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OPINIONS ABOUT TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE BITTERROOT VALLEY:

A SURVEY OF RESIDENTS

RESEARCH REPORT 42
Opinions About Tourism Development in the Bitterroot Valley: A Survey of Residents

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Research Report 42

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Introduction

This report summarizes residents’ opinions about tourism in the Bitterroot Valley based on responses to a mail survey during spring 1995. The research was conducted to support a broader tourism assessment process being undertaken by a committee composed of Valley residents. Results of the study will be used throughout the remainder of the assessment process to constrain and guide the committee’s discussion and decisions.

The Community Tourism Assessment Process

The Bitterroot Valley tourism assessment committee is participating in a yearlong process. It is a fundamental premise of the process that any individual community or area may or may not have potential for further tourism development. For example, areas or communities may lack necessary infrastructure or attractions or perhaps there is no adequately-sized market for their opportunities. Of equal consideration is the community’s goals or vision for their future and the role that tourism may play in that future; communities should not proceed with additional tourism development if they determine that the social, economic, and environmental costs of that development will exceed the associated benefits.

At the conclusion of the assessment process, members of the Bitterroot Valley’s assessment committee will decide whether further tourism development is warranted and desired in the Bitterroot Valley. This decision will be based on consideration of a wide variety of information, including present levels and characteristics of travel, existing travel-related infrastructure and attractions, and the area’s need for economic development. Resident opinions about tourism development, including its social, economic, and environmental impacts, are also considered in the assessment process.

If the community decides that further tourism development is desirable, they can move from assessment to planning and development of possible tourism projects. At that point, information on resident values and concerns regarding tourism development and its impacts can be used to evaluate and modify possible development projects.

Resident Opinions About Tourism

Residents of an area may hold a variety of opinions about tourism and tourist activity. They may have certain ideas about the broad nature of tourism as an industry. They may also have perceptions of the specific impacts of tourist activity, both positive and negative, and how those impacts affect them person-
ally. Finally, they may have preferences for how tourism is managed for their community's future, including how tourism development relates to other options for economic development.

While facts may be debated as right or wrong, there are no right or wrong opinions. Resident opinions about tourism, perceived impacts of tourist activity, and future economic development strategies may or may not reflect realities. However, they are important in several ways.

First, opinions are a crucial measure of support for community and industry actions. Developments that directly conflict with expressed concerns and opinions may face substantial opposition.

Second, opinions suggest where community and industry leaders should focus in their search for real impacts. For example, if opinions suggest out-of-state hunting is not perceived as a problem but out-of-state immigration is, then industry leaders would be wise to expend resources determining and addressing the relationship between migration and tourism before considering issues related to hunting and tourism.

Finally, in some cases, perceptions or opinions are reality. A good example is the concept of crowding. Crowding cannot be objectively measured because it is a perception; if someone feels crowded, they are crowded.

**Survey Purpose and Objectives**

A survey of resident opinions about tourism and tourism development is one step of the yearlong community tourism assessment process. The results are key to determining local receptivity to tourism development and promotion. Three broad questions are answered by the resident survey process:

- How do local people feel about tourism development?
- Are there certain groups within the community that are less supportive?
- What specific issues or concerns do residents have that must be taken into consideration in the community tourism assessment process?

In addition to answering the above questions, the surveying process is the baseline from which a broad network of participation in the tourism assessment, planning, and implementation process may be built. Furthermore, if the assessment committee determines that further tourism development is appropriate, information collected in the survey helps the committee direct any future tourism development into projects that are acceptable to residents.

The specific objectives of the resident opinion survey are to:

- determine the level of community support or lack of support for tourism development,
- assess to what extent residents currently perceive the positive or negative impacts of tourism,
- identify specific concerns of residents about tourist activity and tourism development,
- outline the role that residents see for tourism in the community's future,
- determine resident perceptions of the best opportunities for economic development, and
- identify key characteristics that distinguish between those who support tourism development and those who do not.

**Design and Methodology**

Resident opinions about tourist activity and tourism development were determined through a mail questionnaire. Residents of
the Bitterroot Valley were chosen by selecting a systematic, random sample of names and addresses from the Bitterroot Valley portion of the US West–Missoula telephone book.

A questionnaire was mailed to 782 Valley residents on March 28, 1995. Reminder postcards were sent one week later and replacement questionnaires mailed to all nonrespondents on April 25. Of the 782 addresses selected, 165 were subsequently removed from the sample. Five were removed because respondents failed to completely fill out their returned questionnaires and the remainder were removed because their questionnaires were undeliverable (due to expired forwarding orders, insufficient addresses, etc.). This resulted in a net sample size of 617. By May 5, 285 residents had returned completed, usable surveys to ITRR, for an overall response rate of 46%.

On May 8th and 9th, ITRR researchers tried to reach all remaining nonrespondents by phone. Short interviews were completed with 70 nonrespondents, using selected questions from the original mailed questionnaire. The database of questionnaire responses was subsequently weighted to adjust for nonresponse bias as quantified by the 70 telephone interviews.

Questions were selected for use in the nonresponse bias check based on three criteria. First, three questions used by ITRR in an ongoing statewide opinion poll were included. Second, data on length of residence in Montana and perceptions of how the respondent was personally affected by tourism were collected because of their explanatory power with regard to tourism opinions. Finally, remaining questions were selected by identifying items where responses to the original and replacement questionnaires differed significantly, thus indicating possible areas of nonresponse bias.

Level of Support for Tourism Development

Almost half (49%) of Bitterroot Valley residents agreed or strongly agreed that the overall benefits of tourism outweigh the negative impacts; 33% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, and 18% had no opinion (Figure 1). While more Bitterroot Valley residents agreed than disagreed with this overall assessment, the figures for the Bitterroot compare poorly with those for the State of Montana as a whole. Statewide data collected on an ongoing basis indicates that consistently 65-80% of Montanans agree that the benefits of tourism outweigh negative impacts. Results in the Bitterroot Valley are consistent with a pattern seen throughout the state—that, as tourism levels increase, resident support for tourism decreases.

Perception of Positive and Negative Impacts

Overall perceptions of tourism are based on a composite of experiences, feelings, and impressions about the many specific positive and negative impacts of tourism and tourist activity. Respondents may or may not have perceived various positive or negative impacts associated with the tourism industry. Thus, in addition to making an overall evaluation of the perceived balance between positive and negative impacts, respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with statements suggesting a variety of positive and negative social, economic, and environmental impacts of tourism and tourism development.

Bitterroot Valley residents perceived some impacts and not others. To the extent that they perceived positive impacts and did not perceive negative impacts, they may be said
to have positive opinions about the industry. Conversely, to the extent they perceived negative impacts and not positive ones, they may be said to hold negative opinions regarding the industry.

Reflecting generally positive opinions about tourism, a majority of Bitterroot Valley residents agreed with the following positively-phrased statements:

- Tourism encourages investment in our local economy (71% agreed).
- The tourism industry provides many worthwhile employment opportunities for Bitterroot Valley residents (64% agreed).

Also reflecting general support for tourism development, a majority of residents disagreed with the following negatively-phrased statement:

- Tourists are a burden on the Bitterroot Valley's services (62% disagreed).

