Rationale:
The annual peaking of tourism activity during a few weeks or months during the year can result in inefficiencies within the industry and carrying capacity issues. A good understanding of seasonality in tourism is essential for its management and marketing along with the efficient operation of tourism facilities and infrastructure and to ensure that tourism provides a source of stable livelihoods for residents involved in its operation.

Suggested Indicators
IN-A4a. Specific strategy for marketing off-season events and attracting year-round visitors
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

A4: Tourism Seasonality Management

The engineering of a year-round destination, one which is relatively immune to changes in tourism flow due to climate and/or activity, demands careful definition of the tourism segments which make up the total destination proposition. To this end, many of Sedona's marketing efforts are designed to generate increased visitation during the off-season. According to the SCC&TB Marketing Plan, the #1 short-term goal in fiscal year 2017 is to increase visitor spending in Sedona with a focus on mid-week, off-peak seasons.

This will be achieved through various targeted marketing campaigns during the off-season, including the “Cooler by Nature” campaign to attract visitors in the Summer months (May – August), encourage those visiting the Grand Canyon to stay in Sedona, and targeting households from Sedona’s primary geographic markets to increase visitation during the winter season (November–February).

The Sedona Chamber has also created a product development committee and is prioritizing new product development specifically with the goal of attracting visitors during off-seasons, including the Festival of Lights and other events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
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<tr>
<td>IN-A4a. Specific strategy for marketing off-season events and attracting year-round visitors</td>
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Documentation Provided:
- Sedona Chamber Annual Marketing Plan
- Sedona Chamber Economic Reports
- USFS Seasonal Workforces (2) to meet FS needs
- Special Events

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A5: Climate Change Adaptation: The destination has a system to identify risks and opportunities associated with climate change. This system encourages climate change adaptation strategies for development, siting, design, and management of facilities. The system contributes to the sustainability and resilience of the destination and to public education on climate for both residents and tourists.

Rationale:
With tourism contributing to, suffering from and mitigating climate change, the sector must continuously address these issues for its own sustainability.

Suggested Indicators
IN-A5a. Current system for climate change adaptation and risk assessment
IN-A5b. Laws or policies to mitigate climate change and encourage technologies to mitigate climate change
IN-A5c. Program to educate and raise awareness among the public, tourism enterprises, and visitors about climate change
A5: Climate Change Adaptation

There are agencies with Climate Change Adaptation initiatives in place through their respective local and national offices. To improve upon climate change adaptation within Sedona, there should be more industry-led initiatives and participation (such as through sustainable certification programs).

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<tr>
<td>IN-A5a. Current system for climate change adaptation and risk assessment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-A5b. Laws or policies to mitigate climate change and encourage technologies to mitigate climate change</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN-A5c. Program to educate and raise awareness among the public, tourism enterprises, and visitors about climate change</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>3</td>
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</table>

Documentation Provided:
- USFS National Climate Change Plan
- NEPA
- National Fire Protection Association/SFD - Firewise Program
- Flood Mitigation
A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management

A6: Inventory of tourism assets and attractions: The destination has an up-to-date, publicly available inventory and assessment of its tourism assets and attractions, including natural and cultural sites.

**Rationale:**
The core of destination management and marketing is an inventory of existing and potential attractions that might draw tourists to a place. Effective tourism development provides visitors with authentic, high-quality experiences.

**Suggested Indicators**
IN-A6a. Current inventory and classification of tourism assets and attractions including natural and cultural sites
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

A6: Inventory of Tourism Assets and Attractions

Sedona has the following initiatives in place to maintain a current inventory of all tourism assets and attractions:

• In partnership with National Geographic, the Verde Valley Geotourism Program seeks to capture and promote the culture, heritage, and ecological diversity of the people and places within Sedona and the Verde Valley through nominating the unique and authentic assets and attractions within the destination. There are currently 328 sites nominated.

• The Red Rocks Recreation Guide was created by the USFS to highlight all the individual trails.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
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<tr>
<td>IN-A6a. Current inventory and classification of tourism assets and attractions including natural and cultural sites</td>
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|---|---|---|---|---|
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Documentation Provided:

• National Geographic Geotourism MapGuide
• Red Rocks Recreation Guide
• Deferred Maintenance Plan for Recreation Sites
• Sedona Chamber Inventory in Annual Marketing Plan
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management

A7: Planning Regulations: The destination has planning regulations and/or policies that require environmental, economic, and social impact assessment and integrate sustainable land use, design, construction, and demolition. The guidelines, regulations and/or policies are designed to protect natural and cultural resources, were created with local inputs from the public and a thorough review process, and are publicly communicated.

Rationale:
Managing tourism destinations through planning regulations is an important part of controlling tourism’s impacts to both the environment and host communities. Destination planning regulations can include land use planning, business permits and zoning controls, environmental and other regulations, business association initiatives, and a host of other techniques to shape the development and daily operation of tourism-related activities.

Suggested Indicators

IN-A7a. Planning or zoning guidelines, regulations and/or policies that protect natural and cultural resources
IN-A7b. Guidelines, regulations, and/or policies that address sustainable land use, design, construction, and demolition
IN-A7c. Planning guidelines, regulations, and/or policies were created with local inputs from the public and a thorough review process
IN-A7d. Planning guidelines, regulations, and/or policies are publicly communicated and are enforced
A7: Planning Regulations

In Sedona, strict building and design codes are commonplace. Sedona has employed strict code requirements since its incorporation in 1988, which have only strengthened throughout the years to protect the natural and cultural resources of this unique destination.

Sedona also requires that a strict range of colors be used including hues that match or complement the natural tones of Sedona. This is why the McDonald's on U.S. Highway 89 has teal arches instead of golden ones.

Indicators | Yes/No
---|---
IN-A7a. Planning or zoning guidelines, regulations and/or policies that protect natural and cultural resources | Yes
IN-A7b. Guidelines, regulations, and/or policies that address sustainable land use, design, construction, and demolition | Yes
IN-A7c. Planning guidelines, regulations, and/or policies were created with local inputs from the public and a thorough review process | Yes
IN-A7d. Planning guidelines, regulations, and/or policies are publicly communicated and are enforced | Yes

Rating

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<th>2</th>
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<th>N/A</th>
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</table>

Documentation Provided:
- Land Development Code City of Sedona
- CFAs
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- The National Forest Management Act (NFMA)
- The Coconino National Forest Plan
- National Historic Preservation Act
- Airports Capital Improvement Plan (ACIP) - Environmental Assessments
- Fire Code regulations/inspections
- National Fire Protection Association/SFD - Firewise
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management

A8: Access for All: Where appropriate, sites and facilities, including those of natural and cultural importance, are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities and others who have specific access requirements. Where such sites and facilities are not immediately accessible, access is afforded through the design and implementation of solutions that take into account both the integrity of the site and such reasonable accommodations for persons with access requirements as can be achieved.

Rationale:
Accessible Tourism, or ‘Tourism for All’, is making travel and tourism destinations, products, and information suitable for all those who have particular accessibility needs, including mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive dimensions of access, and even parents traveling with children. Even though accessible tourism is not a new concept, it has only recently been brought to the forefront as tour operators, businesses, and destinations are beginning to take notice to the increasing demand for accessibility and this important market.

Suggested Indicators

IN-A8a. Policies supporting access to tourist sites and facilities, including those of natural and cultural importance, for individuals with disabilities and others who have specific access requirements, where appropriate

IN-A8b. Accessibility solutions are designed to take into account the integrity of the site while making reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities
A8: Access for All

The City of Sedona has the desired goal to not only make City facilities Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant, but ADA friendly. Listed below are some of the projects the City has undertaken in recent years to improve access towards those with disabilities:

- Uptown Sidewalk Improvements
- City Building Improvements
- Miscellaneous Curb Ramps (throughout town)
- Posse Grounds Park ADA improvements
- Other park projects
- City Hall Improvements
- Posse Ground Sidewalk Project
- Shelby Drive sidewalk improvements

There are also a number of wheelchair accessible attractions and well-designed facilities available for visiting tourists, such as The Crescent Moon Ranch at Red Rock Crossing (part of the Coconino National Forest in Sedona, Arizona).

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Documentation Provided:

- Land Development Code City of Sedona
- Ordinance No. 2013-02 Amendment 10.20.060 - Parking areas reserved for the handicapped
- The Coconino National Forest Plan
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- FAA Guidelines
- Enforced with permitted companies
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management

A9: Property Acquisitions: Laws and regulations regarding property acquisitions exist, are enforced, comply with communal and indigenous rights, ensure public consultation, and do not authorize resettlement without prior informed consent and/or reasonable compensation.

Rationale:
Policies and legislation regarding property acquisitions can help ensure that important landscapes within a destination remain protected and alive with the spirit of the past. New strategies and actions to protect, enhance and interpret scenic, biological and cultural values will help sustain destinations for years to come.

