

North Lake Tahoe Economic Development  
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COURTESY SIMON WILLIAMS

Padding Independence Lake is among the opportunities offered at the 2013 Tahoe Expo.

# A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

*Expo looks to spur deeper love of Lake Tahoe and its surrounding natural environment*

By Adam Jensen  
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The Lake Tahoe region has a seemingly endless variety of recreation, activity and history, and one event this weekend will highlight the lake's uniqueness while encouraging stewardship over the Jewel of the Sierra.

[www.SustainTahoe.org](http://www.SustainTahoe.org)

The Tahoe Geotourism Expo, now in

its third year, is centered on experiencing the area while doing no harm. The expo uses the "8 Worlds of Tahoe" — sky, water, plant, land, wildlife, community culture and heritage — to connect people to the lake while also entertaining them.

"The goal of the Tahoe Expo is to build a sustainable and prosperous future for the region by harmonizing tourism with the natural environment," according to

the expo's website. "The Expo features local expertise to welcome and host you to life-changing adventures and the businesses who incorporate sustainability as part of their business model.

"When 'conservation becomes cool' ... 'preservation will become profitable' as visitors have more reasons to stay longer, return sooner and share stories that inspire others to join in the experience," organizers continue. "This will shift Tahoe's tourism industry to a stewardship model

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EXPO, 8

The **2010 Prosperity Plan** highlights 3 economic growth clusters:

1. Health and Wellness (recreation)
2. Environmental Innovation and Infrastructure (green building /energy)
3. Enhanced Visitor Experience (geotourism)

The Tahoe Expo is a tangible experience of **one day** in that **geotourism economy**.

Expo participants are spread out throughout the **150 mile watershed** to: ride our water shuttle, participate in an indigenous ceremony, meet our wildlife, nibble on marsh mint while kayaking thru an eco-system at work, touch a pine tree at its tree top, do our yoga on the water, test storm drain run-off riding an electric bicycle, experience a rare fish sanctuary on kayak, eat food grown in a dome, interact with history, tour and touch a fossil-free home, learn the art of fly fishing, redesign a watershed or photograph a herd of wild mustang horses.

While you can only experience a few activities, you see a rich diverse immersive menu that expands your curiosity (motivating more visits). And when you feel connected and valuable in the community, you become a steward to the area and loyal to the organizations who provided this experience! You see how the pieces fit together your part in maintaining it.

**ROI:** scale this *one-day experience* of 500 people having fun, educational and low-carbon guided adventures, to 350 days, with eventually millions of visitors doing activities that sustain or enhance the unique assets of the region, supporting local wellbeing (jobs!).

**Or..**



Have **one** commercial entity, import talent, to bring 5,000 visitors to a single location. The highway is jammed, businesses within 1- 3 miles have record days, inundated with customers, who, feeling the magic of the place, may also drive around, take pictures, and seek out other forms of recreation given the *menu of options provided*.

The producer (maybe local) gets paid plus any (short term) hired hands and those paid to clean up... **Unless...** the damage created by the event can only be mitigated thru the ongoing restoration efforts costing tax-payers \$1 to \$2Billion every ten yrs!

**ROI?** Did the visitor learn anything significant about the unique sensitivity of the watershed? Was transit provided? Did they become stewards driving around (#1 cause of diminished lake clarity)? And, given their minimal understanding of the area, will they only return when there is another BIG event? Is a two-season, action-packed auto-dependant menu of terrain-trampling activities providing the full benefits we desire and science requires? Can the Tahoe watershed afford visitors who do not become stewards (at some level)?



## Sustainable economy: “seed” vs. “sod”

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*It takes time.*

Elements native to an area do not require costly artificial amenities to maintain. Nor do they degrade the water or habitat. And being indigenous, they serve the entire “**eco-onomy**”.

The 2010 Prosperity Plan directive and Federal Dept of Interior MUO [citing all US destinations promote a geotourism economy to preserve habitat and heritage] asks ROI to include:

- 1) How does it highlight and interpret local assets that create a ‘sense of place’?
  - Are visitors enlightened by locals whose passion for preservation is contagious?
- 2) How does it conserve resources critical to long term health and well being?
  - Does it model actions conducive to sustaining or enhancing the terrain?
  - Is it Zero Waste?
- 3) How does it activate ‘Stewardship’
  - Does it increase active enrollment into conservation efforts?
  - Does it highlight, support, motivate or reward using alternative transit?
  - Does the activity sustain or enhance the unique aspects of the area?
- 4) Does it benefit local well being
  - How is the community involved and benefitting?
  - Does the revenue generated cycle in the community 2.5 times?
  - Are locals eager to welcome and host the visitor (vs. put ‘up with the crowds’)
- 5) Collaboration
  - Does it provide critical collaboration between: .gov, .org, .com, so everyone wins?
- 6) The Story (brand)
  - Does it enrich and enlighten the visitors to experience more of our diversity?
  - Does it support a 4-season high-touch / low-impact brand?
  - Do the visitors see one watershed of immense diversity vs. separate regions competing against each other?

*El Dorado County has made a significant investment* following the directives, mandates and 50 years of UC Davis science *toward developing prosperity* that will also save Lake clarity.

*Thank you for the opportunity to serve!*

Geotourism

## \$70 Million hosting Wildlife!

**Grizzly Bear** hunting in British Columbia generates around **\$2 to \$2.5 million** in annual revenue. This is realized from: tag fees, gas, equipment, guides.

**\$2.5 Million annual \$ to load guns.**

**Grizzly Bear Photo Safaris** generates around **\$70 million!** People who come to see bears *bring their families*, stay longer, to eat, sleep and shop in the community! They book their trip around bear season, so this is the focal point of their travels!

The **\$7M** annual is in the guide fees **x 10** for the actual benefit that bear viewing provides to the British Columbia economy!  
**\$70Million annual \$ to load cameras!**

Grizzly Tours.com does \$3M a year in guide revenue (local jobs!) The additional benefit to the local economy is closer to **\$30 million** from one guide company!

Reference:

**CBVA**(Commercial Bear Viewing Association)

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Geotourism

## \$1.9 Billion hosting Heritage!



### Heritage Attracts Travelers Who Spend Money in Oregon Communities

Mandala Research LLC, showed that Oregon’s cultural heritage travelers spend nearly 60 percent more per person than they do nationally. These travelers contributed an estimated **\$1.9 billion** to the state’s economy on their most recent trip to the state, according to the study’s findings.



A cultural traveler is defined as “a person who travels to experience the places, people, activities and things that authentically represent the past and present, including cultural, historic and natural resources.” This means they visit historic sites, arts venues, state and national parks, ocean beaches and other places also enjoyed by Oregonian.

The report concludes the importance for Oregon to capture the past sense of place, and to weave this iconic place into the present and future.

\$1.9 billion	Amount of dollars spent by heritage travelers on their most recent visit to Oregon
83%	Percentage of leisure travelers in Oregon who consider themselves culture and heritage travelers
\$47.5 million	Number of people who are cultural and heritage travelers within Oregon and its feeder markets
\$1,618	Average dollars spent by a cultural heritage traveler on a leisure trip to Oregon. This is nearly 60% higher than the amount spent nationally
45%	Percentage of Oregonians who spend more on cultural heritage activities while they are visiting
39%	Percentage of travelers willing to pay more for lodging that reflects the cultural and heritage destination they are visiting
1,200	Number of cultural heritage organizations in Oregon