



# Rehabilitating Tourism

A Vision and Approach to our Desired Future  
for the Willamette Valley

**Destination Regeneration Report**



**Willamette  
Valley**

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# The Willamette Valley Visitors Association and Destination Regeneration

## Destination Regeneration Program Overview

Destination Regeneration is a 12-month hybrid program created by the Transformational Travel Council and a team of regenerative tourism development practitioners. It blends self-paced courses, regular online gatherings, and two in-person workshops, and follows a 5-phase process. The program is designed to: build participant and community understanding of transformational travel practices and regenerative development for tourism; build participant and community capacity to self-organize, work together and co-manage; gain meaningful community engagement and input; and ultimately co-create Regenerative Guidelines for Actions to steer the destination into its desired future state. The program incorporates transformational travel design and regenerative leadership practices and tools such as Way of Council and Appreciative Inquiry, as well as contemplative practices, deep listening, and connection to nature, and hosts and facilitates multi-stakeholder\* dialogues. The program takes care to go beyond traditional decision-making processes and evolve ways of being, thinking, and relating to ourselves, each other, and nature.

The program dedicates time and care to mindset-shifting techniques, to allow for program participants and the greater community to establish a vision and approach to destination planning that reaches toward a regenerative future for their place. This method moves away from a problem-solving approach to planning and rather designs from potential. The next section provides a detailed overview of the program's methodology.

\*residents, local Indigenous tribes, visitor-facing stakeholders/businesses, economic partners, makers/producers and nature itself.



## Vision and Approach Fit for the Future

This plan sets the course for a regenerative future that we as program participants and the community at the time of writing, may never see in our lifetimes. This plan is meant to set in motion the desired future state for generations to come, and to give us as a community, the tools and framework to take steps towards incremental change. This will lead us to the ultimate change we want to see, as described in our desired future state for our valley:

*“Through the regenerative connections between thriving communities and nature, the Willamette Valley celebrates and honors its vibrant diversity, rich and replenishing systems and bioregional bounty. This harmony maintains self-sustaining and integrated environments.*

*The Willamette Valley celebrates diversity and equity for all residents. We are home to thriving communities where residents and visitors have access to local, clean, healthy energy, food and transportation systems. Willamette Valley residents work together to ensure both equality and equity in everyday lives and that each person is celebrated for their unique qualities and craft they bring to the community. We work together so that residents and communities alike have the support to thrive. We care for each other and the natural world we call home.”*

While the timeline is long, and the end goals are far reaching, the plan has been designed to leverage real change that can happen now, leading to a long lasting impact into the future. The plan should be used as an evergreen tool for inspiration and a practical framework for action. Therefore, the plan should be the starting point for future tourism strategic action plans and strategies, incorporating the overarching vision, desired future state and end state goals, to continue moving forward towards regeneration.



## Inviting the Community to get Involved

This plan is different from other tourism strategies. It is not only for the tourism community, it is for everyone who believes in the vision of a thriving future for the valley. This future can't be realized in silos. Achieving real change requires collaboration, community and self-organization. Therefore, this plan is an open invitation to the Willamette Valley community to get involved. Let's create this future together.

## Why WVVA and why now?

Due to the Willamette Valley's large geographic span, in which tourism is managed by the Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA), a Regional Destination Management (RDM), and six smaller Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), one of the main challenges the valley's tourism faces is working together under a shared vision based on shared values. When destination community stakeholders\* understand the value of protecting their places, and how tourism intersects within larger systems and contexts, they prioritize and support grassroots efforts. Thus, empowering the tourism industry and beyond to better create programs that promote responsible economic growth and vitality. Based on this understanding, WVVA asked: "How do we inspire our communities to understand the value of strategy and unification, and how do we communicate to visitors and industry alike the need to protect the destination, not just promote and experience it." It was within this context that WVVA sought a different framework to destination management, one that took a community-wide, values-based strategic approach. When setting out on this path, WVVA set short-, mid- and long-term goals:



### Short-term:

To reframe, establish and share the definition of healthy tourism in the valley.



### Mid-term:

To diversify the seats at the table, communicate and collaborate more efficiently with communities.



### Long-term:

To create the conditions for the Willamette Valley to be a regenerative place.

## About Transformational Travel and Regenerative Development for Tourism

The terms transformation and regeneration have become popular in the travel industry. However, they are often misunderstood, or worse, used as a tool to greenwash (misleading or deceptive publicity disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image.).

- The Transformational Travel Council defines **transformational travel** as intentionally traveling to stretch, learn and grow into new ways of being and engaging with self, others, and the world through meaningful encounters, deeper self-awareness and reflection, and immersive authentic travel experiences. Adopting this mindset has the potential to set travelers on a journey that bears fruit long after they return home and can ignite a sense of will and agency that will drive positive change in travelers' own communities and places.
- **Regenerative tourism**<sup>1</sup> consists in applying living-system thinking and being to the development of a tourism destination, to design for the thriveability of the system as a whole. In this approach, a tourism destination is understood as a living place with unique potential. It is composed of a myriad of interdependent and interconnected stakeholders among the tourism industry and its related sectors, including nature itself.
- The Transformational Travel Council are global experts in transformational travel and regenerative tourism, and are convening a community of purpose-driven, forward-looking travel professionals to connect, share, learn, and unlock the power of travel to positively transform how we live our lives, how we live with others, and how we live on our planet through transformative education, regenerative tourism development, community engagement, experiences, and events.

Therefore, regenerative tourism goes beyond the traditional sustainability approach that aims at preventing or reducing the detrimental impact of human activities. It repositions our species in harmony with the interconnected web of life to which it belongs. Hence, it requires a profound shift in our ways of being and thinking and the cultivation of regenerative leadership skills and qualities such as a sense of care and compassion for all living beings, as well as relationship-building, collaboration, and co-creation skills.