Suggested Indicators

IN-A9a. Policy or legislation, including enforcement provisions, exist

IN-A9b. Policy or legislation that considers indigenous rights, ensures public consultation and authorizes resettlement only when there is informed consent and/or reasonable compensation
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

A9: Property Acquisitions

Amendment 12 was a modification to the 1987 Coconino National Forest Management Plan. The key aspects of the Amendment are designed to protect the area’s unique scenic and environmental qualities. Sedona recognizes the national and international importance of the Sedona/Oak Creek ecosystem. They respect the links between human activities and the natural world, and realize that the environment is a sensitive and limited living system in need of actions to sustain and enhance it. Per Amendment 12, they will not regard the area as a potential theme park for commercial exploitation at the expense of nature.

A key provision of Amendment 12 is a land exchange policy that allows disposal of National Forest lands in the planning area only if high-priority private lands can be acquired in the planning area. It also created 12 distinct management areas each with its own standards, guidelines, goals and objectives. National Forest lands impacted by the Amendment cover approximately 160,000 acres in the vicinity of Sedona, Arizona (including lands in two counties - Yavapai and Coconino).

Together with the Forest Service, it is recommended that the Sedona Chamber continue to identify the important areas within the destination and take actions to improve the stewardship of the land.

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<td>N/A</td>
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</table>

Documentation Provided:
- Amendment 12 Land Use Process
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management

A10: Visitor Satisfaction: The destination has a system to monitor and publicly report visitor satisfaction, and, if necessary, to take action to improve visitor satisfaction.

Rationale:
As a service-orientated industry, tourism operators and destinations must continually strive to meet the demands and expectations of visitors for quality tourism products, experiences and services. Visitor satisfaction is determined by a combination of perceived value and quality, consumer expectations and actual experience. A visitor’s overall satisfaction will influence the likelihood of repeat visitation, extended length of stay, increased expenditure, and word-of-mouth referrals.

Suggested Indicators

IN-A10a. Collection and public reporting of data on visitor satisfaction

IN-A10b. System to take action to improve visitor satisfaction based on monitoring information
A10: Visitor Satisfaction

Our review found the following programs in place to measure visitor satisfaction:

- The USFS conducts periodic surveys to measure visitor satisfaction with the RedRock Pass Program.
- The Sedona Chamber sends out monthly surveys to people who requested information to obtain feedback on their visit.
- The Sedona Chamber commissioned intercept surveys of visitors in the destination which included questions of visitor satisfaction.

The Sedona Chamber also has a process in place for reporting, registering and investigating formal complaints through both the website and tourism visitor centers.

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Documentation Provided:

- Sedona Chamber Survey
- Sedona Verde Valley Visitor Survey
- Sedona Chamber Visitor Profile Reports
- USFS National Visitor Use Monitoring - every 5 years
- USFS Visitor Center
- Sedona Chamber Visitor Center
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management

**A11: Sustainability Standards:** The destination has a system to promote sustainability standards for enterprises consistent with the GSTC Criteria. The destination makes publicly available a list of sustainability certified or verified enterprises.

**Rationale:**
Sustainability standards, which can be defined simply as ‘agreed ways of doing things’, have provided destinations and businesses with guidance to help establish and implement repeatable procedures to minimize environmental impacts, enhance benefits for communities, and operate more efficiently.

**Suggested Indicators**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>IN-A11a</th>
<th>Industry-supported sustainable tourism certification or environmental management system</th>
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<td>IN-A11b</td>
<td>Sustainable tourism certification or environmental management system recognized by the GSTC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-A11c</td>
<td>Monitoring of tourism business participation in tourism certification or environmental management system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-A11d</td>
<td>Publicly available list of sustainably certified or verified enterprises</td>
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</table>

www.gstcouncil.org
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

A11: Sustainability Standards

Arizona Green Lodging Program is currently the only sustainability standard program available to tourism businesses in Sedona. The Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association (AzHLA) in partnership with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) and the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) launched the state’s first “Certified Green Lodging” program in 2010, which streamlines the requirements for Arizona hotels to designate themselves as environmental stewards. A listing of certified hotels was found to be available through [www.stayinaz.com](http://www.stayinaz.com).

The AZ Sustainability Alliance has also begun their own certification program for sustainability. They are currently certifying businesses in the following industries: restaurants, hotels, groceries, realtors, retail and entertainment venues. In the fall of 2016 they will be releasing the list of certified businesses during the ‘soft launch’ and will begin soliciting more businesses to see if they qualify. These criteria are aligned with the The Natural Step System Conditions.

It is recommended that the Sedona Chamber do a better job of promoting either of these sustainability certification programs to businesses and also to travelers through the chamber’s marketing efforts.

### Indicators

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**Documentation Provided:**
- Arizona Green Lodging Program
- Sustainable Business Certification - Sustainability Alliance
- USFS Permit Issuance requires standard adherence
A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management

A12: Safety and Security: The destination has a system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, safety, and health hazards.

**Rationale:**
Perceived or real threats to visitor safety have immediate impacts on a destination's reputation and can dramatically affect visitation. If visitor health and safety is not well managed, adverse incidents can significantly impact the profitability and sustainability of an individual business, community or destination. If a visitor feels threatened or unsafe during a trip this may impact their length of stay and expenditure in a destination and decrease the likelihood of repeat visitation and word-of-mouth referrals.

**Suggested Indicators**

<table>
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<td>Ongoing compulsory inspections of fire, food hygiene, and electricity safety for tourism properties</td>
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<td>IN-A12b</td>
<td>Safety precautions such as first aid stations at beaches/tourist attraction sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-A12c</td>
<td>System to prevent and respond to crime</td>
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<td>IN-A12d</td>
<td>Taxi licensing system with clear pricing and an organized taxi dispatch system at points of visitor entry</td>
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<td>IN-A12e</td>
<td>Public reporting of safety and security</td>
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A12: Safety and Security

Sedona is considered a safe place to both visit and reside. Some of the main contributing factors to this are the institutions tasked with safety and security for the city. The agencies (including fire and police departments, airports, forest service, etc.) are responsible for the ongoing safety and security of tourists in the region and are operating at the highest levels of efficiency with individual management plans governing their actions.

As required by law, there are also clear guidelines for private companies (such as hot air balloon operators and the Pink Jeep tours) to ensure visitor safety. From our observations, private operators within the destination take safety and security very seriously.

One of the biggest risks to visitor safety are both the climate conditions and visitor behavior while exploring Sedona. This is something that everyone works together to address—through the Chamber of Commerce publications, the business community (through reminding guests to take plenty of water), and US Forest Service and Arizona State Parks (through signage, etc.) There are also volunteers at certain trailheads to remind visitors about hiking safety. These efforts help minimize the potential risk that visitor behavior can have on sustainability.

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<td>IN-A12e. Public reporting of safety and security</td>
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Rating

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Documentation Provided:
- Sedona Police Department - Unified Crime Report
- Sedona Fire Department - Fire Code Process/Regulations/Inspections
- USFS Fire Index / Fire Risk Assessment
- City Source App
- Airport Security Plan
- Airport Emergency Plan
- SIDA (FAA)
- Back country Medical response plan
- SFD Report Management System
A13: Crisis and Emergency Management: The destination has a crisis and emergency response plan that is appropriate to the destination. Key elements are communicated to residents, visitors, and enterprises. The plan establishes procedures and provides resources and training for staff, visitors, and residents, and is updated on a regular basis.

Rationale:
Whether natural or caused by people, disasters have been and will continue to be something that communities must deal with. Tourism destinations are especially vulnerable to disaster occurrences due to their economic dependence on visitors and the need to maintain a positive image of attractiveness and safety for continued success. To mitigate the negative impacts of such events, community leaders, local governments, and destination managers must have procedures in place for, during and after emergencies.

Suggested Indicators

IN-A13a. Publicly available crisis and emergency response plan that considers the tourism sector

IN-A13b. Financial and human capital to implement the crisis and emergency response plan

IN-A13c. Crisis and emergency response plan developed with input from the tourism private sector and includes communication procedures for during and after a crisis or emergency

IN-A13d. Crisis and emergency response plan provides resources and training for staff, visitors and residents

IN-A13e. Crisis and emergency response plan is updated on a regular basis
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

A13: Crisis and Emergency Management

In 2015 there was a forest fire that effected the Oak Creek Canyon region. This led to the various institutions coming together to develop a coordinated response to both that crisis and future events.

While it appears that each agency operating in Sedona has its own management plan for handling emergencies, these documents were not made available during the course of the assessment.

It is recommended that a crisis and emergency response plan be developed with inputs from all key agencies with consideration for the tourism sector. When a crisis occurs, this will ensure that the organizations and agencies operating throughout Sedona have clear guidance on how to mitigate the many related risks to visitors.

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<td>IN-A13b. Financial and human capital to implement the crisis and emergency response plan</td>
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<td>IN-A13c. Crisis and emergency response plan developed with input from the tourism private sector and includes communication procedures for during and after a crisis or emergency</td>
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<td>IN-A13d. Crisis and emergency response plan provides resources and training for staff, visitors and residents</td>
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<td>IN-A13e. Crisis and emergency response plan is updated on a regular basis</td>
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Documentation Provided:
- USFS - Oak Creek Canyon Flood Plan (Post-slide)
- Sedona Chamber Crisis Management Plan
- USFS Fire Management Plan
- Sedona Fire Department - Crisis Management Plan
- Siren System
- Sensors for rainfall
- Cell phone enhancements in Canyons
- Airport Emergency Plan
- Fire Service Aviation Agreements
- SFD Organizational Standard Operational Plan
- Mutual Aid Agreements
- County Emergency Management Agency Plan
A: Demonstrate sustainable destination management

A14: Promotion: Promotion is accurate with regard to the destination and its products, services, and sustainability claims. The promotional messages treat local communities and tourists authentically and respectfully.