Many opinions were not supportive of tourism. A majority of residents agreed with the following negatively-phrased statements:

- Most of the jobs in the tourism industry are low-paying (80% agreed).
- Tourists add greatly to traffic problems in the Bitterroot Valley (80% agreed).
- Tourism is responsible for too fast a rate of development in the Bitterroot Valley (51% agreed).

Also reflecting unsupportive opinions, a majority of residents disagreed with the following positively-phrased statements about tourism:

- The environmental impacts resulting from tourism are relatively minor (53% disagreed).

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3 Percentages given are for those respondents who "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with a particular statement. The remaining respondents either (1) "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with the statement or (2) indicated they had "no opinion" about the statement.

4 Percentage given is for those respondents who "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with the statement. The remaining respondents either (1) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement or (2) indicated they had "no opinion" about the statement.
• Our household standard of living is higher because of money tourists spend here (62% disagreed).
• The quality of life in the Bitterroot Valley has improved because of tourism (64% disagreed).

Four additional statements, all negatively-phrased, failed to receive a majority of either agree or disagree responses. Two statements reflect resident perceptions of crowding; the remaining statements refer to crime problems and perceived inequities in paying for services used.

• The Bitterroot Valley is becoming overcrowded because of more tourists (46% disagreed; 46% agreed).
• Tourism has increased the number of crime problems in the Bitterroot Valley (48% disagreed; 35% agreed).
• Tourists crowd out local residents in good recreation areas (46% agreed; 40% disagreed).
• Tourists do not pay their fair share for the services they use (44% agreed; 40% disagreed).

The above information is portrayed in Figure 2 in a way that allows a comparative assessment of the issue of tourism impacts. Statements in the top half of the figure are positively-phrased and those in the bottom half are negatively-phrased. Bars extending to the right of the vertical center line indicate overall agreement with the statement; bars to the left of the line indicate disagreement.

The extent of agreement or disagreement (the mean response) is reflected in the length of the shaded bar. In the top half of the figure, where statements are positively-phrased, it is desirable for respondents to agree with the statements. Below the midpoint, with negatively-phrased statements, it is preferable for the mean response to be in disagreement.

Bitterroot Valley residents agreed with only three of the six positively-phrased statements of potential tourism impacts. Bitterrooters disagreed that the environmental impacts of tourism were relatively minor, that their household standard of living had risen as a result of tourism, or that tourism improved residents' quality of life.

Below the midpoint, where it is preferable if respondents disagree with negatively-phrased statements regarding tourism impacts, respondents disagreed with only one of eight statements. Bitterrooters disagreed that tourists were a burden on Valley services (although they agreed that tourists did not pay their fair share for services received). The greatest agreement regarding perception of negative impacts was with regard to traffic problems and the low-paying nature of many tourism sector jobs.

6 The concept of being positively- or negatively-phrased needs further clarification. The distinction does not reflect whether one is pro-tourism or anti-tourism. Rather, what is indicated is whether a positive or negative impact has been perceived. Regardless of one's position with respect to the industry, one would hope that people and communities enjoyed the positive impacts arising from tourism and not the negative ones. Thus, with a positively-phrased statement, agreement indicates that one either perceives the positive impact or does not perceive the negative impact; either is a "positive" outcome. With the right of the vertical center line indicate overall agreement with the statement; bars to the left of the line indicate disagreement.

The analysis displayed in Figure 2 excludes responses of "no opinion" for each statement. Thus, the data represents mean responses of those who expressed an opinion.
Figure 2. Bitterroot Valley responses to statements regarding potential positive and negative impacts of tourism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▷ Tourism encourages investment in our local economy.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>▷ The tourism industry provides many worthwhile employment opportunities for Valley residents.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>▷ The overall benefits of tourism outweigh the negative impacts.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>▷ Tourists are a burden on the Bitterroot Valley’s services.</td>
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These results suggest the importance of several negative impacts of tourism in residents’ minds. In a separate question, we asked respondents to rank possible disadvantages that they or the Bitterroot Valley as a whole may experience as a result of increased tourism (Figure 3). Consistent with previous findings, traffic congestion was identified as the biggest disadvantage of tourism development.

An open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire also solicited residents’ con-
Figure 3. Possible disadvantages of increased tourism, ranked by Bitterroot Valley respondents.

Figure 3 shows the possible disadvantages of increased tourism ranked by Bitterroot Valley respondents. The disadvantages are:

- Traffic congestion
- Out-of-staters relocating to the area
- Overdevelopment
- Environmental impacts
- An increase in the cost of real estate
- More crime
- Higher prices for goods and services
- Crowded recreation areas and facilities
- Higher taxes
- Too many out-of-state hunters

Index (higher values represent greater disadvantages)

Concerns regarding tourism development. The question was phrased: "Do you have any other concerns related to tourists or tourism development that were not addressed in this questionnaire? For example, are there places or events that you would or would not want promoted as tourist attractions?"

In 13 responses, residents suggested ideas for tourism promotion; 20 identified activities or places that should not be promoted. The numerous concerns expressed in response to this question varied widely, referring to quality and aesthetics; traffic, infrastructure, and planning; economic issues; population growth and development pressures; the environment, natural resources, and recreational opportunities; and the militia. Residents' open-ended responses follow:

**Promote**

- Music festivals.
- Another golf course in area.
- Promote music. Do not send crowds into the wilderness before they are educated on wilderness values.
- More horse shows; promote specifically Arabian. Promote Indian type festivities. Promote skiing/snowmobiling.
- Promote Buss Creek Wilderness area.
- I would like to see more historical places and events promoted. More focus on “regular” people who make up the vast majority of tourists would be a plus.
Our county fair should be more supported through advertising — a great fair, 4H is big, crafts are big, rodeo is good. A route with various points of interest in the whole Valley — advertised at Sula and Florence — with a place where maps could be picked up.

Promote: Daly Mansion, summer and winter special events, museum, and natural environment.

Need more historic education programs, signs, rest areas.

Promote good hunting and fishing and pleasing vistas.

Attractions: Daly Mansion, recreational opportunities for the aging "baby boomers".

Promote the Bitterroot Powwow, more skiing, and fishing. Maintain adequate water levels in lakes for recreation and fish survival.

I would promote solely hiking and fly fishing, and only with strict rules for both sports.

Don't Promote

Tourism does not have to be promoted, it's self promoting.

Do not promote wilderness areas unless the recreator can prove they are knowledgeable and have the right equipment.

None of the hunting or fishing.

No casinos.

No militia gatherings or like types!

We don't need them.

Don't promote forests, rivers, or creeks.

I would not promote the lakes and fishing part of it. Water is too important a resource to be abused with outboard boat motors, jet skis, etc.

Nothing that offers alcohol as an attraction. Make family a #1 concern. Wholesomeness.

Do not promote: housing developments, anything that will destroy our "rural" way of life and natural resources.

Do not encourage gambling and casinos or other immoral business.

Leave much of tourism to the private sector. As traffic increases, or as it is anticipated, make necessary improvements (roads, trails, amenities). Don't go all out and promote it, but be courteous to those who choose to come.

Keep them out of our creeks!

Do not promote the Bitterroot Valley!

I would not like to see mega-events such as rock concerts.

No off-road motor events or motor boats on river.

No roadside casinos. We need clean air events and industries.

I personally do not want my beloved Bitterroot Valley used to promote tourism.

We don't need more tourists.

Not in my backyard.

Comments about Quality and Aesthetics

I would hate to see cheap tourist attractions that have sprung up in places like Jackson Hole, WY, such as gift shops, junk shops, etc.