The combination of both conscious transformative travel experiences for travelers and a regenerative development of tourism destinations have the power to make travel a force for good.

<sup>1</sup>Source: REGEN Hospitality, Marina Laurent <https://regenhospitality.com/>

\*residents, local Indigenous tribes, visitor-facing stakeholders/businesses, economic partners, makers/producers and nature itself.





## Program Participants

There were a total of eleven (11) program participants who contributed immense time, effort and care into the creation of this plan.

### **Audrey Comerford**

Oregon State University Extension Service  
Agritourism Coordinator

### **Ken Henson**

Chef and Refettorio Consulting owner

### **Kieron Wilde**

First Nature Tours Founder

### **Scott Bricker**

Travel Oregon Vice President,  
Destination Development

### **Tracey Sunflower**

Wesfir Lodge Owner

### **Taylor Pfaff**

Left Coast Estate CEO

### **Jessy Fabrizio-Stover**

Outdoor Recreation and Global Sales Coordinator

### **Katie McFall**

Communications and Program Manager

### **Macy Mullholland**

Travel Salem

Destination Ambassador:

### **Ruby O-Donnell**

Willamette Valley Visitor's Association

### **Dawnielle Tehama**

Willamette Valley Visitor's Association

# Program Methodology

The Willamette Valley Visitors Association began the Destination Regeneration program in January 2022, and completed the program in January 2023. This section details the Destination Regeneration process used to create this plan.

## **Participant Selection**

Before officially launching the program with the Willamette Valley Visitors Association, efforts were taken to ensure the group of program participants included diverse voices and perspectives from a range of tourism industry segments. Program participants include representatives from hospitality and accommodations, food and wine, outfitting and tour operation, agritourism, and both state-level and regional destination management.



## B. Theory U-Model

The program follows Otto Scharmer's Theory-U change management method. The five-phased approach first moves down the left side of the "U" when we open up and unpack our preconceived notions and assess our inner values; before determining our collective goals at the bottom of the "U", and then moving up the right side of the "U" where we link all that we've learned in the program into practical applications, namely the Regenerative Guidelines for Action.



## C. Co-Design Process

The co-design process took multiple steps to engage our broader community of stakeholders to take a proactive role in the development of our Place. Projects and initiatives that have emerged from this collaborative design process collectively understand what the Place is and what roles stakeholders should embrace to realize that vision.

## D. Online Gatherings and In-Person Workshops

Program participants attended a total of 9 monthly online gatherings designed to build our capacity and understanding of transformational design practices and regenerative development for tourism and how they interrelate; while doing "inner work" to develop an understanding of our underlying beliefs, values and worldviews; then understanding the context of our place, Willamette Valley, its stakeholders, challenges and opportunities. The online gatherings then built our understanding of design thinking from potential and the process of co-creating regenerative goals and tactics that make up the Regenerative Guidelines for Action set out in this report. Each online gathering was facilitated by Destination Regeneration facilitators, and was a blend of theory and practices including contemplative exercises and co-design tools as noted in the opening section of this plan.



## Online Gathering 1

*Creating a safe space for transformation to happen.*

During this initial session we as program participants introduced ourselves and our role in tourism in Willamette Valley, and learned about the Transformational Travel Council, and the Destination Regeneration program.

## Online Gathering 3

*Regenerative leadership skills and qualities<sup>2</sup>*

During this session we were guided through tools to cultivate the skills and qualities of the IDGs, including personal development tools such as journaling, nature walks and contemplation.

## Online Gathering 4

*Design thinking and working with emergence*

The first online gathering after the workshop introduced the concepts of design thinking as an inclusive, facilitated learning and action-oriented process where participants engage in building empathy, cooperative learning and co-designing of actions.

## Workshop #2

*Crystallizing the vision and prototyping*

The second two-day in-person workshop was focused on building the place-based vision and the end-state goals for Willamette Valley as a destination.

## Online Gathering 7 & 8

*Design Sprint*

These extended sessions were focused on completing the Regenerative Guidelines for Action, using the Theory of Change tables and building from the core elements of the plan created during Workshop #2, which are the Destination Manifesto, the Desired Future for the valley, the Destination End-State Goals, and the Regenerative Development Goals.

## Online Gathering 2

*Transformation and regeneration in travel & tourism.*

This session provided a detailed overview of transformational travel as a tool for regeneration and how regenerative development applies to tourism.

## Workshop #1

*Creating destination transformation from the inside out*

The first two-day in-person workshop was designed to dig deeper into the concepts of transformational travel and regenerative tourism, foster reflection and inner work, create a space for program participants to connect, and begin to identify shared values among participants and a common vision for the destination.

## Online Gathering 5

*Co-design and community engagement<sup>3</sup>*

This session detailed the concepts of contextualizing the place or the destination within its nested systems. We underwent a co-designing process of destination stakeholder ecosystem mapping and began to consider where there might be deep leverage points for action

## Online Gathering 6

*Tools for regenerative tourism strategic planning.*

As the program shifted into co-designing the Regenerative Guidelines for Action, this session focused on guiding program participants through the frameworks and tools used in regenerative development for tourism.

- A. The Law of Three Framework
- B. The Three Levels of Work Framework
- C. Regenerative Development Principles for Places
- D. Regenerative Developmental Goal Characteristics<sup>4</sup>

## Online Gathering 9

*Honoring our progress and ongoing process*

This session created space to celebrate the work completed during the program, acknowledge the progress made, and set intentions for the ongoing commitment to implementation and a regenerative future for the valley.

See detailed Inner Development Goals Framework in Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup>Source: Ekskåret Foundation (2020) <https://www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org/>

<sup>3</sup>Source: Stakeholder Engagement and Regenerative Hospitality, Marina Laurent and Carlos Martin-Rios, Taylor & Francis

<sup>4</sup>Source: Regeneration Institute for Regenerative Practice, <https://www.regenerat.es/>



## E. Community Survey & Interviews Process and Results

Using design-thinking and co-design tools and practices involving both our team of program participants and the broader community of stakeholders locally, we underwent a process to uncover what makes our destination unique in multiple aspects (cultural, natural, economic), and reconnected around shared values and a common vision and identity for our destination.