**Rationale:**
Designing the right branding for the destination and its positioning in the market are key requirements to attracting target markets to a destination. Competition among travel locales is intense and a destination must find a way to differentiate itself among its closest competitors while staying true and authentic to their brand.

Additionally, truth in advertising is paramount. Destinations must be accurate in marketing and not promise more than they can deliver, so that the tourism product will meet visitor expectations, and visitors will be satisfied with the destination experience.

**Suggested Indicators**

IN-A14a. Destination promotional messages that represent local communities and visitors authentically and respectfully

IN-A14b. Destination promotional messages that are accurate in their description of products and services
A14: Promotion

The Sedona Chamber has done a tremendous job with promoting their destination. The “Sedona Secret 7”, a social media and digital campaign launched in winter 2016, identified seven different categories of under-the-radar sites in Sedona so visitors can experience the area like a local. Due to its creativity, this campaign was recently awarded nearly $100,000 in in-kind marketing dollars from the Arizona Office of Tourism (through their “Grand Pitch” contest).

The Chamber of Commerce has a very strong partnership with its private sector members and is regularly providing opportunities to promote the destination. The Chamber also works very closely with its neighbors to promote the region of the Sedona Verde Valley.

Sedona Chamber has annual marketing plans that utilize best practices in Destination Marketing and have been accredited by DMAI which is evidence of their best practices in this area.

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<td>IN-A14b. Destination promotional messages that are accurate in their description of products and services</td>
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Documentation Provided:
- Sedona Chamber Annual Marketing Plan
- Sedona Chamber Website, Ads, and Visitor Guide
- Sedona Brand Style Guide
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

**B: Maximize Economic Benefits to the Host Community and Minimize Negative Impacts**

**B1: Economic Monitoring:** The direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism to the destination’s economy is monitored and publicly reported at least annually. To the extent feasible, this should include visitor expenditure, revenue per available room, employment and investment data.

**Rationale:**
By monitoring tourism’s economic impact, policy makers can make informed decisions regarding the funding and prioritization of tourism development. Economic data can also help to monitor the industry’s overall successes and future needs.

**Suggested Indicators**

IN-B1a. Regular monitoring and reporting of visitor expenditure data, revenue per available room, employment and investment data

IN-B1b. Regular monitoring and reporting at least annually of direct and indirect contributions of tourism

IN-B1c. Collection and public reporting at least annually of tourism-related employment data, disaggregated by gender and age group
B1: Economic Monitoring

The City of Sedona has a partnership with Smith Travel Research and regularly reports bed and sales tax revenues through information derived from tax returns.

The Sedona Chamber has a partnership with the Yavapai college (who conducts periodic Economic Impact studies) and regularly reports lodging metrics on a macro level. From these statistics, the Sedona Chamber has been able to ascertain that, on average, for every $1 spent on lodging, $4 is spent in the community. Similar valuable metrics and year-over-year comparisons evaluating the performance of Sedona’s tourism industry are also made publicly available through the Sedona Chamber’s Annual Report.

Sedona should consider producing an annual tourism economic impact study that would utilize the data collected by the Sedona Chamber and the city. This would not only publicize the direct economic benefits of tourism but also identify the Tourism Income Multiplier to determine the indirect contributions of tourism to the local economy. Indirect contribution would measure how the tourism dollars created in the community are then circulated through the community’s economy (construction, materials, goods and services, etc).

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<td>IN-B1b. Regular monitoring and reporting at least annually of direct and indirect contributions of tourism</td>
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Documentation Provided:
- Sedona Chamber Annual Report & Quarterly Reports to City Council
- Sedona Visitor Profile Reports
- Sedona Verde Valley Visitor Survey 2014-2015
- Yavapai College - Sedona Lodging Sector Compensation Report 2015
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

B: Maximize Economic Benefits to the Host Community and Minimize Negative Impacts

B2: Local Career Opportunities: The destination’s enterprises provide equal employment, training opportunities, occupational safety, and fair wages for all.

**Rationale:**
The travel and tourism industry is one of the largest and most dynamic industries in today’s global economy—supporting 10% of all economic activity on the planet and 8% of global employment. It is also a labor-intensive industry that does not require significant technical skills or major capital investment. To ensure tourism continues to have a positive impact on its host community, it is imperative that tourism businesses provide equal employment, training opportunities, occupational safety and fair wages for all.

**Suggested Indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN-B2a</th>
<th>Legislation or policies supporting equal opportunities in employment for all, including women, youth, disabled people, minorities, and other vulnerable populations</th>
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<tr>
<td>IN-B2b</td>
<td>Training programs that provide equal access to all, including women, youth, disabled people, minorities, and other vulnerable populations</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN-B2c</td>
<td>Legislation or policies supporting occupational safety for all</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN-B2d</td>
<td>Legislation or policies supporting fair wages for all, including women, youth, disabled people, minorities, and other vulnerable populations</td>
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Criteria Evaluation

B2: Local Career Opportunities

Existing practices in the City of Sedona reflect a commitment to non-discriminatory practices and fair treatment among and toward its residents, visitors, and employees. The recently adopted Human Rights Ordinance (NO. 2015-10) demonstrates that the City is taking further measures to protect the equality, dignity, personal and religious expression rights, privacy rights, and interests of all parties involved to the maximum extent possible, and to provide mechanisms for balancing these rights.

As the tourism industry is a major economic driver of the community, there are many residents employed by the sector. A strong relationship exists between the community and Yavapai College, which provides a variety of certificate programs within the Hospitality Industry.

Another priority for the City Government and Chamber is to find ways to have more affordable housing in the region so that more people who work in the industry can afford to live in close proximity to the City.

Indicators Yes/No

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Documentation Provided:
- Human rights ordinance
- Airport Management Plan
- Sedona Chamber Employee Policy & Procedures Manual
- Sedona Chamber- Sedona Information Training
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

B: Maximize Economic Benefits to the Host Community and Minimize Negative Impacts

B3: Public Participation: The destination has a system that encourages public participation in destination planning and decision making on an ongoing basis.

Rationale:
Public participation is critical to destination planning and decision making for three reasons: (1) Citizens, as taxpayers, are economic partners in tourism development and as such have a right to participate in the decision making process. (2) Investors in the tourism sector can avoid problems and mistakes that can be very costly to themselves and the industry in general through public collaboration and decision making. (3) There is the moral obligation to consult those who have traditionally utilized the resources available in the environment to be developed and who may suffer the consequences of lack of access, resource deprivation or resource degradation through tourism.

Suggested Indicators
IN-B3a. System for involving public, private and community stakeholders in destination management planning and decision making
IN-B3b. Public meeting(s) to discuss destination management issues each year
Criteria Evaluation

B3: Public Participation

Individually, the various agencies within the community are doing a great job of involving the public in the development of their management plans and decision making. The Chamber is also actively involved in various committees and organizations working towards economic development and conservation in the community.

When the Chamber is proposing new product development ideas and events, there is community participation (as needed) and proactive measures are taken to ensure there is input and feedback on decisions impacting the greater community. In a general sense, the public has the opportunity to go to the Chamber of Commerce to voice their concerns and know they will be heard.

This public participation is on an as-needed basis and there is currently not a systematic or regular process for discussing tourism impacts to the community. We encourage tapping into the strong civic engagement of the community and have residents become more involved in destination management issues through a systematic process.

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Documentation Provided:
- USFS Scoping documents
- Fire Board Public Meetings (posted to YouTube)
- City of Sedona Ordinance No 2013-12 Section 1 - Adoptions of City Code Chapter 2.100, Citizen engagement, public participation, and community collaboration
- Sedona Chamber Stakeholder Relationship Management Plans
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

B: Maximize Economic Benefits to the Host Community and Minimize Negative Impacts

B4: Local Community Opinion: Local communities’ aspirations, concerns, and satisfaction with destination management are regularly monitored, recorded and publicly reported in a timely manner.

**Rationale:**
When done correctly, tourism provides opportunities to generate wealth and conserve natural and cultural resources that might otherwise be destroyed or lost. Tourism can also evoke a sense of pride in local culture. The local population, however, can suffer at the hands of tourist encroachment and the opinions of local community members should therefore be closely monitored.

**Suggested Indicators**

IN-B4a. Regular collection, monitoring, recording, and public reporting of data on resident aspirations, concerns and satisfaction with destination management

IN-B5b. Collection, monitoring, recording and public recording of data occurs in a timely manner
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

B4: Local Community Opinion

Through our meetings with the Sedona Chamber, it was clear that local community opinion is valued but is not currently being monitored or recorded on a regular basis. Among Destination Managers, there also appears to be a true understanding of the importance of striking a balance between creating a great place to live and attracting more visitors. While the Sedona Community Plan provided a forum for collecting the local community’s opinion, aspirations, and concerns, it needs to continue on an on-going process.