Please no tourist traps.

I hate to see the increase in commercial strips along Highway 93. The strips in Hamilton and Stevensville detract greatly from the beauty of the Valley. Make better use of downtown space and facilities and control strip development.
I am not in favor of things like the miniature golf course we had in Hamilton on Highway 93. We can’t stop visitors from coming, but maybe it would be best if they enjoyed what those of us who live here enjoy.

Small, locally-owned businesses should be encouraged and large, out-of-area businesses discouraged. The number of the latter has increased enormously and is primarily responsible for the ugly strip along 93.

I feel that many of the individuals and businesses in Hamilton could greatly improve our image by cleaning up vacant lots, keeping sidewalks cleaned during winter (isn’t there a law on the books concerning this?), and sweeping the streets other than Main and 1st (or did only those taxpayers pay for the sweeper?).

Comments about Traffic, Infrastructure, and Planning

▷ Widening Highway 93 to accommodate the excess traffic is a must.

▷ Traffic is the most overwhelming.

▷ What we need is better rural county roads.

▷ I feel there has to be a four lane highway to Missoula if we are to attract tourists; as it is now, it’s too congested just for local residents.

▷ Highway development and service infrastructure is not keeping up with growth and traffic.

▷ Our roadways cannot handle any more traffic. The existing local traffic is far too dangerous and overcrowded. Why would we want to encourage any more people to move here?

▷ Infrastructure – roads, sewage, power supplies, billboards, etc.

▷ I would hope the development of tourism and development of the Valley overall be carefully planned and controlled so the atmosphere and beauty of the Valley is preserved. The planning needs to take place now since the Valley has already changed a great deal.

Comments about Economic Issues

▷ Who is going to pay for it? It should be those who wish to capitalize on tourism. It would be nice if we had a highway instead of a road.

▷ I would like to see more taxes for tourism and special cards for native Montanans to get a break from those taxes. If the tourists want to come to Montana, let them pay the taxes.

▷ Whitefish and West Yellowstone have both been imposed with a 3% tax which I believe was established not by a vote of the citizens. Auto dealers and other businesses would probably close up as I would buy a car, etc. from dealers in Missoula instead of paying a 3% tax.

▷ The only ones benefiting from tourists are motels, and a very few other businesses. For the rest of the people, they are a pain in the butt.

▷ Montana is putting all its eggs in the tourist basket. No well-paying jobs are being created which allow young families to remain in state.

▷ Tourism only seems to generate minimum wage jobs, raise property taxes, and displace the local people.

▷ Tourism is largely low-paying, seasonal employment. It offers little toward community stability or quality of life for yearlong residents.

▷ The overall negative thing I see about tourism is that our own young people who stay here become “service people”: waiters, cooks, motel operators, and housekeepers. They only receive minimum wages.
Comments about Population Growth and Development Pressures

- Realtors have not paid their share.
- My biggest concern is the population growth and development that decreases the quality of life in the Bitterroot.
- They come as tourists, then they move here. Soon the only thing that looks like the Bitterroot is the mountain. Tourists will make so much dust you will not see them soon. I remember when you'd go to town, you'd know them. Now I feel I am in the wrong town.
- The largest problem with tourism is the amount of wealthy landbuyers coming into the Valley; this drives home prices beyond the reach of the average Valley resident, as the pay scale in the Valley is very low compared to the national average.
- Greatest concern is crime and the impact that too liberal or abusive people may and do move here from other places. They may have been tourists, but then just as likely, may have not. I believe this area, along with tax problems locally, are of a separate basis than tourism and need great attention as well.
- I don't think tourism really makes a lot more crime at this point. It seems a lot of people moving to the area with children who have no respect for property of humans, think that this area can solve their problems - which it can't do, so they make things worse for everyone else.
- Montana's "Last Best Place" reputation has already overcrowded the Valley with people who want to get away from what they are trying to turn Montana into (ironic, no?). Streets, schools, housing are all overcrowded. The local and state governments want to bring in more people to get the money to pay for the last 5 years' influx. Always playing "catch-up" and becoming more crowded, more dirty, and more expensive. Look at what happened to Santa Fe, NM. Ask them how well it worked.

Comments about the Environment, Natural Resources, and Recreational Opportunities

- I feel tourism would have less negative impact if local businesses involved were more eco-conscious, i.e., becoming more aware of the benefits of recycling waste products, using water saving devices, etc.
- Environmental impacts on water quality and wildlife.
- Nothing was mentioned about pollution in this questionnaire.
- Air pollution due to heavy tourism and commuting travel.
- Need to consider tourism's impact on water quality, winter game range, and road travel safety.
- Need more patrols of the forests and game wardens to prevent fires and fishing/hunting without proper licenses and tags. Impose more fines where necessary.
- The Bitterroot River is being ruined by tourism as well as the addition of new and ridiculous laws governing our lands, forests, and rivers.
- I think the river is overrun with guides and not enough is put back to clean it up or maintain the fishery. Limit guide permits and regulate numbers of boats on the river.
- I feel that our fishing is in danger of falling off, further than at present levels. I do not feel that promoting this as an attraction is in the state's best interest.
- Lake Como is already overused. Local trails are overused.
- Our lakes and streams are overused by local residents as it is. They don't need additional pressure.
- Everyone should be able to enjoy what we have to offer.
Families who visit our Valley are very limited [in opportunities]. The river and Lake Como or Painted Rocks are the only recreation.

If the loss of attractions such as Sleeping Child Hot Springs to private holdings continues, it could have a negative impact on tourism. Also, we must protect easy access to public lands.

Comments about the Militia

No militia camps! More events that support our Valley schools.

I am concerned about the negative publicity generated by the antigovernment forces in the Bitterroot Valley and its effect on visitors wanting to come here.

Other Comments

In the words of your cover letter, I do not think tourism development is a strategy to be pursued.

Very little in the tourism industry encourages higher education, thinking, or global justice.

The Bitterroot is a very nice place; however, it does not have a major attraction. Therefore, only time will tell. As the population of this country increases, so will the uniqueness of the Valley; however, by that time, it will be trashed like Missoula and no longer a pretty place.

My feelings are: (1) tourism helps economy; (2) tourists should have sales tax to help pay for thousands of miles used of highways; (3) crime is perpetrated by locals; (4) tourists do little damage, they're just passing through, after all.

Tourism should be kept in perspective. Example: polls of tourists and out-of-staters played a part in wolf reintroduction to Yellowstone. This expensive program very likely will never produce any tourism dollars, and will be a hardship to other local industries. As a Montanan, I'm proud to share the beauty of our state, but let's remember it is our state.

Tourism and the Future of the Bitterroot Valley

Communities pursue tourism development primarily as an economic development strategy. Obviously, there are other options for economic development; some communities may be able to expand their retail or business services sectors, others may see options in certain natural resource-based industries.

Since the mid-1980s, tourism development has been a popular economic development strategy for many Montana communities as well as the state as a whole. It is popular because travel activity has been expanding worldwide and thus there are opportunities to become established in the tourism sector. In addition, tourism development has been a natural strategy for Montanans, as we are able to capitalize on the attractiveness of our natural resources in the midst of declines in many of our traditional extractive industries.