This process was initiated during the first in-person workshop, which gave us the opportunity to get to know each other and connect deeper in a caring and safe environment and explore what unites us as members of this unique community. Commonly identified values were:

- 1. Future Generations Well-being**
- 2. Positive Difference in Community**
- 3. Trust among Stakeholders**
- 4. Nurturing Compassion**
- 5. Communication and Transparency**

Following this first workshop, we broke into three subgroups to deepen this conversation and presented our findings to the larger group of program participants. Once we were comfortable with them, we reached out to our local community to see how these values resonated with them through qualitative interviews with community stakeholders.

After the second workshop, the group consensus was that some of these values didn't resonate because they were too industry-focused and, as a result, resonated less within the community. We then refined them to account for the community sentiment and used them to write down our Destination Manifesto and Destination Assessment Report.

Stakeholders from the communities were surveyed from the following backgrounds; DMO, Guides & Operators, Wineries, Agriculture, Higher Education, Hoteliers,



## F. Destination Assessment Report (DAR)

The Willamette Valley Destination Assessment Report (DAR) assesses the current situation of the Willamette Valley as a tourism destination, and informs, in-part, the design and implementation of this plan. As well, the DAR monitors the Destination Regeneration program process from start to finish, in terms of the inner development of the people involved in the process and how this informs the outer development of the place. Following the approach of ownership and self-management fostered throughout the program, each program participant was assigned a section of the DAR to create.

Knowing tourism does not exist in a vacuum, and to understand and appreciate the greater context in which tourism sits, the DAR looks closely at a large number of the valley's characteristics. These include: Destination Current Situation and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC), including the creative economy, ecological features, cultural features and economic features; the Inner Development Goals of each participant; the Community's vision and values process and results; the Destination update, opportunities, victories, exciting things to come, and support needed; the Destination Ecosystem Map; and finally, the various elements that make up the Regenerative Guidelines for Action.

The DAR serves as the red thread throughout the entire program to monitor the transformational process that takes place within the program participants and in the community as we moved through the process, while simultaneously showcasing how this translates into tangible action planning for the valley.





# Tourism in our Valley and the Greater Context

The Willamette Valley spans Newberg and Wilsonville in the north to Cottage Grove in the south—while rising to the crest of both the Coast Range to the west and the Cascades to the east. Counties represented in this area include southwest Clackamas, Yamhill, Marion, Polk, Linn, Benton, and east Lane counties. The Willamette Valley is the largest river valley in the Pacific Northwest and is proud to be filled to the brim with wine and culinary experiences, family-friendly outings, small town charm and historic city centers, local and century farms, expansive outdoor recreation offerings including cycling routes, hiking trails, the Willamette River water trail, mountain biking, and more. The Willamette Valley is a home to more than 700 wineries and as of August 2021, the valley received protected geographic indicator status from the European Union, the second location in the U.S. to receive this recognition after Napa Valley. Tourism is a major economic driver. Direct tourism spending is estimated at \$1.7 billion dollars a year, of which 27% is accounted for from day visitors and the remaining 73% from overnight visitors. The most current estimates, from a 2018 Dean Runyan report, reflect nearly 6.8 million overnight person trips to the region a year. The main visitation season is summer, with spring and fall being our shoulder seasons. However, we are seeing, especially for more eastern areas, the season being condensed due to fire in August and September.

The Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the regional DMO for the Willamette Valley and works to drive visitor expenditures and economic impact to all parts of the region as well as identifies needs and develops resources to promote responsible tourism by reducing social and economic inequalities and advocating for diverse and inclusive visitor experiences. WVVA is a contractor of Travel Oregon and is funded through the transient lodging tax program based on House Bill 4146. Thus, funding to WVVA is legislatively dictated and defined by Travel Oregon through the Regional Cooperative Tourism Program (RCTP). WVVA is one of seven regional DMOs in Oregon that is part of the RCTP. WVVA is directed by a board of six Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO) and has a current staff of three. WVVA serves constituents across seven counties and holds two engagement sessions per year with stakeholders. The entire Willamette Valley is represented through board membership: South Clackamas County (Clackamas County Tourism), Yamhill County Tourism Partnership, Marion and Polk Counties (Travel Salem), Linn County (Albany Visitors Association), Benton County (Visit Corvallis), and East Lane County (Travel Lane County). The Willamette Valley is traditional territory of the Kalapuya Native American group.

Those main groups that make up our stakeholder maps include residents, farms, wineries, restaurants, Travel Oregon, Main Street, ODA, parks and other land managers, lodging, visitors, NGOs, non-profits, local Indigenous tribes, WVVA's DMO partners, tourism operators, travel agents and nature itself.

As shared in our community engagement and echoed by program participation, the valley's vast expanse of land, landscapes and experiences, and diversity of stakeholders and ways of life can challenge our shared sense of place. **Therefore, we strive for a sense of belonging and a distinct sense of place across the region.**

Overall there is an imbalance in priorities at the RDMO level. Politically WVVA must continue to work with communities to ensure their work is community-focused and aids in community livability. Invoking the principles of regenerative tourism, which is based on Indigenous principles and nature's systems, means to consider how our travel today will impact the land and community seven generations from now. While there is a clear need for destination stewardship at this level, WVVA's mandate remains that of a destination management organization. Further, capacity and finances are challenges experienced by WVVA in regard to time needed to continue to expand WVVA's focus past marketing or management and toward stewardship. Economically, WVVA's main source of funding spend is currently dictated by Travel Oregon's guidelines that specify they must be spent down to the dollar each biennium. Therefore WVVA has no reserves. Addressing these restraints in order to fulfill the organization's potential as a destination steward, is a priority.