An initial study of residents was conducted in 1991 and 2001 (by Dr. Mark Pritchard of Central Washington University) that looks at positive and negative impacts of tourism. This professor has made a proposal to continue this research, but funding limitations have made this not possible thus far.

Once a resident survey provides baseline information on attitudes, the DMO can then monitor and manage those perceptions by influencing the tourism development. The very same community research can also serve to educate the community not only about tourism benefits and risks, but inspire them to take pride in the community and hosting visitors.

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<td>IN-B4a. Regular collection, monitoring, recording, and public reporting of data on resident aspirations, concerns and satisfaction with destination management</td>
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Documentation Provided:
- Sedona Community Plan
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

B: Maximize Economic Benefits to the Host Community and Minimize Negative Impacts

**B5: Local Access:** The destination monitors, protects, and when necessary rehabilitates or restores local community access to natural and cultural sites.

**Rationale:**
Many natural and cultural sites are subject to growing visitation. Maintaining such sites requires adequate practices to guarantee environmentally sound management and protections of the sites and at the same time ensuring that local communities benefit and have access to these attractions.

**Suggested Indicators**
- IN-B5a. Programs to monitor, protect, and rehabilitate or restore public access by locals and domestic visitors to natural and cultural sites
- IN-B5b. Monitoring of behaviour and characteristics of local, domestic and foreign visitors to tourist sites and attractions
B5: Local Access

The USFS has prioritized public access to Sedona’s trails and wilderness areas. More than 1 million people enjoy the Red Rock Trails each year and there are more than 250 miles of public trails surrounding Sedona and the Village of Oak Creek.

In addition, recreation opportunities within the Red Rock Ranger District in the Coconino National Forest include over 160,000 acres of campgrounds, trails, restrooms facilities, wilderness areas, boating/fishing sites, scenic drives, picnic areas and archeology sites.

Even when private development or land acquisition takes place, the USFS takes great strides to ensure public access is maintained for these public lands.

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Documentation Provided:

- Public Access negotiated with new private development and trail adoptions
- USFS 2012 Trails Planning Document
- USFS Travel Management Regulations
B: Maximize Economic Benefits to the Host Community and Minimize Negative Impacts

B6: Tourism Awareness and Education: The destination provides regular programs to affected communities to enhance their understanding of the opportunities and challenges of tourism, and the importance of sustainability.

**Rationale:**
Tourism is one of the world's largest employers and yet many communities are unsure of the benefits of the industry. The economic benefits are often the easiest to measure and the most effective, however the social and environmental benefits of tourism including protection of natural and cultural assets, supporting local events and cultural practices and provision of services and public facilities should not be overlooked. For this reason, effective destination managers should regularly engage in education and advocacy of the benefits of tourism with local influencers and key community stakeholders.

**Suggested Indicators**
IN-B6a. Program to raise awareness of tourism’s role and potential contribution held in communities, schools, and higher education institutions
B6: Tourism Awareness and Education

A strong relationship currently exists between the Sedona Chamber and Yavapai College as well as Northern Arizona University. Both educational institutions have tourism programs and strong relationships within Sedona’s tourism industry.

At the high school level, there are several programs in place to give students exposure to tourism products to help them understand tourism’s role in the communities.

To encourage a stronger connection between local high schools and the Sedona Chamber, it is recommended that tourism be introduced as a career path (with opportunities for upward mobility) as opposed to just an opportunity for part-time employment. One model to consider is the Global Travel & Tourism Partnership Passport to the World Program that could be applied to the new Yavapai College Tourism and Hospitality school to be built in Sedona.

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Documentation Provided:
- USFS Leave no Trace Programs
- Red Rocks Visitor Center
- Wilderness Rangers
- OCC Ambassadors
B: Maximize Economic Benefits to the Host Community and Minimize Negative Impacts

B7: Preventing Exploitation: The destination has laws and established practices to prevent commercial, sexual, or any other form of exploitation and harassment of anyone, particularly of children, adolescents, women, and minorities. The laws and established practices are publicly communicated.

Rationale:
Inequalities can be deeply entrenched in some societies, including within the tourism sector. Combating exploitation and harassment in the tourism industry is an ongoing struggle that requires concerted efforts and partnerships between all relevant stakeholders.

Suggested Indicators
IN-B7a. Laws and a program to prevent commercial, sexual, or any other form of exploitation, discrimination or harassment of residents or visitors
IN-B7b. Laws and programs are publicly communicated
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

B7: Preventing Exploitation

In 2015, the Sedona City Council voted unanimously to adopt a non-discrimination ordinance (No. 2015-10) that protects LGBT residents and visitors from discrimination at home, at work and in public spaces. This ordinance ensures that all people will be protected equally from discrimination whether they are long-time residents or just visiting Sedona for the weekend.

This ordinance, along with other existing laws and programs to prevent exploitation, discrimination and harassment communicates that Sedona is open to all people.

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Documentation Provided:
- City of Sedona Ordinance No. 2015-10 - Amending Code Title 9 - (Public Peace, Morals, and Welfare) by adding chapter 9.30 (Human Rights)
B: Maximize Economic Benefits to the Host Community and Minimize Negative Impacts

B8: Support for Community: The destination has a system to enable and encourage enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute to community and sustainability initiatives.

**Rationale:**
Around the world, local communities are key stewards of the natural and cultural places vital to their local tourism industry. Enabling and encouraging communities to sustainably use and protect these resources is critical for their sustainability.

**Suggested Indicators**
IN-B8a. Programs for enterprises, visitors, and the public to contribute donations to community and biodiversity conservation initiatives and/or infrastructure development.
Criteria Evaluation

B8: Support for Community

The following programs are in place that allow enterprises, visitors and the public to contribute time or money to community and biodiversity conservation within Sedona:

1) Sedona Red Rock Trail Fund – a volunteer coalition of hikers, bikers, equestrians and outdoor enthusiasts working to protect the Red Rock Trails in partnership with the USFS. Donations are solicited from both individuals and organizations to fund their programs.

2) Sedona Trail Keepers program – The Sedona Chamber in conjunction with the City of Sedona, the US Forest Service and the local business community has developed the Sedona Trail Keepers program to encourage businesses to sponsor a trail by financially committing to sustain and maintain existing trails. The sponsorship will also assist in the development of new trails in the USFS Red Rock Ranger District. The goal is for each sponsor to commit $1000 per year for five years for a total of $5000.

3) USFS Trail Funding: Hiking Book – the concept behind this program is to create a product that can be sold with the proceeds donated to USFS. A Hiking Book (currently under development) will retail for $8.00, with $5.50 donated to the USFS for the maintenance and development of trails.

4) One for the Verde – originally a project of Verde Valley Land Preservation, is continuing to grow under the roof of Friends of the Verde River Greenway with operational funding from the Walton Family Foundation. They are working in collaboration with organizations, businesses, municipalities, and individuals across the Verde Valley to restore and preserve the Verde River.

In addition to these programs, there are a number of opportunities for individuals to volunteer in the region.

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<tr>
<td>donations to community and biodiversity conservation initiatives and/or</td>
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<td>infrastructure development</td>
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Documentation Provided:

- Red Rocks Trail Fund
- Sedona Friends of the Forest
- Enchantment Resort - Boynton Canyon Foundation
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

B: Maximize Economic Benefits to the Host Community and Minimize Negative Impacts

B9: Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade: The destination has a system that supports local and small- and medium-sized enterprises, and promotes and develops local sustainable products and fair trade principles that are based on the area’s nature and culture. These may include food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.

Rationale:
Destinations that include local businesses, service providers and farms within their value chains continue to strengthen the economic base of the community. Local businesses are also owned by people who live within the community and are more invested in the destination’s future.

Suggested Indicators
IN-B9a. Program to support and build capacity of local and small- and medium-sized enterprises
IN-B9b. Program encourages enterprises to purchase goods and services locally
IN-B9c. Program to promote and develop local sustainable products based on local nature and culture
IN-B9d. Program to include local artisans, farmers, and suppliers in the tourism value chain
Criteria Evaluation

**B9: Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade**
The Sedona Chamber encourages both residents and visitors to think local, shop local and buy local through a campaign that provides coupons and offers from local businesses. Their 2016 coupon book (the “2016 Superpass”) includes over $5,000 in savings from local merchants throughout the Greater Sedona Area.

The Verde Valley Regional Economic Organization (VVREO) has also developed a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to assist small and emerging businesses in the region. The program’s goal is business growth, retention, and job creation, and offers borrowers lower interest rates, long-term fixed rate financing, lower down payment requirements, and enhanced private lender risk.

By embracing a sustainability certification program for area businesses, the Sedona Chamber would help businesses think about where they source their business inputs thus creating new demand for local and sustainably produced products.

