

Walla Walla Valley Tourism Workspace – Bringing Leaders Together to Develop a Regional Tourism Strategy

The November-January collaborative workshop series will benefit communities including Walla Walla, Waitsburg, College Place, Dayton (Wash.) and Milton-Freewater (Ore.)

SEATTLE (Sept. 12, 2023) – State of Washington Tourism is offering a rural tourism support program for the Walla Walla Valley, encompassing communities in both Washington and Oregon. The program in November, December and January will bring together business owners and entrepreneurs with community leaders, local officials, land managers and others. Together they'll produce and execute a shared vision for creating a thriving and sustainable regional tourism and outdoor recreation destination. Interested participants can register for the workshop series at industry.stateofWAtourism.com/rts-walla-walla.

The Walla Walla Valley Tourism Workspace includes a series of development workshops designed to help communities come together to stimulate their economies through sustainable tourism development; build alliances and partnerships throughout the region; and protect and enhance their resources. The program will feature a kickoff event for stakeholders to meet, four interactive workshops and two additional networking events.

State of Washington Tourism and the program's local organizers are teaming up to increase collaboration that will shape the future of the tourism and outdoor recreation economy in the Walla Walla Valley. This will strengthen the region's position as a premier tourism destination by enhancing community livability and healthy environments, while continuing to attract visitors.

The program is designed to bring community and business leaders together to address key challenges, including the following:

- Preserving and enhancing the natural and cultural resources of the region while offering high-quality visitor experiences
- Encouraging stewardship best practices by visitors as well as local businesses and residents
- Integrating cultural heritage into the visitor experience, authentically and respectfully
- Spreading the positive economic benefits of tourism throughout the region, and maximizing integration with other key economic drivers, including agriculture and Main Street retail
- Increasing residents' understanding and appreciation of tourism's value and contribution to the local economy
- Capitalizing on community projects already underway to bolster momentum

The following workshops and events are being offered as part of the program:

Tues., Nov. 14	Kickoff Networking Event
4–6 p.m.	<i>A gathering for participants to build or strengthen relationships that will serve as a program foundation.</i>
Walla Walla, WA	

Wed., Nov. 15 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Walla Walla, WA	Walla Walla Valley Tourism Summit: Visioning + Scenario Planning (Full-Day Workshop) <i>Bringing regional stakeholders together to create a shared vision of success and begin designing a roadmap to get there.</i>
Tues., Dec. 5 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Waitsburg, WA	Arts + Culture (Full-Day Workshop) <i>Bringing together artisans, makers, local cultural representatives and area stakeholders to collaboratively spotlight local arts and culture to enhance the region’s economic vitality.</i>
5–6 p.m. Waitsburg, WA	Networking Event <i>An evening networking session that will feature a guest presenter from the region.</i>
Wed., Dec. 6 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Waitsburg, WA	Outdoor Recreation (Full-Day Workshop) <i>Working together and learning from other successful destinations how to identify gaps and opportunities for delivering a world-class outdoor recreation experience, emphasizing trails and routes.</i>
Wed., Jan. 17 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Walla Walla, WA	Food Experiences (Full-Day Workshop) <i>Bringing together growers, raisers/producers and regional stakeholders to learn about current trends and best practices, to create and connect new opportunities to experience local foods.</i>
5–6 p.m. Walla Walla, WA	Networking Event <i>A celebration of the program’s completion!</i>

All workshops and events are free, but preregistration is required for the workshops. Space is limited, and is specifically designed for residents, businesses and organizations operating in the communities of the Walla Walla Valley.

To maximize the program’s impact, organizers recommend that participants attend all workshops and events. Those who attend at least three of the four full-day workshops will receive a certificate of completion from State of Washington Tourism.

For more information and to register, visit industry.stateofwatourism.com/rts-walla-walla.

For general inquiries about the program, contact:

Cara Jacobson
Visit Walla Walla
509-525-8727
cjacobson@wallawalla.org

This program is provided by State of Washington Tourism and produced by Crosscurrent Collective, in partnership with Visit Walla Walla.

About State of Washington Tourism

State of Washington Tourism (the recently rebranded Washington Tourism Alliance) is a 501(c)(6) organization established by industry stakeholders with the sole mission of developing and sustaining Washington state destination tourism marketing. SWT procures and administers funds for state destination tourism marketing activities, and creates and implements the strategic statewide destination marketing plan. Visit the destination website at www.stateofWAtourism.com or the tourism industry site at www.industry.stateofWAtourism.com.

About Visit Walla Walla

Visit Walla Walla is a catalyst in marketing and promoting a diverse tourism economy that is safe, welcoming, memorable and beneficial for all who are here to live, work or visit. Learn more at wallawalla.org.

About Crosscurrent Collective

Crosscurrent Collective is a planning, strategy and engagement firm that supports communities as they design, build and manage world-class outdoor recreation destinations. It focuses on developing unique experiences, cultivating vibrant regional outdoor recreation and tourism economies, and helping leaders strike a delicate balance between visitation, preserving local values and maintaining healthy ecosystems. It designs processes that support inclusive, community-based decision-making and collaborative action to drive local solutions. Learn more at CrosscurrentCollective.com.