The Willamette Valley is a natural wonderland which is embraced by visitors and inhabitants alike. However, the natural environment is at risk. For example, historically, the Willamette Valley forests were mostly an oak savanna—tall grasslands with scattered Garry oaks and groves of coast Douglas-fir. The river floodplains contained extensive wetlands, stands of willow, alder, and cottonwood, and gallery forests. Now, only 4% of native oak savannah is left. Most of the gallery forests that historically lined the riparian zones have been removed, which increases water siltation, pollution from agriculture, and temperature due to lack of shading. All these factors lead to a severely reduced capacity for native aquatic ecosystems to function. Further, the valley is the most densely settled region of Oregon, holding nearly 70% of the state's population. Urban sprawl is prevalent, and only 1% of this ecoregion is protected while natural habitat constitutes only around 2% of the land outside protected areas. **To reverse these trends, we strive for thriving nature, where our natural environment is protected yet accessible for all to enjoy, which requires people to live in harmony with nature, both inside and outside of the cities. Specific to cities, we strive for clean energy that powers our urban environments, and viable transportation networks that are accessible to everyone.**

The Willamette Valley has long been a farming community. It is harvest season year round in the valley. The farm loops and trails highlight farms and harvest season in each region of the valley and offer the ability for visitors and residents alike to drive and explore on their own, or for tour operators to develop itinerary ideas. There are fantastic food offerings throughout the valley, including full service restaurants, food trucks, farm stands, and more. The developed food trails throughout the valley help direct people to local notable restaurants, with some using a majority of local produce in their food. Agriculture and farming is a vital component of the valley's sense of place, way of life, economic vitality, social-fabric and culture, but non-regenerative agriculture practices are also a contributor to environmental degradation. **Our desired future state includes the viability of environmentally sound Willamette Valley local farms, which are supported by a circular model of food production and consumption that allows all community members and visitors to access fresh, organic, local food year-round.**

Overall, our valley is made up of proud Willamette Valley communities and groups of people who want what is best for the valley and for each other. In order to achieve the outcomes set out in this plan, and to maintain a regenerative state, **our communities must be unified and integrated around a shared meaning and purpose. We must be able to self-organize towards this greater purpose.**

# Destination Values

The Destination Values capture the values we deem important collectively and what we value as a community in our place. These values represent the foundation upon which our actions and behavior are based, from how we select and collaborate with volunteers and partners to the type of travelers we want to attract and how we interact within our home. They act as an activating force driving our will to care for our place and its inhabitants and serve as one of the foundational pieces of this plan, informing in part: the Destination Manifesto, Desired Future State, and Theory of Change tables described further in this plan. The Willamette Valley destination values were determined using a collaborative process involving both the program participants and the broader community of stakeholders. For more information about the process we used to get there, please refer to the Community Survey & Interviews section of this report.

## Our Community's Values

- Interconnectedness, Togetherness & Sense of Community
- Tenacity & Resilience
- Abundance, Peace & Harmony
- Honoring and Celebrating our Legacy, Identity & Culture
- Respect, Pride & Support
- Stewardship of & Accessibility to Nature
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion





# Destination Manifesto

*“We are a place of community. We honor and respect the legacy and diverse cultures that call the Willamette Valley home. We celebrate togetherness and the Abundance of Nature through gatherings that provide a connection to our home and promote Harmony and Equity. We are a place of tenacious resiliency and honor our connections to peace, the land, our residents, and our travelers.”*

The Destination Manifesto captures the story of who we are as a community in our destination, what makes us unique (identity, shared values, essence, sense of place), and what we aspire to manifest in our place that would bring health and vitality to the whole system.

Our Destination Manifesto was co-designed during the second immersive workshop drawing upon both the Community Vision and Values previously identified and a deeper understanding of the identity of the place from both an internal perspective - the felt sense of belonging and shared identity of its residents - and external perspective - the place's history, culture, and natural systems.

The Destination Manifesto serves three main purposes:

- **To act as a “North Star” and anchor:** informing all the future strategic decisions of the destination tourism body, ensuring that the decision-making process honors and fosters the unique identity of the place and its people.
- **To unify the greater community of stakeholders around shared vision and goals:** helping the community move beyond and reconcile seemingly conflicting interests to co-create a development plan that will contribute to the betterment of their human and natural communities as a whole, which will ultimately bear positive ripples on any stakeholders.
- **To position the destination uniquely and authentically and attract visitors that are aligned with the destination's essence and identity:** helping the destination identify and attract travelers that identify with its core values, understand and respect its unique identity and are willing to contribute to its Desired Future State while traveling. The destination will then design its marketing strategy in alignment with the manifesto.

# Our Desired Future and End-State Goals

Our Desired Future State envisions what the Willamette Valley could become if its potential were fulfilled. It arises from both the place's unique essence and evolutionary trajectory. In this context, if we are to become stewards of our place, any projects we undertake should be geared toward supporting the realization of the place's unique potential.

## Our Desired Future State

*“Through the regenerative connections between thriving communities and nature, the Willamette Valley celebrates and honors its vibrant diversity, rich and replenishing systems and bioregional bounty. This harmony maintains self-sustaining and integrated environments.*

*The Willamette Valley is the home for celebrating diversity and equity for all residents. We are home to thriving communities where all residents and visitors have access to local, clean, healthy energy, food and transportation systems. Willamette Valley residents work together to ensure both equality and equity in everyday lives and that each person is celebrated for their unique qualities and craft they bring to the community. We work together so that residents and communities alike have the support to thrive. We care for each other and the natural world we call home.”*



## Our End-State Goals

We co-designed the following end-state goals based on what we envisioned our destination could be and the ends it could be pursuing if its inherent potential was fulfilled:

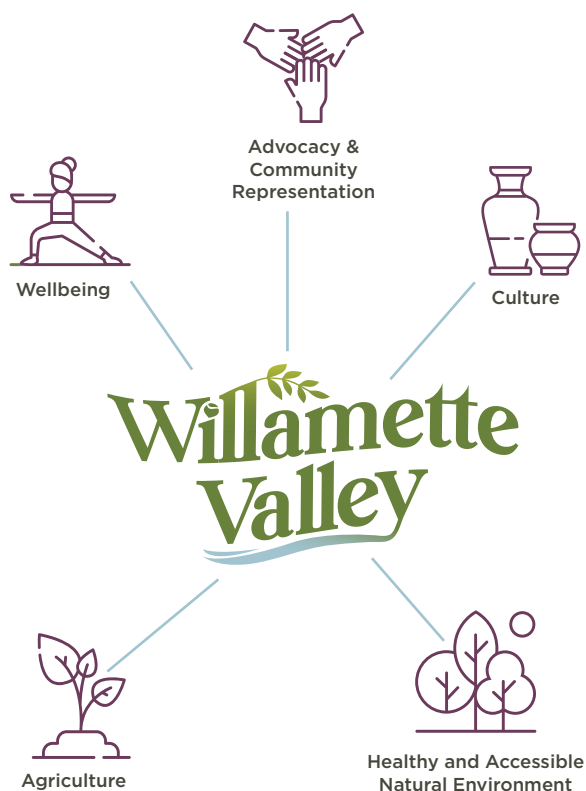
- **A Sense of Place:** We embody a sense of belonging in our community and we celebrate our unique identity while sharing it with others.
- **Thriving Cultures:** The diverse cultures of the valley are thriving.
- **Thriving Cities:** Clean energy powers our cities and an affordable and convenient transportation network is accessible to all who live and visit here.
- **Thriving Nature:** Our natural environment is accessible for everyone to enjoy and people live in harmony with nature.
- **Closed-loop Systems:** We use a circular model of food production and consumption that allows all community members and visitors to access fresh, organic, local food year-round.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Our socio-economic system is fair, equitable and inclusive of all gender, communities and origins.
- **Self-organizing Communities:** Our communities are unified and integrated around a shared meaning and purpose, and we support each other in achieving each other's end-state goals.



# Regenerative Goals

To achieve the end state goals outlined above, we have identified 5 Regenerative Goals or “Pillars of action” that will be at the core of our actions and guide all our decisions while implementing this plan.

These goals have been vetted using all the tools for regenerative tourism strategic planning described within the “Online Gathering 6” paragraph the Methodology section of this plan, and ensuring they are place and context-specific, inspirational, inherently systemic, and developmental by nature.



## Our Five Regenerative Goals are as Follows:

- 1. Agriculture:** Increase the viability of Willamette Valley farms.
- 2. Culture:** Enhance and enrich our diverse cultural landscape and unique Sense of Place within our watershed.
- 3. Natural Environments:** Regenerate natural environments while deepening connection and expanding accessibility from the crest of the coastal range to the crest of the cascade range.
- 4. Advocacy and community representation:** Create inclusive systems representing all human and biological communities in the Willamette Valley.
- 5. Wellbeing:** Create the conditions so all communities of the Willamette Valley nurture the comprehensive health and wellbeing of its inhabitants.

# Regenerative Guidelines for Action

To effectively implement the regenerative goals noted above systemically, our actions must be based on deep leverage points through which even small interventions can produce the greatest systemic changes. Each of these deep leverage points has then been divided into concrete and accessible actions or “suggested tactics” that will mark the starting point of our intervention, followed by how we can measure the change we want to see and how we need to be to serve the change we want to see. Further, we have noted the types of groups and representatives needed to be involved in making the changes possible. All of these steps follow the Theory of Change process and are reflected in the Regenerative Guidelines for Action tables below.

As with the regenerative goals, all deep leverage points and potential initiatives have been filtered through the tools for regenerative tourism strategic planning listed below and detailed in “Online Gathering 6” in the methodology section of this plan.

- **The Law of Three Framework**
- **The Three Levels of Work Framework**
- **Regenerative Development Principles for Places**
- **Regenerative Developmental Goal Characteristics**

A note on implementation: The desired future state and end state goals in this plan are significantly long-term. While it is impossible to put an exact timeline on goals of this nature, 100 years would be a useful place to start. The regenerative goals should be considered medium-term, in the 25-year range. And those potential initiatives are designed to be shorter-term. Some can begin now, and others need to begin later, as not all can be done at once. The plan is designed as a guideline to support our community in reaching our desired future state. Therefore it can't be prescribed beyond the level of detail provided at this stage. Finally, we have listed the types of groups and representatives we believe would need to be involved in realizing this change. If you see a role for yourself and your organization in the realization of this future, connect and collaborate.



# 1. Agriculture:

Increase the viability of Willamette Valley farms.