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<td>IN-B9c. Program to promote and develop local sustainable products based on local nature and culture</td>
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<td>IN-B9d. Program to include local artisans, farmers, and suppliers in the tourism value chain</td>
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**Documentation Provided:**
- City’s Economic Development Plan
- VVREO - USDA Grant/Revolving Loan Fund
- USFS outfitter guide program
- Sedona Chamber Shop Local Campaign
C: Maximize Benefits to Communities, Visitors and Culture; Minimize Negative Impacts

**C1: Attraction Protection:** The destination has a policy and system to evaluate, rehabilitate, and conserve natural and cultural sites, including built heritage (historic and archaeological) and rural and urban scenic views.

**Rationale:**
The development of cultural, natural and/or protected areas for tourism requires a careful balance between providing adequate visitor experiences and services, protecting the ecological and cultural values of the area and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the site.

**Suggested Indicators**

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<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>IN-C1a</td>
<td>Management system to protect natural and cultural sites, including build heritage and rural and urban scenic views</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN-C1b</td>
<td>Management systems to monitor, measure and mitigate tourism impacts on sites and attractions</td>
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Criteria Evaluation

C1: Attraction Protection

The zoning codes and development regulations within Sedona are some of the strongest in America. These were put in place to ensure any development happens in a harmonious way with the natural environment and blends into the natural landscape of desert and red rock.

To protect the region’s attractions, the USFS maintains an up-to-date Maintenance Plan of Cultural and Recreation Sites.

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Documentation Provided:

- USFS Deferred Maintenance of Cultural & Recreation Sites
C: Maximize Benefits to Communities, Visitors and Culture; Minimize Negative Impacts

C2: Visitor Management: The destination has a visitor management system for attraction sites that includes measures to preserve, protect, and enhance natural and cultural assets.

Rationale:
Visitor management plays an essential role in protecting the sustainability of natural and cultural areas by providing funding and business opportunities through tourism and ensuring visitors can obtain a worthwhile experience from their visit by taking measures to limit over-visitation.

Suggested Indicators
IN-C2a. Administrative mechanism responsible for implementing visitor management plans and operations
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

C2: Visitor Management

The major attractions of Sedona include land under management by the USFS and the State Parks, each of which have strong visitor management plans. Even the more popular and potentially congested attractions (such as Slide Rock) have limitations for parking to limit overcrowding. To more effectively spread tourism visitation, the Sedona Chamber limits their targeted promotion of the most visited sites in the region and focuses efforts to raise awareness and increase visitation to the lesser known attractions.

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<td>IN-C2a. Administrative mechanism responsible for implementing visitor management plans and operations</td>
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**Documentation Provided:**
- The Coconino National Forest Plan
- Outfitter and guide permits
- Parking Management Plans
C: Maximize Benefits to Communities, Visitors and Culture; Minimize Negative Impacts

C3: Visitor Behavior: The destination has published and provided guidelines for proper visitor behavior at sensitive sites. Such guidelines are designed to minimize adverse impacts on sensitive sites and strengthen positive visitor behaviors.

Rationale: Published guidelines and codes of conduct for visitors and tour guides aim to influence tourists’ behavior in a more responsible way and are an effective tool in preventing or reducing negative impacts caused by tourism.

Suggested Indicators

IN-C3a. Cultural and environmental guidelines for visitor behaviour in sensitive sites

IN-C3b. Code of practice for tour guides and tour operators
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

C3: Visitor Behavior

Through their interpretive information available regarding visiting the trails, the USFS publishes information for visitors encouraging them to follow their “Leave no Trace” principles:
   1) Plan ahead and prepare
   2) Travel and camp on durable surfaces
   3) Dispose of waste properly
   4) Leave what you find
   5) Minimize campfire impacts
   6) Respect wildlife
   7) Be considerate of other visitors

Volunteers are stationed at the trailheads and trained through the USFS Volunteer Management Plans to tell people how to behave.

USFS also provides training to Guides and Outfitters taking visitors into these areas to help them manage their impact.

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<td>IN-C3a. Cultural and environmental guidelines for visitor behavior in sensitive sites</td>
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<td>IN-C3b. Code of practice for tour guides and tour operators</td>
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Documentation Provided:
- Leave no Trace Signage at trailheads
- Volunteer Management Plans
- USFS Outfitter Training Program
**V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment**

C: Maximize Benefits to Communities, Visitors and Culture; Minimize Negative Impacts

**C4: Cultural Heritage Protection**: The destination has laws governing the proper sale, trade, display, or gifting of historical and archaeological artifacts.

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<th><strong>Rationale:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Suggested Indicators</strong></th>
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| Cultural heritage refers to the cultural aspects like heritage sites, monuments, folklore, traditional activities, languages, and practices that are considered vital to be preserved for future generations. Cultural heritage protection is essential for sustainable destination management as it gives people a connection to certain social values and beliefs and allows us to better understand and identify with the history of previous generations. | IN-C4a. Laws or regulations to protect historical and archaeological artifacts including those located under water, and evidence of their enforcement  
IN-C4b. Program to protect and celebrate intangible cultural heritage (e.g. includes song, music, drama, skills and crafts) |
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

C4: Cultural Heritage Protection

As part of the City Government of Sedona, the Historic Preservation Commission conducts hearings relative to the identification and preservation of landmarks representing distinctive elements of Sedona's historic, archeological, and cultural heritage, to promote the use of historic landmarks for education, pleasure and welfare of the people of Sedona, to foster civic pride in the accomplishments of the past, to stabilize and improve property values of rehabilitated and protected sites, to provide incentives for restoration by owners of landmarks or historic properties, and to provide standards for restoration of landmarks and new construction within historic districts; all in accordance with the recommendations set forth in the Sedona Community Plan.

Other initiatives exist within Sedona to promote the region's cultural heritage, such as the Cowboy Artists of America – a group with the goal to perpetuate the memory and culture of the Old West through art. The Sedona Heritage Museum along with the Sedona Historical Society, are also working with the community to preserve the ever-growing history and cultural heritage of Sedona.

Laws such as the USFS Antiquities Act and USFS National Preservation Act protect the area's unique scenic and environmental qualities.

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Documentation Provided:
- USFS Antiquities Act
- USFS National Preservation Act
C: Maximize Benefits to Communities, Visitors and Culture; Minimize Negative Impacts

C5: Site Interpretation: Accurate interpretive information is provided at natural and cultural sites. The information is culturally appropriate, developed with community collaboration, and communicated in languages pertinent to visitors.

**Rationale:**
As visitor demand has increasingly focused on the provision of tourism experiences rather than products, the importance of interpretation and education has risen. The interpretation of tourism attractions, products, stories and history is an important part of providing a positive visitor experience as well as an education tool. Interpretation and education can be achieved through a range of methods including informative brochures, guided or self-guided tours, interactive displays, signage, media displays, audio information or interpretive information boards.

**Suggested Indicators**

IN-C5a. Interpretive information available to visitors in tourist offices and at natural and cultural sites

IN-C5b. Interpretive information is culturally appropriate

IN-C5c. Interpretive information is developed with community collaboration

IN-C5d. Interpretive information is available in languages pertinent to visitors

IN-C5e. Tour guide training in the use of interpretive information
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

C5: Site Interpretation

Natural resource-based travel and tourism provides a window through which an increasingly urban society can enjoy and appreciate the natural world. The USFS is a leader in developing and distributing interpretive materials for the nation’s recreational areas, including those prominent to the tourism industry around Sedona.

As part of the USFS’s “Recreation Agenda”, the agency is expanding opportunities for community input into forest planning. In order to ensure quality recreation experiences for the guided public, the Forest Service also requires that any commercial outfitter/guides operating on the National Forest have a permit.

To further ensure the community is involved, the Sedona Chamber has also recently partnered with local residents to develop a interpretive guide to hiking in Sedona that will be sold as a fundraiser.

As more and more international visitors are coming to Sedona, it is recommended that the interpretive information made available be translated into more languages as needed.

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<td>IN-C5c. Interpretive information is developed with community collaboration</td>
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<td>IN-C5d. Interpretive information is available in languages pertinent to visitors</td>
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<td>IN-C5e. Tour guide training in the use of interpretive information</td>
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Documentation Provided:
- USFS Signage & Interpretation materials - need translation into more languages
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

C: Maximize Benefits to Communities, Visitors and Culture; Minimize Negative Impacts

C6: Intellectual Property: The destination has a system to contribute to the protection and preservation of intellectual property rights of communities and individuals.

Rationale:
The various tools of the intellectual property system which prevent unauthorized third parties from exploiting the use of a brand, certification labels or trademarks are amply useful for the tourism sector. These often widely recognized and respected marks allow individual establishments to effectively compete and differentiate themselves in a highly competitive service market.

Suggested Indicators

IN-C6a. Laws, regulations or programs to protect intellectual property rights of local individuals and communities
C6: Intellectual Property

United States Copyright laws protecting intellectual property are governed by the Copyright Act of 1976 and are some of the strongest in the world. These laws are adhered to by those within the tourism industry to protect intellectual property rights of local individuals and communities within Sedona.

Relevant to the tourism industry, the Copyright Law of the United States tries to encourage the creation of art and culture by rewarding authors and artists with a set of exclusive rights. Copyright law grants authors and artists the exclusive right to make and sell copies of their works, the right to create derivative works, and the right to perform or display their works publicly.