When communities consider the industrial mix within their economic base, all local opportunities must be considered and balanced with one another. Some communities will have more limited opportunities due to various constraints, and will have an economic base that emphasizes one or two major industries. However, other communities may be able to diversify their economic base, perhaps providing for greater economic stability over the long run.
While the tourism assessment process focuses on tourism as an economic development strategy, two questions on the resident opinions survey solicited input as to the desired role of tourism within the local economy (Figure 4) and perceptions of sectors with the greatest potential for local economic development (Figure 5).

Only 12 percent of residents felt tourism should play a major role in the Valley economy; over half felt it should play a comparable role, and one third thought it should play only a minor role. When asked to rank the potential for economic development through tourism compared to other options, tourism or recreation development was one of five industries seen to provide good opportunities for future economic development in the Bitterroot Valley. Only manufacturing was ranked higher in terms of economic development opportunity.

Figure 4. Preferred role of tourism in the Bitterroot Valley economy.

Figure 5. Best opportunities for future economic development, ranked by Valley residents.
While residents feel tourism should play a comparable role in a balanced local economy, it may be that tourism development is already at that desired level in the Bitterroot Valley. If one considers survey responses related specifically to future growth, the Bitterroot Valley’s tourism industry seems to be at the point where further growth is less important than careful management.

Only one in four residents agreed with a statement that increased tourism would help the Bitterroot Valley grow in the “right” direction. Other questionnaire responses indicated the level of support residents gave to various aspects of managing future tourism development in the Bitterroot Valley.

Residents felt tourism should be managed, though not restricted; with resident involvement in the planning process, rather than leaving decisions to the private sector; and with quality of life considerations more important than the number of jobs created. Current Valley residents felt that tourists should visit the area but not become residents themselves. Finally, zoning was supported as a tool for managing development in the Valley.

- Increased tourism would help the Bitterroot Valley grow in the “right” direction (50% disagreed; 24% agreed).
- The Bitterroot Valley should develop plans to manage the growth of tourism (79% agreed; 11% disagreed).
- The Bitterroot Valley should take steps to restrict tourism development (49% disagreed; 32% agreed).
- It is important that Bitterroot Valley residents be involved in decisions about tourism (87% agreed; 5% disagreed).
- Decisions about how much tourism we should have in the Bitterroot Valley are best left to the private sector (52% disagreed; 22% agreed).

- The most important factor in determining how much tourism to have in the Bitterroot Valley is the impact on local quality of life (11% disagreed; 78% agreed).
- The number of jobs produced by tourism is the best measure of success for the Bitterroot Valley (60% disagreed; 26% agreed).
- I would prefer that tourists visit our area but not move here (71% agreed; 16% disagreed).
- A good way to manage development in the Valley is through land use zoning (73% agreed; 14% disagreed).

**Vision of the Future**

To plan for the future of tourism in the Bitterroot Valley, assessment committee members must consider the current tourism situation in the Bitterroot Valley as well as the vision of where they want to be at some future date. To provide one opportunity for community input into the visioning process, we asked respondents for their “vision of the Bitterroot Valley’s future and what role tourism should have in that future.” While we were seeking ideas about preferred futures toward which community leaders might manage, a surprising number of residents offered bleak views of their community’s future. These and other comments offered by respondents are presented below.

**Hopeful Visions**

- Tourists are welcomed to come and enjoy, but don’t forget to leave.

- Ideally, a mixture of specialized agriculture, sustainable wood products, information highway research, and niche manufacturing networks will allow us to preserve enough of what makes the Bitterroot what it is to provide a continuing role for tourism.
The Valley has a bright future as long as Californians and Easterners don’t make this Valley like the places they came from. Tourists should be taxed more in some way.

Maximum use of renewable resources, retaining at least 50% of arable land for agribusiness, community college, and public transport system.

Nothing but up and continuing to grow.

Have more good eating places, not so many fast foods.

The Valley will continue to grow and tourism should make it a better place to live. We should consider how to pull income from tourism to help our cities and towns (creating park districts, usage fees going to towns, etc.).

My vision would be to maintain the quality of life here. Get better forest, land, and wildlife habitat management. If tourism can fit in and not impact the quality of life here; great, if not, then forget it!

It should be a nice place to visit and yet be too small or rural for most folks to want to move to.

Tourism should play a big role in the future. I think with more activities to attract tourists, families that already live here will have more to do.

Zoning, sales tax, better county services (roads), and more funds for schools.

We have a fabulous wilderness/roadless area. I think we should have a junior college here with an outward bound type program. This would afford education for our young people as well as bringing in students from all over the United States.

I hope it stays as pristine and beautiful as it is now and that no economic development or tourism development ruins what so many have come here to enjoy.

Proper forest management.

Tourism should have a positive effect on our area. Facilities (e.g., a convention complex) must be created to allow Bitterroot Valley to become a destination area.

Since we do not have industry to speak of and limited agriculture, tourism provides a way to bolster the economy in the Valley. Of course, we would benefit from a sales tax, too.

I would like to see slow growth in the Valley. I would like light manufacturing businesses to develop resulting in jobs offering good hourly wages. The Valley needs a comprehensive plan to avoid uncontrolled growth. I believe gambling and tourism should be emphasized much less in order to maintain our current way of life.

The Bitterroot should remain agricultural with small towns to support the agriculture community. For this to happen, zoning will have to be enforced to stop subdividing by developers. I’ve already bought property in the Lemhi Valley of Idaho for the future because I don’t see this happening here.

Tourism is important. I feel the city and county government need to implement some sort of tax on motels so that their use of our area will not be a burden to those of us who live here.
I would like to see this Valley remain a beautiful place to live, with clean air and a low crime rate. In other words, promote tourism, but discourage the overdevelopment of housing and business. As far as I'm concerned, our beautiful surroundings are our biggest asset and (in the long run) will benefit us more than short-term profit for a few money-hungry developers.

Visit, but don't stay!

A gradual, natural flow of increased tourism which will give the people and the government time to adjust to the changes (the many changes), good and bad. Push for livable wages!

The future, or growth, of the Valley, is in the hands of people moving in with high incomes from out of state. They will desire good retail stores and restaurants with good service. Tourism will bring this, along with the professionals to work in these positions.

Less growth, more concern for new job industries.

Tourism attractions based on the natural/historical aspects of the area - not "created" attractions (i.e., Disney World).

The Valley has a beautiful rural character that must be protected by intelligent land use planning. Tourism, and the resulting development, can be accomplished and be a positive influence to us all if properly planned. Tourists must also provide positive economic assistance to residents. Developers and real estate interests should not be the driving forces in promotion of tourism nor have significant voices in tourism issues. In case after case, in areas of natural beauty where development is occurring, development interests have unduly influenced decisions of planners and the general population by their self-serving motives.

There will be some tourists returning to make their homes and enjoy the most beautiful place in Montana. I love it and thank God everyday that it's my home.

The Bitterroot Valley is going to grow and tourism will be a part of that growth. But a healthy economy depends on diversity. Tourism should not become our focus or push out other more stable (though perhaps slower growing) industries. Also tourists shouldn't decide our future. We who live here need to manage our resources, not outsiders with no understanding of our land or our lives.

Come spend their money and return home!

Mixture of light manufacturing and retirement. Tourists should be led to realize that coexistence is not only possible, but beneficial.

It is my hope that the Bitterroot can maintain clean air and water as well as its visual beauty, yet at the same time provide employment for those who live here. It seems light, non-polluting industry and tourism could help do that.