#	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Title	Stakeholders	Behavior and Attitude	Measurement	Potential Initiatives	Deep Leverage Points	Regenerative Goals	End State Goals
Detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oregon Community Food Systems Network, Oregon Department of Agriculture</li> <li>• Farmers Organizations and Associations</li> <li>• Small Distributors</li> <li>• Food Hubs</li> <li>• Restaurants</li> <li>• Oregon residents, local communities</li> <li>• Local governments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency, conscious communication, and active listening, and empathy: ensure that all stakeholders feel included and heard, understand their needs.</li> <li>• Openness and learning mindset: curious and eager to learn and understand local land use, bioregions, and food chain.</li> <li>• Professionalism and respect: stakeholders feel like the initiatives have power and meaning and can be realized over time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder database in place.</li> <li>• Quality of life of farmers, payroll per farm and YOY trend.</li> <li>• Increase in food and beverage entrepreneurs.</li> <li>• Land reclamation, minimal net loss of acreage utilized for agriculture or increase in acreage.</li> <li>• Increase in multilevel agricultural products (Farm products manufactured further up the supply chain: jams, fermented products, leather, etc.)</li> <li>• Increase in number of residents and visitors valuing and demanding local products and/or engaging with small producers.</li> <li>• Increase in WV farms in WVVA key marketing messaging.</li> <li>• Growth of number of products and/or increase in local spend.</li> <li>• Longevity of small producers/farms, number of new producers entering into the space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map local stakeholders and foster collaboration and the co-design of solutions.</li> <li>• Create a support system and pool of resources and/or broader logistical capabilities.</li> <li>• Support the use of seasonal, local foods among consumers and restaurants through education and accessibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate the local food chain across the valley (e.g. infrastructure, education, awareness, connections, premium pricing, etc.)</li> <li>• Continue to build and perpetuate market demand for local agricultural products.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agriculture:</b> Increase the viability of Willamette Valley farms.</p>	<p>Our desired future state in concrete goals, relevant to each pillar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed-loop systems</li> <li>• Self-organizing communities</li> </ul>
		<p>What are the main skills and qualities we need to cultivate in ourselves to make that change?</p>	<p>How can we measure our progress?</p>	<p>Where to start right now to move towards the change we want to see?</p>	<p>Actions that can harness the greatest systemic change</p>	<p>The pillars at the core of all planning</p>	



# 2. Culture:

Enhance and enrich our diverse cultural landscape and unique Sense of Place within our watershed.

#	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Title	Stakeholders	Behavior and Attitude	Measurement	Potential Initiatives	Deep Leverage Points	Regenerative Goals	End State Goals
Detail	<p><i>Who needs to be involved to realize the change?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communing Role: WVVA &amp; DMOs</li> <li>• Mobile populations (students, migrant farmers, seasonal employees, etc.)</li> <li>• Community leaders.</li> <li>• Local businesses</li> <li>• Associations, BIAs, downtown associations.</li> <li>• Chambers</li> <li>• Tribal leaders and council.</li> <li>• Intergovernmental relationships</li> </ul>	<p><i>What are the main skills and qualities we need to cultivate in ourselves to make that change?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humility: Celebrating diversity in a respectful manner while acknowledging our unity.</li> <li>• Openness: Inclusive mindset and cultural awareness.</li> </ul>	<p><i>How can we measure our progress?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Messaging that includes the voices of underrepresented communities in tourism campaigns and marketing materials.</li> <li>• Participation of indigenous tribes in local art projects, programs, and exhibitions.</li> <li>• Number of projects/initiatives launched by/with underrepresented communities.</li> <li>• Funds that go to financing regenerative projects in favor of cultural diversity.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Where to start right now to move towards the change we want to see?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Elevate authentic voices through genuine storytelling and messaging designed by the communities themselves.</li> <li>2. Use WVVA as a connector of and resource for the voice of these communities (especially those that are underrepresented)</li> <li>3. Identify how each culture associates with nature and values and protects this relationship.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Actions that can harness the greatest systemic change</i></p> <p>Identify and foster the essence and vibrancy of each of our communities, their history and evolutionary trajectory.</p>	<p><i>The pillars at the core of all planning</i></p> <p><b>Culture:</b> Enhance and enrich our diverse cultural landscape and unique Sense of Place within our watershed.</p>	<p><i>Our desired future state in concrete goals, relevant to each pillar</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thriving Cultures</li> <li>• Sense of Place</li> </ul>

# 3. Regenerate Natural Environments

while deepening connection and expanding accessibility from the crest of the coastal range to the crest of the cascade range.

#	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Title	Stakeholders	Behavior and Attitude	Measurement	Potential Initiatives	Deep Leverage Points	Regenerative Goals	End State Goals
Detail	<p><i>Who needs to be involved to realize the change?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Business Watershed nonprofits.</li> <li>Conservation organization. State and Local government agencies, policy-maker</li> <li>Travel Oregon/ RDMOs/DMOs.</li> <li>Oregon Residents including indigenous communities</li> <li>The entire biotic community.</li> </ul>	<p><i>What are the main skills and qualities we need to cultivate in ourselves to make that change?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complexity awareness and sense-making</li> <li>Sense of interconnectedness, connection and collaboration.</li> <li>Long-term orientation and visioning.</li> <li>Perseverance and tenacity.</li> <li>Appreciative inquiry.</li> <li>Openness and learning mindset:</li> <li>Learning from NGO &amp; non-profit partners who are already doing the work.</li> <li>Connection: WVA embraces a facilitation role allowing stakeholders to guide the work.</li> <li>Authentic and honest commitment to values.</li> </ul>	<p><i>How can we measure our progress?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standardized program</li> <li>Database of conservation organizations.</li> <li>The economic costs of our commons/natural systems.</li> <li>The improved health of our watershed over time.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Where to start right now to move towards the change we want to see?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the creation of a standardized program to protect the watershed; including storytelling, certification, etc. (similar to the Food Trail)</li> <li>Think big! Support the design of a program that combines more industries together to fund larger preserving, protecting and restoration of the watershed.</li> <li>Bring conservation partners together.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Actions that can harness the greatest systemic change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the accessibility and stewardship of the Willamette Valley watershed through connecting existing stakeholders across industries.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The pillars at the core of all planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Regenerate natural environments</b> while deepening connection and expanding accessibility from the crest of the coastal range to the crest of the cascade range.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Our desired future state in concrete goals, relevant to each pillar</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thriving Nature</li> <li>Self-organizing communities</li> <li>Closed-loop systems</li> </ul>

# 4. Advocacy and Community Representation:

Create inclusive systems representing all human and biological communities in the Willamette Valley.