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Documentation Provided:
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

D: Maximize Benefits to Environment and Minimize Negative Impacts

D1: Environmental Risks: The destination has identified environmental risks and has a system in place to address them.

Rationale:
Sustainable tourism has the potential to not only mitigate the potentially harmful impacts of visitation to natural areas, but can also act as a powerful tool to support conservation of the ecosystems upon which it depends. The key to harmoniously aligning tourism development with conservation begins with a comprehensive understanding of the direct and indirect threats to biodiversity at a site, with a focus on the human socio-economic conditions that often lead to environmental degradation such as lack of economic alternatives, awareness, and industry standards.

Suggested Indicators
IN-D1a. Sustainability assessment of the destination within the last five years, identifying environmental risks
IN-D1b. System in place to address identified risks
D1: Environmental Risks

In Sedona, the USFS along with the Sedona Fire Department both recognize that wildfires are among the greatest risks to the environment and have plans in place to monitor and manage the risks associated with them. As the designated land stewards, the USFS and Arizona States Parks system take proactive and coordinated measures to mitigate these risks.

In the Spring of 2016, the city of Sedona Volunteer Park Rangers began to warn visitors in Uptown Sedona about the critical topic of wildland fire danger. On days when the National Weather Service issues a Red Flag Warning for Sedona and the surrounding forest, the Volunteer Park Rangers wear “Red Flag Warning Today” buttons to educate the public of the potential for a fire and the steps needed to prevent one.

A Red Flag Warning is issued when there is a combination of low humidity, winds averaging 15 mph or more, temperatures greater than 75 degrees, and very dry conditions – all of which could lead to catastrophic wildfire activity. The staff and volunteers at the Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center in Uptown Sedona have also joined the effort. Between the Visitor Center and the Volunteer Park Rangers walking in Uptown Sedona every day, it is hoped that they will reach as many visitors as possible.

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<td>IN-D1b. System in place to address identified risks</td>
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Documentation Provided:
- Sedona Fire Department Risk Management
- USFS Heat Stress
- Hazmat Incident Plan
- ADEQ
- Counties response plan

www.gstcouncil.org
D: Maximize Benefits to Environment and Minimize Negative Impacts

D2: Protection of Sensitive Environments: The destination has a system to monitor the environmental impact of tourism, conserve habitats, species, and ecosystems, and prevent the introduction of invasive species.

Rationale:
In maximizing the benefits to the environment, tourism has a role to play through contributing directly to the conservation of sensitive areas and habitat. Revenue from park-entrance fees and similar sources can be allocated specifically to pay for the protection and management of environmentally sensitive areas. Special fees for park operations or conservation activities can be collected from tourists or tour operators.

Suggested Indicators

IN-D2a. Maintained and updated inventory of sensitive and threatened wildlife and habitats

IN-D2b. Management system to monitor impacts and to protect ecosystems, sensitive environments, and species

IN-D2c. System prevents the introduction of invasive species
D2: Protection of Sensitive Environments

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a strategic framework and monitoring system for invasive species management. The goal of the USDA Forest Service invasive species program is to reduce, minimize, or eliminate the potential for introduction, establishment, spread, and impact of invasive species across all landscapes and ownerships.

The Chief of the USDA Forest Service has identified invasive species as one of the four critical threats to the Nation’s ecosystems. In response to this national threat, they have evaluated the role of the Forest Service (active in Sedona) as a leading forest research, forest health, and Federal resource management agency.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department also uses their strategic plan to guide wildlife programs, including an inventory the more than 800 bird, reptile and mammal species native to the state – with special attention and programs for sensitive and threatened wildlife and habitats.

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<tr>
<td>IN-D2a. Maintained and updated inventory of sensitive and threatened wildlife and habitats</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>IN-D2b. Management system to monitor impacts and to protect ecosystems, sensitive environments, and species</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN-D2c. System prevents the introduction of invasive species</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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Documentation Provided:
- The Coconino National Forest Plan
- Outfitter and guide permits
- Arizona Game and Fish Department’s Strategic Plan
D: Maximize Benefits to Environment and Minimize Negative Impacts

D3: Wildlife Protection: The destination has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards for the harvest or capture, display, and sale of wildlife (including plants and animals).

**Rationale:**
The protection and presence of wildlife opens the possibility of a thriving tourism industry. Today the wildlife tourism industry spans the globe and generates billions of dollars of revenue, while also providing an economic incentive for wildlife and habitat conservation.

**Suggested Indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN-D3a</th>
<th>Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IN-D3b</td>
<td>Regulations and standards for controlling harvesting or capture, display, sale, of plants and animals</td>
</tr>
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</table>
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

D3: Wildlife Protection

The Arizona Game and Fish Department ensures that regulations and standards are in place and enforced regarding controlling the harvesting or capture, display, and sale of plants and animals. They also recently developed HabiMap™ Arizona, an innovative new tool that utilizes the latest mapping technology to provide wildlife data to help conservation partners make informed planning decisions that consider wildlife’s needs. This user-friendly, web-based data viewer also makes the information contained within the State Wildlife Action Plan available to anyone interested in Arizona’s wildlife.

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<td>IN-D3b. Regulations and standards for controlling harvesting or capture, display, sale, of plants and animals</td>
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</table>

Documentation Provided:
- The Coconino National Forest Plan
- Arizona Game and Fish Department’s Strategic Plan
D: Maximize Benefits to Environment and Minimize Negative Impacts

D4: Greenhouse Gas Emissions: The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, minimize, publicly report, and mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects of their operation (including emissions from service providers).

Rationale:
The tourism industry is closely linked to climate change as it involves the movement of people from their homes to other destinations and the accommodation and servicing of these people in host locations prior to their returning home. Many aspects of this business cycle are accompanied with a heavy carbon footprint and as more time and money is being dedicated to leisure, the tourism industry is playing a larger role in global greenhouse gas emissions. Mitigation in the tourism sector can be achieved by reducing energy use through changing travel behaviour, by improving energy efficiency, increasing the use of renewable energy, carbon offsetting strategies, as well as changes in business practices.

Suggested Indicators
IN-D4a. Program to assist enterprises to measure, monitor, minimize and public report greenhouse gas emissions
IN-D4b. System to assist enterprises to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

D4: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Sustainability Alliance (http://www.sustainabilityallianceaz.org) is an initiative supported by the Sedona Chamber that is continuing to refine both a Dashboard of Community Indicators and a Business Sustainability Certification Program which will include greenhouse gas emission monitoring. With limited financial resources and a mostly volunteer-run effort, this alliance currently lacks the ability to access and collect certain data, however.

It is recommended that the community of Sedona further support the Sustainability Alliance by providing financial support and/or assistance requesting the data from enterprises to better monitor greenhouse gas emissions, for example.

Through the community embracing the Sustainability Alliance’s initiatives and providing greater benefits for participation (i.e. marketing from the Chamber, recognition from the City), more businesses will understand how to measure and track their Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IN-D4a. Program to assist enterprises to measure, monitor, minimize and public report greenhouse gas emissions</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>IN-D4b. System to assist enterprises to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions</td>
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</table>

Documentation Provided:
- The Coconino National Forest Plan
- Arizona Game and Fish Department’s Strategic Plan
D: Maximize Benefits to Environment and Minimize Negative Impacts

**D5: Energy Conservation:** The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report energy consumption, and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

**Rationale:**
To avoid wasting energy and resources, the tourism industry must make sure it does not use more energy than that which is strictly necessary and that the energy comes from environmentally-friendly sources.

**Suggested Indicators**

IN-D5a. Program to promote energy conservation and measure, monitor, reduce and publicly report energy consumption

IN-D5b. Policies and incentives to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, improve energy efficiency, and encourage the adoption and use of renewable energy technologies
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

D5: Energy Conservation

Arizona has some of the strongest energy efficiency goals in the nation. Over the next five years, the Arizona APS (Arizona Public Service Electric Company) plans to work with customers to achieve energy savings of over 2.8 million MWh – or enough energy to provide power to all households in a city the size of Glendale for just over 2 years – through their energy efficiency programs. APS currently has programs for both residential and business customers that include rebates for installing energy efficient equipment, training and technical support to help identify and understand energy efficiency opportunities, and information about how to become more energy efficient via their website.

While APS is leading these efforts, the larger community should also embrace the Sustainability Alliance’s initiatives for enterprises—including the Certification Program—and provide greater benefits for participation so that more Sedona-based businesses will be incentivized to conserve energy and adopt renewable energy technology. This will create both the incentive and demand for the tools that APS has created to support energy conservation and adoption of renewable energy.

Indicators

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>IN-D5a. Program to promote energy conservation and measure, monitor, reduce and publicly report energy consumption</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN-D5b. Policies and incentives to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, improve energy efficiency, and encourage the adoption and use of renewable energy technologies</td>
<td>No</td>
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Documentation Provided:
- Arizona APS
- Sedona Recycles
D: Maximize Benefits to Environment and Minimize Negative Impacts

**D6: Water Management:** The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce, and publicly report water usage.

**Rationale:**
Tourism’s impact on fresh water availability and quality is dependent on a wide range of factors, such as the relative abundance and quality of water in the region, current and anticipated future water abstraction rates, the share of non-consumptive versus consumptive uses, the seasonal and spatial character of water abstraction, competing uses, and the treatment of sewage and wastewater. The fact that many of these issues are interrelated necessitates careful analysis of potential measures to manage water resources.