The Valley is becoming a long retirement community. Tourists have always passed through to get to Flathead Lake where they can participate in family recreation. Tourists will always see our Valley from their vehicles, unless we put in "traps" as on Route 2 to Glacier.

Good vision of future; big role for tourism in that future.
A bright future if we get some type of control on development. The window of opportunity is closing. The county should stop all subdivision until a plan for growth is in place. Tourist events should be developed around Valley culture, history, storytelling, powwows, and natural history.

Visit and move on.

Keep it the beautiful, less populated Valley it used to be.

Would like recreation-oriented tourism encouraged. No “uptown” casinos, no big city malls. Encourage RV parks, recreation, year-round opportunities. Not much advertising is needed to bring people to the area.

My vision is to remain wild and beautiful. No more Jackson Holes or Colorados.

I would like to see an industry come here that would be environmentally safe, with decent wages for our own people. Tourists only cause the prices to go up in the grocery stores, fill up our few recreation sites (lakes, rivers, etc.), and have high impact on our highways.

Development of more destination attractions – better museum facilities, forest interpretative center, large native flower gardens, etc. Also, some very major attraction that we can become famous for.

Tourism will play an increasingly vital role as the nation’s supply of “beautiful spaces” is depleted. Planned development of a tourism sector of our economy will help ensure that the Bitterroot Valley retains its “beautiful spaces”.

I would like to see growth, and more jobs, but at the same time I would like to see its beauty preserved, the forests kept sacred and closely monitored. I hate the thought of overpopulation, and with that always comes an increase in crime. I want to feel safe about raising my two children here without overpopulation in the schools, violence, etc. Growth is good as long as it is monitored.

Fair vision of the future; tourism should be well controlled.

A stable economy with a diversified base. Planned growth with the goal of maintaining the quality of life that we now enjoy. Tourism should play an important role in providing a stable and predictable portion of the Valley’s income.

Tourism is a strong alternative to more environmentally-damaging development.

Wanted or not, tourism will have an impact on the Bitterroot Valley. I would hope that my family and friends will continue to be able to visit this Valley and that they will be welcomed. While here, their contribution to the local economy is considerable.

The Valley seems to be moving towards summer homes, recreation, fishing, hunting, retirement. All of these areas seem to be in harmony with tourism.

Growing, making it more stable economically.

Tourism should and will play a significant role in the Bitterroot Valley’s future.

The Valley will probably grow but I really don’t think that tourism is a great factor because businesses are supported where it counts by the ones who live here, not the ones who pass through.

Conservation of natural resources. An example of the harmony and beauty that can bring.
Bleak Outlooks

▷ I hate to see all the new housing developments; I'm concerned about water, sewage, etc. I would like to see a planning committee do a reasonable prediction of growth and try not to expand too fast.

▷ Need manufacturing jobs so families can afford to live here in the Valley and not be forced to move away. Tourism should not be the #1 concern.

▷ I see an overdeveloped residential market with very few good-paying jobs. I feel tourism promotes very few good jobs for the impact it has, and should not be our first priority.

▷ Going from bad to worse. Leave it alone.

▷ The Valley is getting too crowded. Crime is on the rise. There are too many people who come here to live.

▷ This place could easily become another Vail or Aspen, Colorado — strictly a playground for the rich — and would not enhance people's lives who like it here (because of clean air, water, etc.) because they would be forced to move to another lower rent district in order to survive financially.

▷ Come enjoy the Valley and go home. Too many houses. Too many people.

▷ There will be more tourism in the future [even] if nothing is done to bring them in. In the long run, tourism will have a negative effect on this Valley.

▷ We see the Bitterroot Valley becoming overcrowded and the quality of life diminishing.

▷ I see another Las Vegas, Nevada, or Deadwood, South Dakota.

▷ Tourism is changing the face of the Bitterroot in a negative manner. I would like to see tourism controlled by means of a sales and/or bed tax.

▷ I feel that tourism, if promoted, will completely ruin the Valley. I've seen it happen in other places. It draws too many undesirables and promotes all types of crime. It would kill the reason for which 50 to 60% of the people live here.

▷ The Bitterroot will continue to grow, and the Californians will continue to come and pay high prices for everything and take jobs at low pay rates.

▷ Our sewer system has faults now and might not handle the additional load. Highway 93 is unbearable now.

▷ I have some real concerns about growth in the Valley and am not sure this [place] would be my choice if I had it to do again. I'm not anti-growth but am concerned about our direction. I'm not sure of the role tourism plays in this.

▷ Could go downhill unless everyone develops more civic pride. The clutter and untidiness of properties is terrible. It seems to get worse and, if this continues, I don't think the Bitterroot will continue to be a pleasant place to visit.

▷ Future is bleak unless counties get the upper hand on uncontrolled indiscriminate subdividing and commercial strip development along Highway 93.

▷ Growing way faster than I would like see. Big city attitudes are changing our Valley drastically.

▷ Not very good, the way development is occurring.

▷ Too much congestion. Law enforcement is overworked — too many outsiders want to make their own laws, and not obey our Montana laws.
▷ 3000 homes! – there goes the Valley.

▷ My vision of the Bitterroot Valley’s future is less decent paying jobs and more retail service jobs. Only the wealthier retirees will be able to afford land or homes. Tourism could become a year-round attraction.

▷ Overcrowded, overdeveloped, and complete loss of what brought them here to begin with.

▷ Continued low-paying jobs for the working people and tourism will only add to the low-paying jobs.

▷ Population growth in the Valley is continuing and with that growth comes many “outside” influences. It will happen and, in fact, is already taking place – planning and management are the key. We can’t stop it, but we can evaluate and plan ways to control it. Tourism is a natural offshoot to growth and beauty such as we have here in the Valley.

▷ My vision is that the Bitterroot Valley will experience rapid growth as big-moneyed, big city refugees migrate away from their “hell holes”. I do not believe in efforts to curtail anyone’s right to move or relocate as they wish. But it is unfortunate that as this migration continues, the property values (and property taxes) are and will continue to force people to move away and the demographics will change.

▷ Uncontrolled growth with congestion, more crime, and higher taxes. Let tourism take its own course.

▷ Tourism will be lost because of the tremendous, fast growth in the Valley. Tourism is a great money maker for the Valley, but in the near future who would want to leave the city life and vacation in another city?

▷ Not a good future because services such as police and roads have not kept up with problems brought in with tourists.

▷ Continued growth and the end of a great place to live. Tourism is not a related issue, regarding the fate of the Bitterroot. People escaping worse places, and bringing their city “ideals” with them, turn the tide toward exodus.

▷ I see the Bitterroot Valley’s future as this: in 50 years the Valley will be house to house from Darby to Lolo.

▷ My vision of the Valley’s future is too much population growth – water quality problems, high real estate prices (making it impossible for the natives to compete), air quality problems, increases in crime.

▷ There are going to be many more houses or homes on small acreages.

▷ My vision is the Bitterroot Valley being like Aspen, Vail, or Lake Tahoe! An over-priced, no industry, overcrowded place to play, where we natives have to move away from in order to find employment that pays over minimum wage. I have no problem with reasonable tourism, but there is a reason people used to like our way of life. As we get trampled, that quality changes. How about a little leadership as we steamroll our tourism concerns.