#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Title	Stakeholders	Behavior and Attitude	Measurement	Potential Initiatives	Deep Leverage Points	Regenerative Goals	End State Goals		
<i>Detail</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel Oregon.</li> <li>• Tourism partner organizations. All communities.</li> <li>• Nature-based organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust.</li> <li>• Openness: Inclusive mindset and cultural awareness.</li> <li>• Empathy and compassion.</li> <li>• Co-creation skills. Integrity and authenticity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group-project created and stakeholders involved.</li> <li>• Impact of group-project.</li> <li>• Policies in favor of DEI.</li> <li>• Tourism experiences that are co-designed with underrepresented communities.</li> <li>• Inclusion of nature, nature conservation agencies, and underrepresented communities in project development decision-making processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a cross-valley listening program about tourism to engage with the community to determine what is lacking and what is thriving.</li> <li>• Provide effective education on tourism's value and what it means to our region.</li> <li>• Be more vocal and present to our legislators about barriers for tourism businesses; creating stronger leverage points with decision-makers.</li> <li>• Monitor resident &amp; decision-makers sentiment and co-create a project-based representation system.</li> <li>• Leverage partners connected to various segments of the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create the conditions for awareness building and healthy, ongoing communications among the community.</li> <li>• Confirm an advocacy role for WYVA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Advocacy and community representation:</b> Create inclusive systems representing all human and biological communities in the Willamette Valley.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-organizing communities</li> <li>• Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)</li> </ul>		
		<p><i>Who needs to be involved to realize the change?</i></p>	<p><i>How can we measure our progress?</i></p>	<p><i>Where to start right now to move towards the change we want to see?</i></p>	<p><i>Actions that can harness the greatest systemic change</i></p>	<p><i>The pillars at the core of all planning</i></p>	<p><i>Our desired future state in concrete goals, relevant to each pillar</i></p>		



# 5. Wellbeing:

All communities of the Willamette Valley nurture the comprehensive health and wellbeing of its inhabitants.

#	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Title	Stakeholders	Behavior and Attitude	Measurement	Suggested Tactics	Deep Leverage Points	Regenerative Goals	End State Goals
<i>Detail</i>	Who needs to be involved to realize the change?	What are the main skills and qualities we need to cultivate in ourselves to make that change?	How can we measure our progress?	Where to start, right now to move towards the change we want to see?	Actions that can harness the greatest systemic change	The pillars at the core of all planning	Our desired future state in concrete goals, relevant to each pillar
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connecting WVVA to current organization are already doing the work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-awareness.</li> <li>Empathy and compassion.</li> <li>Leading by example (e.g. showcasing our own actions and process in favor of DEI.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder wellness monitoring using qualitative and quantitative criteria (similar to the Bhutan Gross Happiness Index including:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological wellbeing</li> <li>Health</li> <li>Education</li> <li>Time use</li> <li>Cultural diversity and resilience</li> <li>Good governance</li> <li>Community vitality</li> <li>Ecological diversity and resilience (Living standards)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include a DEI component in all work and programs.</li> <li>Tap into the potential and resources that arise from volunteering residents and others associations.</li> <li>Build a checklist/toolkit for tourism businesses and organizations, and others, to consider in terms of the health and wellness of their people, nature and environments, including how WVVA operates.</li> <li>Build understanding and awareness around the importance of wellbeing in our lives and communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WVVA to create a safe space for a community of practice to emerge and nurture itself over time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Wellbeing:</b> All communities of the Willamette Valley nurture the comprehensive health and wellbeing of its inhabitants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-organizing communities</li> <li>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)</li> <li>Closed-loop systems</li> <li>Thriving cities</li> </ul>

# What's Next

## Implementation

Throughout the process of creating this plan, we as program participants have built our capacity of understanding regenerative development for tourism approaches and principles, the complexities of our valley and the context in which tourism exists, how to self-organize as a community, and the mindset needed to create lasting change. This core foundation will be crucial as we move towards putting this plan into action. But while the Willamette Valley Visitors Association will be leading the way, for real change to occur and to see the desired future state as set out in this plan come to fruition, the community needs to be involved in a significant way, including collaboration and support from agencies, businesses and individuals in tourism and beyond. If you see yourself in this plan, and relate to the desired future it sets out to achieve, make yourself known. Be in touch, and let's move forward together.

## Destination Transformers

The purpose of the Destination Regeneration program is to build capacities in our destination to nurture a self-reliant and -organizing community. Therefore, program participants have volunteered to become "Destination Transformers" to ensure the implementation of the plan is consistent with the spirit and vision that has prevailed throughout its design phase and to rally the broader community of stakeholders to take a proactive role in making it a reality.

As such, they are primarily in charge of:

- Embodying the community values and acting as ambassadors of destination vision and regenerative development approach, and communicating the program output and action plan.
- Identifying existing resources among the local community and stakeholders working toward regenerating their local community, identifying their needs and challenges in implementing the plan, and ensuring smooth and effective communication between them.
- Inspiring local stakeholders to join forces in implementing the program and connecting them to the program initiators, fostering and sustaining engagement in the long run, creating a safe container for people to co-evolve as part of a thriving community.

# Glossary of Terms

## Acupuncture point or Deep Leverage Point:

Specific place in a living system where a nodal intervention has the potential to impact the system as a whole, similar to the acupuncture points in a human body.

## Place:

In the context of regenerative development, the place is the container and central focus of human intervention as it forms a coherent whole, made of unique human and non-human inherent characteristics, and its scale is accessible for us to comprehend and influence. It understands the Place we inhabit as living systems i.e. an intricate web of reciprocal relationships gifted with its own identity and evolutionary potential and the ability to self-organize and self-evolve. Therefore, it encompasses and transcends the notion of “Destination” derived from a more managerial approach traditionally used in the tourism industry.

## Regenerative Goals or "Pillars for Action":

Regenerative goals of a project are set to create the conditions and capabilities of the system to evolve towards the realization of its inherent potential continuously. According to the Regenesi Institute for Regenerative Practice, regenerative goals have four characteristics: they are Place and context-specific, inspirational, inherently systemic, and developmental by nature.