**Suggested Indicators**
IN-D6a. Program to assist enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce and publicly report water usage
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

D6: Water Management

The Arizona Water Company provides free water audits to address water conservation opportunities at both residences and businesses. A Company representative will conduct an internal water audit for any customer who requests such an audit, and a written conservation recommendation will be furnished to the customer along with selected conservation pamphlets.

The Oak Creek Water Company also provides water conservation tips through their website (http://oakcreekwater.ruralwaterusa.com/conservation-tips/).

Businesses should be encouraged to take part in the audit through strengthening support for the Sustainability Alliance's Certification Program.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IN-D6a. Program to assist enterprises to measure, monitor, reduce and publicly report water usage</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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Documentation Provided:
- 2 water companies
D: Maximize Benefits to Environment and Minimize Negative Impacts

D7: Water Security: The destination has a system to monitor its water resources to ensure that use by enterprises is compatible with the water requirements of the destination community.

Rationale:
Water is at the core of sustainable development and is critical for socio-economic development, healthy ecosystems and for human survival itself. Water, and especially fresh water, is one of the most critical natural resources. The tourism industry generally overuses water resources for hotels, swimming pools, golf courses and personal use of water by tourists. This can result in water shortages and degradation of water supplies, as well as generating a greater volume of waste water.

Suggested Indicators
IN-D7a. Management system to ensure that water use by enterprises and water requirements of the destination community are balanced and compatible.
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

D7: Water Security

Good water management depends on having accurate information about water use on which to base regulatory and management decisions. The state of Arizona does not require that municipal water providers outside of Active Management Areas (AMAs) meter and report water use. Water suppliers must report their water use to ADWR if they serve 15 or more connections or 25 or more people, but in rural areas, there are few reporting requirements. Outside of AMAs, neither domestic or agricultural well users are required to measure or report their water use.

It is recommended that a management system be put into place to ensure that water use by enterprises and water requirements of the destination community are balanced and compatible. This management system should require the reporting of water use.

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<td>IN-D7a. Management system to ensure that water use by enterprises and water requirements of the destination community are balanced and compatible</td>
<td>No</td>
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Documentation Provided:

• None
D: Maximize Benefits to Environment and Minimize Negative Impacts

D8: Water Quality: The destination has a system to monitor drinking and recreational water quality using quality standards. The monitoring results are publicly available, and the destination has a system to respond in a timely manner to water quality issues.

**Rationale:**
An increase in use and overcrowded conditions due to tourism can lead to water quality issues—which is a threat to health and safety.

**Suggested Indicators**

IN-D8a. Management system to monitor and publicly report on drinking and recreational water quality

IN-D8b. Monitoring results are publicly available

IN-D8c. System to respond in a timely manner to water quality issues
The Arizona Water Company has a system in place to monitor the quality of drinking water. All water samples are collected by state-certified employees of Arizona Water Company. Samples are analyzed by state-certified independent laboratories and the results are forwarded to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality ("ADEQ"). The results are publicly available through reports which provide detailed information about the quality of the water delivered to customers. The water supplied by Arizona Water Company also complies with all state and federal safe drinking water standards and regulations.

The USFS has also put into place a reservation system for visiting the popular tourist attractions of Fossil Creek during the summer months to reduce the risk of over-visitation leading to water quality issues. According to the USFS, measurement sampling of water quality is conducted monthly during the high use season and will increase in frequency as needed.

### Table: Indicators and Rating

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<td>IN-D8a. Management system to monitor and publicly report on drinking and recreational water quality</td>
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<td>IN-D8b. Monitoring results are publicly available</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN-D8c. System to respond in a timely manner to water quality issues</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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**Documentation Provided:**

www.gstcouncil.org
D: Maximize Benefits to Environment and Minimize Negative Impacts

D9: Wastewater: The destination has clear and enforced guidelines in place for the siting, maintenance and testing of discharge from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems, and ensures wastes are properly treated and reused or released safely with minimal adverse effects to the local population and the environment.

**Rationale:**
Construction of hotels, recreation and other facilities often leads to increased sewage pollution. Wastewater has polluted seas and lakes surrounding tourist attractions, damaging the flora and fauna. Sewage runoff causes serious damage to coral reefs because it stimulates the growth of algae, which cover the filter-feeding corals, hindering their ability to survive. Changes in salinity and siltation can have wide-ranging impacts on coastal environments. And sewage pollution can threaten the health of humans and animals.

**Suggested Indicators**

- IN-D9a. Regulations for the siting, maintenance, and testing of discharge from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems, and evidence of their enforcement
- IN-D9b. Regulations to ensure the size and type of wastewater treatment is adequate for the location, and evidence of their enforcement
- IN-D9c. Program to assist enterprises to effectively treat and reuse wastewater
- IN-D9d. Program to ensure proper treatment of wastes and safe reuse or release with minimal adverse effects to local populations and environment
## Criteria Evaluation

### D9: Waste Water

The mission of the Wastewater department of the City of Sedona is to protect public health and safety by providing professional and efficient maintenance and operation of the wastewater system in a manner that takes into account the requirements of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, the direction of the City Manager, the City Council, and the desires of the citizens of Sedona, as well as the professional standards governing wastewater system operations.

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<td>IN-D9c. Program to assist enterprises to effectively treat and reuse wastewater</td>
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**Documentation Provided:**
- City of Sedona
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

D: Maximize Benefits to Environment and Minimize Negative Impacts

D10: Solid Waste Reduction: The destination has a system to encourage enterprises to reduce, reuse, and recycle solid waste. Any residual solid waste that is not reused or recycled is disposed of safely and sustainably.

Rationale:
Solid waste generation is nowadays considered as one of the most relevant environmental aspects from touristic activities, especially due to the fact that many of the establishments that make up this sector, such as hotels, bars and restaurants, use large quantities of expendable single-use consumer goods as part of their operations. In addition, tourists are not always aware of how waste management in a specific region is supposed to function. As tourists are there for just a short period of time, education is critical to understanding local recycling programs or other solid waste management systems.

Suggested Indicators

IN-D10a. Waste collection system that maintains public records on the amount of waste generated

IN-D10b. Solid waste management plan that is implemented and has quantitative goals to minimize, and ensure safe sustainable disposal of waste that is not reused or recycled

IN-D10c. Program to assist enterprises to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste

IN-D10d. Program to reduce the use of bottle water by enterprises and visitors

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V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

D10: Solid Waste Reduction

Sedona Recycles is a nonprofit community recycling center, providing recycling information and services to Sedona and the Verde Valley. The Sedona Recycles Program provides recycling programs for individuals and enterprises, including free drop-off locations and dumpster-style bins, when available, for businesses looking to recycle cardboard, paper, or mixed plastic and cans.

While Sedona Recycles is leading these solid waste reduction efforts, the larger community should also embrace the Sustainability Alliance’s initiatives for enterprises—including the Certification Program—and provide greater benefits for participation so that more Sedona-based businesses will be incentivized to recycle. This will create both the incentive and demand for the programs that Sedona Recycles has created to support solid waste reduction.

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<td>IN-D10b. Solid waste management plan that is implemented and has quantitative goals to minimize, and ensure safe sustainable disposal of waste that is not reused or recycled</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN-D10c. Program to assist enterprises to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste</td>
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<td>IN-D10d. Program to reduce the use of bottle water by enterprises and visitors</td>
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Documentation Provided:
- Sedona Recycles
D11: Light and Noise Pollution: The destination has guidelines and regulations to minimize light and noise pollution. The destination encourages enterprises to follow these guidelines and regulations.

Rationale:
The inappropriate or excessive use of artificial light – known as light pollution – inhibits the observation of stars and planets and can also have serious environmental consequences for humans, wildlife, and the climate. Noise pollution refers to unwanted sound that either interferes with normal activities such as sleeping, conversation, or disrupts or diminishes one’s quality of life. Both of these factors can be detrimental to the experience provided in a tourism destination.

Suggested Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN-D11a</th>
<th>Guidelines and regulations to minimize noise and light pollution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IN-D11b</td>
<td>Program to encourage enterprises to follow guidelines and regulations to minimize noise and light pollution</td>
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V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

D11: Light and Noise Pollution

In recognition of local efforts to promote and protect its naturally dark nighttime environment, the International Dark-Sky Association named Big Park, Arizona (the Village of Oak Creek), an International Dark Sky Community. In order to make the village eligible for Dark Sky Community status, local leaders successfully lobbied for changes and improvements to the Yavapai County outdoor lighting ordinance. The result was a county-wide lighting code that brings a high degree of dark-skies protection.