▷ Each additional person in the Bitterroot makes an infinitesimal reduction in the quality of life of those already here. I don’t know how many infinitesimals it takes to make a finite unit, but why promote it? It’s going to happen regardless, but I would prefer foot dragging to pushing.

▷ Unless we can agree on and pass a comprehensive land use plan, we will continue to experience hodge-podge, chaotic, and helter-skelter subdivisions, increasing traffic congestion, etc. until there is precious little left to attract tourists or anyone else.
Overcrowded, polluted, good for business, not so good for quality of life – unless we have excellent land use planning with a strict septic permit system.

The Bitterroot is doomed.

Basically, as in many areas, this Valley has changed drastically since I first came here 15 years ago. It’s a snowball headed for hell if some controls are not applied soon. Good luck to all of us!

I am concerned about uncontrolled growth in the Valley. If steps are not taken now to put a lid on this problem, tourism will decline to a dangerously low level.

Tourism could have a great role in the economic development of the Bitterroot. One concern is how “we” are going to keep up. We are already way behind in traffic control. My other concern is that the typical Bitterrooter will not be able to live here comfortably because of the out-of-state dollars that are already causing stress. The schools are already overcrowded and a lot of people refuse to help fill the needs of the community. We should be taking care of the needs of our people first!

Historically and consistently, it is characteristic of this area to invite beauty lovers to visit with only limited community resources to support them. Resources are not adequate for a large population in the Valley.

Confusion and congestion.

I am concerned with the rate of growth. I moved here for a quality life in 1976 and hate to see too many changes.

I see much building and general use of land and space and much overuse of our roads in the Valley. I am of the older generation, so I may be a bit biased in some of my likes and dislikes.

My vision of the future is dim, unless strong measures are adopted to manage the growth. Tourism, being inevitable, should be restricted through careful management.

It’s going to be strictly a retirement area as there’s no industry here to support young people with families. People will flock in to get away from earthquakes, floods, etc., but won’t be able to afford homes and there will be no jobs.

Down play tourism. The future doesn’t look so good. Lack of clean air and adequate water are major concerns, not to mention the extreme increase in traffic and accidents. I fear the day my children begin to drive. We have a lack of experience to drive as defensively as you need to around here; I have close calls daily on Eastside, as well as on 93 and at crossings.

Although I am not against tourists, tourists see how nice, peaceful, and beautiful the Valley is. And this gives them the idea to move here, overcrowding the Valley.

I liked the Bitterroot Valley as it was 30 years ago. Unfortunately, tourism is on the increase – a situation which is not likely to change. We, therefore, need to develop methods of dealing with this increase so that the impact is pleasant for all concerned.

I am sure this Valley will continue to grow and develop. I do not like to see it change, but it is inevitable so we must accept this. I hope this growth can be orderly and also not tax us out of our homes to provide needed services, such as schools, fire, streets, water, sewer, etc.

Ultimately the Valley will fill with people who take for granted what we have here, and the quality of life will deteriorate as it has already in most parts of the country.
A very overcrowded Valley. Taxes and prices so high that people on fixed incomes will not be able to live here.

Retirement Valley for residents from states with overpopulation, high taxes, and high crime rates. Unfortunately, tourism will promote more retirement here, and increase population, taxes, and crime rates.

Bleak.

I see the Bitterroot growing dramatically each year. I'd hate to see it become another Aspen. Tourism has a major role in development, as I talk to numerous people who come to visit, fall in love with the area, and move here. Most of those people do care about the beauty, but for those passing through... how do you educate an entire nation of consumers to pick up after themselves and respect the beauty they came to see? I'm afraid for the most part they use and abuse it.

The future for the Bitterroot is bleak - the quality of life is poor and crime is rampant. Sewage is in all the aquifers and recreational opportunities are minimal. I would like to see tourism dumped. The only people who are going to benefit from tourism are real estate people.

I see a steadily deteriorating future; a tourist now and then wouldn't hurt.

I see too many people for the Valley to sustain. No jobs, too little pay.

My vision of the Bitterroot Valley's future is without me living in it. As soon as I can sell out, I'm out of here!

Extreme growth - subdivisions from Florence to Hamilton. A lot of people want to live in the Valley and they're coming in fast. Unfortunately, the open fields along the route from Hamilton to Missoula will eventually be filled with homes.

Too much growth, too fast. We need more county planning for control of growth and its impacts on education and law enforcement.

Other Suggestions

Tourism should help finance and mandate city-county land use planning.

I don't think tourism is a sound economic industry. It is usually comprised of a few promoters (paying minimum wage) extracting some profit from tourists, while locals have to pay for the services and wait in line. We need more basic industries like the log homes, medical research, or light manufacturing to really realize economic growth.

We are simple people, who want simple things out of life - not radical change caused by newcomers moving into the Valley from large cities. If tourism could promote our peaceful way of life and attract people wanting our lifestyle, that would enhance the Bitterroot Valley. Unfortunately, in many instances, newcomers bring with them their ideas of what we should become, and don't appreciate what we are.

People in all walks of life are different. Some tourists come here and appreciate and enjoy the area. Others take advantage and misuse it. I believe it is called respect... If there could be a way to enforce that, tourism would never be a problem.

As long as there is responsible planning, all will benefit. Who are we to deny this beauty to others? I'm sick of the attitude in this Valley against tourists and transplants.
I believe the Bitterroot would best be served by having clean industry. Everybody wants to live here, yet few want to sacrifice income, accept local development, or — in essence — grow (not just economically, but socially). Manufacturing clean retail products and marketing them elsewhere; rich people buying summer (or better yet winter) cabins here, but living elsewhere; winter tourism to balance our summer-winter economic cycles — all are top considerations in my view.

Need to control signs in the Valley. Need zoning. Need improvement in traffic system. Tourism should be part of Bitterroot Valley’s future.

Tourism should have a minor role in the Bitterroot Valley’s future because it is seasonal.

There will always be people trying to get away to the calm and quiet of the Bitterroot. Take tourism slow or you’ll be overrun and ruined by too much too soon.

Tourism’s role should remain minor. If it becomes major, this will be a grievous error and all who truly care about the Bitterroot will pay a high price in exchange for what we all “once had”.

In a mountain/rural community, I believe more people have to have a truly land-based, natural resource-based economy and wealth. Tourism is a want-driven industry and as such is unstable.

The more tourists we have, the more new families are going to be coming permanently. Already we are plagued with traffic congestion, “out of sight property prices”, and a marked increase in crime. My opinion is don’t encourage tourism — there will be more than enough on its own. I say to those who come anyway: “Look, don’t touch, then go home.”

Planned and controlled growth is not all bad.

I don’t believe there are enough attractions in the Valley to greatly increase tourism. We have many friends and relatives that come to visit (they think the Valley is beautiful) and then they move on.

The role of tourism should be positive, provided those aspects of the Bitterroot are not destroyed by over-logging, over-mining, and over-developing the Valley.

Tourism should have limited application because the jobs are mostly low-paying.

The Valley is going to grow no matter what we say or do; we just need a little control over the growth.

I feel the local real estate agents are overselling the Bitterroot Valley. I guess I’m fearful of tourism; we are growing too fast.

Let nature take its course — less bureaucracy and government.

Tourism should have a small part — preferably people just passing through quickly and not coming back.

You can not stop tourism, but it is too bad when a lot of people’s income for the year is geared to 3-6 months of tourism income; then the rest of the year they make almost nothing. Tourism creates a lot of low-paying, temporary jobs.