## Regenerative Tourism:

Regenerative development of a tourism destination is understood as a living “Place” by which we design for the thriveability of the system as a whole, considering the entire ecosystem of stakeholders (residents, food producers and systems, economic vitality partners, land managers, City and County entities, businesses, and nature itself) among the tourism industry, its related sectors, and nature itself.

## Transformational Travel:

Travelers have also developed an appetite to connect with the soul of a destination like never before. The latest industry buzzword is ‘transformational travel’ — this refers to a type of travel that provides deeper and more meaningful experiences. The Transformational Travel Council, an industry group spearheading the trend, defines transformational travel as ‘intentionally traveling to stretch, learn and grow into new ways of being and engaging with the world’. It says adopting this mindset will allow you to go on a journey that lasts long after you return home.



# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Regenerative Principles for Places:

These principles are designed to guide the design of a regenerative development plan for tourism destinations. They are intended to set up a pathway - active and alive rather than passive and stagnant. They are aspirational by nature and provide a sense of direction to guide our decisions as we design our actions.

Each principle has further been translated into questions against which we have assessed our actions' potential for regeneration

All principles are of equal importance:

### **1. Design from a place of expanded consciousness:**

This principle refers to the “inner work,” i.e., the necessary mindset shift and conscious evolution we need to achieve to do this meaningful work. It allows us to connect to something greater than ourselves and develop the necessary skills and qualities to become regenerative agents.

### **2. Design with Shared Values and Vision at its core:**

Use the Destination Manifesto as a “North Star” and anchor of any regenerative project, unifying stakeholders around shared vision and values ignites a sense of care and belonging that will keep people on track and engaged throughout time.

### **3. Adopt a Place-Based design strategy:**

Regenerative development occurs locally and is anchored in a Place. The strategy and actions are derived from the unique identity or “Sense of Place,” and any project or initiative is designed to help unleash the Place’s inherent potential.

### **4. Enable Community Co-Design:**

The broader community of stakeholders is taking a proactive role in the development of its Place. Projects and initiatives emerge from a collaborative design process that collectively senses what the Place is called for and what roles stakeholders should embrace to realize that vision.

**5. Design for Evolution using living-system thinking:** The Place is understood as a living system nested into other living systems of different scales. As such, it is deemed to evolve continuously and adapt to change among its constituent parts or the greater environment in which it is embedded. Our role as ecosystem participants is to create the conditions for the Place to constantly self-organize and self-evolve to remain in a dynamic equilibrium that allows it to stay alive and thrive over time.

## Appendix 2: Inner Development Goals Framework:

### GOAL

### QUALITIES

#### Being: Relationship to Self

Qualities such as courage and optimism help us acquire true agency, break old patterns, generate original ideas, and act with persistence in uncertain times.

**Inner Compass:** Having a deeply felt sense of responsibility and commitment to values and purposes relating to the good of the whole.

**Integrity and Authenticity:** A commitment and ability to act with sincerity, honesty, and integrity.

**Inner Compass:** Having a basic mindset of curiosity and a willingness to be vulnerable and embrace change and grow.

**Self-awareness:** Ability to be in reflective contact with own thoughts, feelings, and desires; having a realistic self-image and ability to regulate oneself.

**Presence:** Ability to be in the here and now, without judgment and in a state of open-ended presence.

**Critical Thinking:** Skills in critically reviewing the validity of views, evidence, and plans.

**Complexity awareness:** Understanding of and skills in working with complex and systemic conditions and causalities.

**Perspective skills:** Skills in seeking, understanding, and actively making use of insights from contrasting perspectives.

**Sense-making:** Skills in seeing patterns, structuring the unknown, and being able to create stories consciously.

**Long-term orientation and Visioning:** Long-term orientation and ability to formulate and sustain a commitment to visions relating to the larger context.

**Appreciation:** Relating to others and the world with a basic sense of appreciation, gratitude, and joy.

**Connectedness:** Having a keen sense of being connected with and/or being a part of a larger whole, such as a community, humanity, or global ecosystem.

**Humility:** Being able to act in accordance with the needs of the situation without concern for one's own importance.

**Empathy and Compassion:** Ability to relate to others, oneself, and nature with kindness, empathy, and compassion and address related suffering.

**Communication Skills:** Ability to really listen to others, to foster genuine dialogue, to advocate own views skillfully, to manage conflicts constructively, and to adapt communication to diverse groups.

**Co-creation skills:** Skills and motivation to build, develop and facilitate collaborative relationships with diverse stakeholders, characterized by psychological safety and genuine co-creation.

**Inclusive mindset and intercultural competence:** Willingness and competence to embrace diversity and include people and collectives with different views and backgrounds.

**Trust:** Ability to show trust and to create and maintain trusting relationships.

**Mobilization Skills:** Skills in inspiring and mobilizing others to engage in shared purposes.

**Courage:** Ability to stand up for values, make decisions, take decisive action, and, if need be, challenge and disrupt existing structures and views.

**Creativity:** Ability to generate and develop original ideas, innovate, and be willing to disrupt conventional patterns.

**Optimism:** Ability to sustain and communicate a sense of hope, positive attitude, and confidence in the possibility of meaningful change.

**Perserverance:** Ability to sustain engagement and remain determined and patient even when efforts take a long time to bear fruit.

#### Thinking: Cognitive Skills

Developing our cognitive skills by taking different perspectives, evaluating information, and making sense of the world as an interconnected whole, is essential for wise decision-making.

#### Relating: Caring for Others and the World

Appreciating, caring for and feeling connected to others, such as neighbors, future generations or the biosphere, helps us create more just and sustainable systems and societies for everyone.

#### Collaborating: Social Skills

To make progress on shared concerns, we need to develop our abilities to include, hold space and communicate with stakeholders with different values, skills, and competencies.

#### Acting: Driving Change

Qualities such as courage and optimism help us acquire true agency, break old patterns, generate original ideas, and act with persistence in uncertain times.