In regards to noise pollution, after traffic, noise in the community is one of the more sensitive issues facing tourism in the region and complaints among community members. The following ordinance was enacted to address these issues:

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Documentation Provided:
- IDA
- Airport and land ordinance
- OHU, helicopter
D: Maximize Benefits to Environment and Minimize Negative Impacts

D12: Low-impact Transportation: The destination has a system to increase the use of low-impact transportation, including public transportation and active transportation (e.g., walking and cycling).

Rationale:
Sustainable, low-impact transportation systems make positive contributions to the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the communities they serve. These systems limit emissions and waste, use renewable resources at or below their rates of generation while minimizing the impact on the use of land and the generation of noise.

Suggested Indicators

IN-D12a. Program to increase the use of low-impact transportation

IN-D12b. Program to make sites of visitor interest more accessible to active transportation (e.g., walking and cycling)
V. GSTC Destination Criteria Assessment

Criteria Evaluation

**D12: Low-Impact Transportation**

Sedona has long been known as a great destination for mountain biking and serves up a diverse menu of mountain biking trails for locals and visitors alike. In May 2011, the community received a prestigious designation as a bicycle friendly community.

In May 2011, the League of American Bicyclists, announced that Sedona had been awarded the Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community designation. Since that time, additional improvements have been made to the system.

While Sedona has embraced biking as a means of transportation and encouraged greater walkability in the shopping areas, the destination attractions outside of town are not accessible through public transportation. A trailhead transportation system has been approved but the commercial viability of the system is not clear. Sedona would benefit tremendously with a stronger public transportation system for visitors and residents.

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<td>IN-D12a. Program to increase the use of low-impact transportation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-D12b. Program to make sites of visitor interest more accessible to active transportation (e.g., walking and cycling)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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**Documentation Provided:**
- Bike Friendly Silver Certification
- Trailhead Transport
VI. Areas of Good Practice

A.4. Tourism Seasonality Management - Many of Sedona’s marketing efforts are designed to generate increased visitation during the off-season in order to attract year-round visitors.

A.7. Planning Regulations - In Sedona, strict planning, building and design guidelines, regulations and policies are in place that protect natural and cultural resources.

A.8. Access for All - The City of Sedona has the desired goal to not only make City facilities Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant, but ADA friendly to ensure access for all.

A.9. Property Acquisitions - Amendment 12 was enacted in the Coconino National Forest Management Plan to protect the area’s unique scenic and environmental qualities.

A.12. Safety and Security - The agencies responsible for the ongoing safety and security of tourists in the region and are operating at the highest levels of efficiency with individual management plans governing their actions.

A.14. Promotion - Sedona Chamber has an annual marketing plan in place that utilizes best practices in destination marketing and promotion.

B.2. Local Career Opportunities - As the tourism industry is a major economic driver of the community, there are many residents employed by the sector, which is committed to non-discriminatory practices and fair treatment among its employees.

B.5. Local Access - The USFS has prioritized public access to Sedona’s trails and wilderness areas including when private development or land acquisition takes place.

B.7. Preventing Exploitation - A non-discrimination ordinance enacted by the City, along with other existing laws and programs to prevent exploitation, discrimination and harassment communicates that Sedona is open to all people.

B.8. Support for the Community - Sedona has developed a number of programs that allow enterprises, visitors and the public to contribute time or money to community and biodiversity conservation within the destination.

B.9. Supporting Local Entrepreneurs and Fair Trade - The Sedona Chamber encourages both residents and visitors to think local, shop local and buy local through a campaign that provides coupons and offers from local businesses.
VI. Areas of Good Practice

C.1. Attraction Protection – The zoning codes and development regulations within Sedona are some of the strongest in America.

C.2. Visitor Management - The major attractions of Sedona include land under management by the USFS and the State Parks, each of which have strong visitor management plans.

C.3. Visitor Behavior – Through their interpretive information available regarding visiting the trails, the USFS publishes information for visitors encouraging them to follow their “Leave no Trace” principles.

C.4. Cultural Heritage Protection – As part of the City Government of Sedona, the Historic Preservation Commission conducts hearings relative to the identification and preservation of landmarks representing distinctive elements of Sedona’s historic, archeological, and cultural heritage.

C.5. Site Interpretation – The USFS is a leader in developing and distributing interpretive materials for the nation’s recreational areas, including those prominent to the tourism industry around Sedona.

D.1. Environmental Risks – In Sedona, the USFS along with the Sedona Fire Department both recognize that wildfires are among the greatest risks to the environment and have plans in place to monitor and manage the risks associated with them.

D.2. Protection of Sensitive Environments – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a strategic framework and monitoring system for invasive species management.

D.3. Wildlife Protection – The Arizona Game and Fish Department ensures that regulations and standards are in place and enforced regarding controlling the harvesting or capture, display, and sale of plants and animals.

D.8. Water Quality – The Arizona Water Company has a system in place to monitor the quality of drinking water, the results of which are publicly available through reports which provide detailed information about the quality of the water delivered to customers.

D.11. Light and Noise Pollution - In recognition of local efforts to promote and protect its naturally dark nighttime environment, the International Dark-Sky Association named Big Park, Arizona (the Village of Oak Creek), an International Dark Sky Community.
VII. General Recommendations

Based on this assessment, it is evident that destination sustainability and balancing tourism growth with conservation of the natural and cultural resources is a priority for both the public and private sectors of the community of Sedona. The assessment identified 33 of the 41 criteria being implemented with documentation and evidence of management systems and efforts in place.

8 of the 41 criteria scored a “0” or "1" because while policies or initiatives may be in place, there was little evidence of implementation. An example is the low participation of the tourism enterprises in either of the two available sustainable certification programs for businesses. If the Sedona Chamber embraced one or both of these programs and promoted it to businesses, residents, and travelers more businesses would have the incentive for participation and thus increase implementation of these criteria.

The main recommendation from the GSTC assessment, would be for the Sedona Chamber to better coordinate the various organizations involved in destination management to work more collaboratively to ensure the sustainable development, management, and promotion of tourism in Sedona. Right now the destination is one of the world leaders for implementing sustainable tourism but this is for the most part being done with little coordination between the various parties involved. By formalizing a partnership around the development and implementation of a sustainable destination strategy greater coordination can be achieved with shared efforts and shared responsibilities.

Based on this assessment, it is recommended to focus on the following criteria for enhancing the sustainable destination management of Sedona:

- **A1: Sustainable destination strategy**
- **A11. Sustainability Standards**
- **B4: Local Community Opinion**
- **D.12. Low Impact Transportation**
VII. Specific Recommendations

A1. Sustainable Destination Strategy - Develop a comprehensive sustainable destination strategy through a process that involves public participation.

A2. Destination Management Organization - Appoint an individual within the Sedona Chamber with the sole responsibility of ensuring tourism is managed sustainably.

A3. Destination Management Organization - Design and implement an over-arching and holistic system for monitoring and reporting environmental, economic, social and human rights issues as they pertain to sustainable tourism management.

A5. Climate Change Adaption - Develop and implement more industry-led initiatives and participation in climate change adaptation programs (such as through sustainable certification programs).

A11. Sustainability Standards - The Sustainability Alliance should continue working with the Sedona Chamber and develop their certification program through aligning it with the GSTC Criteria, making the program applicable for all businesses within the tourism industry, and making a list of certified enterprises publicly available online.

A15. Crisis and Emergency Management - A crisis and emergency response plan should be developed with inputs from all key agencies with consideration for the tourism sector.

B3. Public Participation - The Sedona Chamber should tap into the strong civic engagement of the community and have residents become more involved in destination management issues through a systematic process.

B4. Local Community Opinions - With the baseline survey already conducted, it is recommended that research on community tourism opinion be replicated in a systematic and timely way to use for destination management decisions and develop a window for community members to voice their opinions about tourism development and management.
VII. Specific Recommendations

B6. Tourism Awareness and Education - To encourage a stronger connection between local high schools and the Sedona Chamber, it is recommended that tourism be introduced as a career path (with opportunities for upward mobility) as opposed to just an opportunity for part-time employment.

D.4. Greenhouse Gas Emissions - It is recommended that the community of Sedona further support the Sustainability Alliance by providing financial support and/or assistance requesting the data from enterprises to better monitor greenhouse gas emissions.

D.5. Energy Conservation - While APS is leading energy conservation efforts, the larger community should also embrace the Sustainability Alliance’s initiatives for enterprises—including the Certification Program—and provide greater benefits for participation so that more Sedona-based businesses will be incentivized to conserve energy.

D.6. Water Management - Businesses should be encouraged to take part in the free water conservation audits provided by the Arizona Water Company through strengthening support for the Sustainability Alliance’s Certification Program.

D.7. Water Security - It is recommended that a management system be put into place to ensure that water use by enterprises and water requirements of the destination community are balanced and compatible. This management system should require the reporting of water use.

D.10. Solid Waste Reduction - While Sedona Recycles is leading local solid waste reduction efforts, the larger community should also embrace the Sustainability Alliance’s initiatives for enterprises—including the Certification Program—and provide greater benefits for participation so that more Sedona-based businesses will be incentivized to recycle.

D.12. Low Impact Transportation – A circulator public bus system that connects residents and visitors to the different areas of Sedona and the numerous trail heads is badly needed.
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