Tourism should have a minimum role.

Role: none. Tourism will come — you can’t close roads.

I would not want tourism to be the whole vision. We need to build on residents [not tourists], and jobs to keep families here that want to stay here. Our quality of life depends on people working in the community year-round.

We dare not become exclusive in our attitude, or snobbish.
I think a task force should look at other successful tourist areas and learn from their expertise. Tourism will be in this Valley whether locals want it or not, so be as well prepared as possible. Some success stories are: Leavenworth, WA; Polson, MT; and Kimberly, Alberta.

Increasing population and decreasing supply of natural resources like timber. Increases in tourism could bring in outside dollars to help offset the losses of local revenue from extractive industries like logging.

Limited tourism.

Think 10 to 15 years ahead.

To develop places such as Lake Como at the cost of local taxpayers just so out-of-state tourists can feel pampered is not the kind of tourism that needs to be developed here. They should leave things the way they are so that the more adventurous visitor can afford to enjoy Montana. Do not develop Montana into destination resorts!

Since we can’t stop tourism and we shouldn’t profit from it except for retail sales, tax it to allow it to pay for the extra services it demands.

Little role for tourism.

We need quality employment opportunities for present and future residents which will provide a tax base and an ability-to-pay sufficient to provide necessary government services.

The Bitterroot has been discovered. We can stick our head in the sand or we can begin to plan and accept what is going to happen.

I think we have no choice but to promote tourism.

Tourism should play a large role, but industrial parks, improved roads, and good planning should come first.

Promote tourism and plan and develop the industry in such a way as to meet the pressures on all webs of services in the Valley.

We need all the help we can get in the Bitterroot because the “City Fathers” would never let any business come in. Thus tourism, which no one can keep out, comes in. I’ve witnessed this for many years.

Ideas for Tourism Development Projects

If the assessment committee determines that tourism development is a wise strategy for future economic development, they will identify possible short- and long-term projects to be ranked and further evaluated for their economic, social, and environmental impacts.

Respondents were given an opportunity to offer ideas for these projects. While a number did offer suggestions, many respondents expressed concerns about financing of tourism development and potential impacts, including traffic congestion, that may result from increased tourism. Furthermore, as suggested earlier, many residents expressed opinions that there is already enough (or perhaps too much) tourism, or, that the focus on tourism development is somehow misdirected – that there are more important issues to be addressed in the Bitterroot Valley.
Ideas

▷ Keep it basic, rustic; preserve natural beauty. Keep it accessible but not too accessible – used but not swarmed over – basically as is.

▷ No changes.

▷ Clean up the river from Stevensville to Florence. Get rid of the junk cars. Keep roadways and camp areas cleaner. Make welfare put people to work for a check doing the clean up.

▷ Clean up campaign to obliterate the trash and junk, at least from the Highway 93 corridor.

▷ A major clean-up program – private dumps and unkempt properties detract. “Westernizing” or “frontier-nizing” strategic businesses and other areas – develop some common themes.

▷ Move Nevada City, MT here.

▷ Bike trails. More mountain access for foot and horse travel. Affordable lodging.

▷ (1) Development of snowmobile accesses and services and marketing of this aggressively as an enjoyable tourist vacation sport. (2) Development of golf course services (and related sub-businesses). (3) Encouragement of summer-cabin tourism in the high end market. Direct costs of custom homes, golf, and related expensive sports. This is a clean industry and well suited to our construction-heavy employment. (4) Manufacturing of MT-made products to outside markets; this is not necessarily tourism, but is along the lines of a clean, economic industry.

▷ Wilderness safe houses for grizzly bear advocates. Signs at every trailhead that say “all who enter, you have just entered the food chain”.

▷ Once a month (or more often) rodeo in summer. A zoo with native animals. Some type of a western show with local people participating.

▷ Rebuild Fort Owen as a working Living History Center.

▷ More emphasis on wildlife and wilderness protection.

▷ Dude ranches, community support of local artists, destination golf courses, recreation outfitting, rodeos, festivals that celebrate Rocky Mountain heritage, continued restoration of Daly Mansion and stables.


▷ Guided tours by travel guides and recreation guides, etc. Golf courses. Forest Service could provide lectures in building facilities as well as outdoors.

▷ Convention center, sales tax, remodel fronts of buildings in towns, beautification of Highway 93, improvement of Eastside Highway. Light manufacturing should be one of the definite goals of the Valley.

▷ Operate a “Valley” excursion train daily, in summer, between Missoula and Hamilton on existing MRL track.

▷ Water park.

▷ More campgrounds. More access by road for people not wishing or not able to hike.


▷ More outdoor events like the powwow, bluegrass festival, rodeos, etc.

▷ Panning gold for tourists, convention center, sports complex.
A festival type event (e.g., Libby Nordic Fest) based on a historical event such as Lewis and Clark or others. Powwow at Daly Mansion was good. More bike paths may be attractive.

Historical education programs (Lewis and Clark, Salish-Kootenai, Marcus Daly, etc.). Always include the precious balance of tourism impact on river systems and backwoods areas.

Better roads, more camping areas.

Sawmill tours and self-guided, signed forestry site tours.

We need more big RV parks for retired folk – they are the spenders. We could have them for 3-4 months, resulting in low impact on the environment and big economic impact.

More developed campgrounds. Public access to fishing streams. Enhanced fishing.

A bicycle/walking/hiking trail with campsites and shuttle bus going the length of the Bitterroot.

Expand Lost Trail ski area.

Theme park, gambling.

Government grants for “Green Projects”. For example: (1) outdoor survival courses for teens and adults, (2) organized hike (day and longer) trips, (3) organized river float trips.

Conservation tours.

Advertising.

Better advertising.

Marketing.

Better signs and advertisement on a local level.

Financing Tourism (and other equity issues)

Bring in more money interests to invest in better facilities.

Use the bed tax to help pay for local services, not to promote more tourism.

Impose a 2% sales tax on all out-of-staters and apply that to improving our highways.

Tax out-of-staters at least $.08/dollar (with Montana cardholders exempt from tax).

A local option sales tax on “luxury” or non-essential items such as dining, lodging, and recreational services.

Insure tourists pay for the use of our Valley by some means that does not cost current residents also.

Full time RVers and “summer snow birds” come here to enjoy northern state climates in the summer months. Most of the states they come from charge Montana winter visitors sales tax. I believe we should be exempted from their sales tax if we do not charge them any in our state when they visit here.

Concern for Impacts

Take a look at Branson, Missouri. It was a beautiful Ozark town. Now it is a disaster area (overcrowded with no infrastructure).

I’ve been to places like Sun Valley, Whitefish, and Jackson Hole; tourism on that basis makes it impossible to afford to live in these communities unless you’re on the upper income scale.
If we need to develop tourism, let's promote "ma & pa" shops – something to promote the quality of life, education, or self improvement; not what we can rape out of our community before the whole state of California moves here.

Tourism should play a minor role in the Bitterroot Valley, to minimize its impacts on recreational facilities and pollution.

Do not encourage tourism into wilderness areas; develop non-wilderness sites.

If tourism is going to be developed, it needs to supply income year-round and not a lot of temporary low-paying summer jobs. Also the impact on our recreational sites, hunting, and fishing are enormous, and the residents of the Valley pay the price along with the wildlife. I think it is a beautiful place to live, but you can develop too fast and too big for the area to support.

Tourists are welcome to visit the Daly Mansion, museum, Ravalli County fair; but not to stay.

Tourists are welcome to come visit but not to stay. These people move here because they like the area and our way of life, but soon want to change everything to what it was like in the area that they disliked and moved here to get away from.

Tourism would be good for the Bitterroot if it is developed carefully. I don't want to see tourism override other types of local business. It should not develop into a tourist-trap environment.

I think that as long as tourism is going to cause the cost of living to escalate, that there should be more lower income housing made available to those of us who are working hard but still having to compete with the ever increasing rent payments. There's not enough affordable housing for the Bitterroot people, because tourists and out-of-staters who move here are willing and able to pay $500-600/month for rent; we are not.

Tourism only promotes low income jobs, impact on streams and rivers, and impact on hunting.

Put into place high building code laws and strict zoning laws.

Traffic

Any tourism development project must consider Highway 93 and the increased usage it will receive with more tourism. It must be widened to 4 lanes or at least have several areas with a passing lane.

Widening Highway 93 would help accommodate the increased traffic tourists bring. Tourists should contribute to the local quality of life and economy through taxes - perhaps on gas during summer months or on lodging and services or through higher campground fees?

Accommodate increased traffic with better road systems and maintenance. Frustration in this area runs high and makes old timers' and new residents' irritability levels rise a measurable degree.

Four lane Highway 93 from Missoula south to Salmon; County-maintained restrooms to ease private facilities; and the rest will follow.

Make sure the traffic patterns can handle the increased use before development blossoms. There is nothing worse for morale than to be stuck in a traffic jam of seasonal traffic while on the way to work.
Four lane Highway 93. It's the pits and has been far too long.

Impose a 2% sales tax on all out-of-staters and apply that to improving our highways.

Construct a new highway to accommodate the traffic.

Encourage and enforce slow moving traffic to yield to flow of vehicles stacked up behind.

Too Much Already

The question assumes we want increased tourism, I don't.

There is already enough.

Don't want tourists; they just encourage more population here.

As I've told many others: If you're looking for tourist attractions don't come to the Bitterroot Valley; if you're looking for a great place to live come to the Bitterroot Valley. "Tourist attractions" could change the way I feel about living here.

I hope there is consideration given to off-season uses for the tourism projects - similar to the peace-time conversion of the military industry.

Having lived most of my years in a high tourism impacted area, I feel tourism is the last thing I would choose as a benefit to the economy. It wrecked the other place for the residents.

Don't develop.

Keep out signs.

Don't.

Put signs on both ends of the Valley that say "Gut shoot 'em at the borders".

I don't want to see any development. I feel the Valley is too crowded now.

Please don't promote our little Valley anymore. We are losing the quality of life at a rapid enough rate as it is!

From the 70's I've seen tourism increase. The people that move here are tourists that have been here before. They bring with them crime, drugs, and other big city problems they are trying to leave behind. The only development of tourism I would like to see is the lack of it.

Forget it.

Misdirected Focus

Tourism provides only a minor non-year-round business for the Valley as opposed to solid year-round manufacturing facilities.

Most sides of tourism have negative effects. We need a more sound economic base to stabilize this Valley, not concentrating our efforts on the continual rise and fall of tourism tides and their trickle down effects that cheapen our way of life here.

I believe we need to focus on things that build families and right, wholesome living. Gambling and alcohol-related attractions destroy the kind of image I want us to be known for. Do we actually have enough "attractions" to warrant the adverse results that come from an influx of tourists. Focus on quality, not quantity.

The Bitterroot Valley does not have the major tourist draws - big water or major skiing - therefore tourism development would result in a commercial, junky tourist trap, and we are too far gone for a cutesy tourist trap.
Forget the tourists! What does this Valley offer young teens? Our local teens are being picked-up for shoplifting, MIP's (minors-in-possession), breaking into homes, and property destruction. Give them somewhere to go that doesn’t cost parents half-a-week’s wage to entertain a teenager – video arcades, movies geared for teens only (shown on special nights), a local ice rink.

Distinguishing Supporters from Non-Supporters

Earlier, when discussing resident perceptions of positive and negative impacts, we said that those Bitterrooters who perceive positive impacts and not negative ones may be said to be positive about the industry. Conversely, those who perceive negative impacts but not the positive ones, were said to be negative about the industry.

To address our final objective of identifying distinguishing characteristics of those who support tourism and those who do not, we used a statistical procedure to group the respondents to our survey into two groups – those who held relatively positive opinions about the industry and those who held relatively negative opinions. As might be expected, those with positive opinions were much more likely to prefer that tourism play a dominant role in the Bitterroot Valley economy (Figure 6).

7 Through cluster analysis, we grouped those who had similar patterns of responses to the twenty-two opinion statements regarding tourism impacts and management. While the differences between groups are more important than the relative size of the groups, 54% of respondents were placed in the “positive” group and 46% in the “negative” group.

Figure 6. Preferred role of tourism in the Valley economy, by whether respondents had generally positive or negative opinions about the industry.
By definition, the positive group perceived the greater positive impacts and vice versa for the negative group. Nevertheless, it is interesting to compare the responses of the two groups to the statement that the overall benefits of tourism outweigh the negative impacts (Figure 7).

Members of the two groups did not differ with regards to several standard demographic variables, including gender, age, household income, or being born in Montana. Those who were positive about the industry had slightly higher education levels.

While the two groups did not differ on age, those who were negative about the industry had lived longer in Montana and in the Bitterroot than those who were positive about the industry (Figure 8).

Finally, we asked respondents to indicate how they were personally affected by tourism. We asked how they felt they were affected overall as well as in terms of economic, cultural, and recreational opportunities. We also asked them to indicate whether they felt their job security was positively or negatively affected by tourism (Figure 9).

It is notable that even those who were positive about the industry felt, on average, somewhat negatively impacted in terms of their recreation. Those who were negatively disposed toward the industry felt these impacts even more strongly and the importance of this impact seems to be reflected in their assessment of overall impacts. In contrast, the negative impact on recreational opportunities did not seem to affect the overall rating of the positive group.
Figure 8. Length of residence (years and percent of life) in Montana and the Bitterroot Valley, by whether respondents had generally positive or negative opinions about the industry.

Figure 9. Average (mean) responses to questions regarding how respondents were personally affected by tourism, by whether respondents had generally positive or negative opinions about the industry.
**APPENDIX: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS**

To allow comparison to other Bitterroot Valley surveys and to further define our sample for the benefit of our readers, we provide the following outline of the demographic characteristics of our weighted database.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>58%</th>
<th>42%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>18-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50-59</th>
<th>60-69</th>
<th>70-89</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Born in Montana</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Lived in Bitterroot Valley</th>
<th>0-5</th>
<th>6-10</th>
<th>11-15</th>
<th>16-20</th>
<th>21-25</th>
<th>26 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>High school or less</th>
<th>Some college</th>
<th>College graduate</th>
<th>Post-graduate study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income (1994, before taxes)</th>
<th>Less than $10,000</th>
<th>$10,000 to $19,999</th>
<th>$20,000 to $29,999</th>
<th>$30,000 to $39,999</th>
<th>$40,000 to $49,999</th>
<th>$50,000 to $59,999</th>
<th>$60,000 to $69,999</th>
<th>$70,000 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>