



FINDING BALANCE: OUTER BANKS LONG-RANGE TOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN

April 24, 2024

The Outer Banks®

VISITORS BUREAU

outerbanks.org

THE OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU

Official **Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)**
for Dare County's Outer Banks

Dare County Tourism Board (DCTB) – 13 members,
with representation from 6 local municipalities,
Dare County Board of Commissioners, industry
associations (OBAR, OBRA, Hotel/Motel Assoc.),
Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce and 2 At-Large
seats, including Hatteras Island

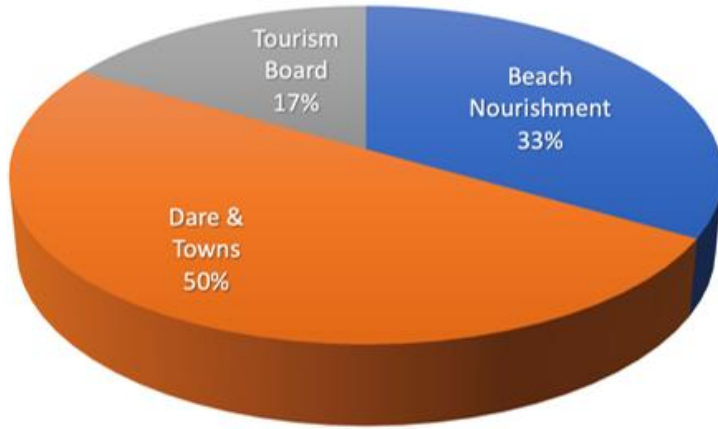
11 full-time staff

4 Welcome Centers: Aycock Brown (Kitty Hawk),
Sarah Owens (Manteo), Whalebone (Nags Head),
U.S. Weather Bureau Station (Hatteras Village)

Mission is to **increase overnight visitation during
less-than-peak months**



TOURISM'S ECONOMIC IMPACT ON DARE COUNTY



The Dare County Tourism Board is funded by a **1% tax on overnight accommodations** and a **1% prepared meals tax**. Of those collections:
75% - general promotion
25% - programs and services needed due to the impact of tourism

\$1.97 Billion

Dare County visitor spending in 2022

- All-time high
- Up 8% YOY (\$1.83 Billion in 2021)

#4 in North Carolina

1. Mecklenburg 2. Wake 3. Buncombe

45.5% of all Dare County jobs are in the **leisure and hospitality sector**

Accommodations · Arts & Entertainment ·
Food Service · Recreation · Retail · Transportation

\$3,696 Tax savings per Dare County resident
Highest per resident savings of any county in NC

2. Swain (\$1,611) – Bryson City, Great Smoky Mtns

3. Currituck (\$1,208)

Sources: Tourism Economics, U.S. Travel Association, Visit NC,
The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau

TOURISM'S ECONOMIC IMPACT ON DARE COUNTY

Community Grants at Work: Tourism Impact & Events

Cumulative totals since the onset of the programs.

\$22 Million in funding to benefit the community

700+ grants awarded **150+** grant recipients



MEASURING SUCCESS: THE NEED TO FIND BALANCE

Traditional Tourism Models:

Success = Jobs, business growth and development



Sustainable (Long-Range) Tourism Model:

Success =

- Preserving the unique history and culture of the OBX
- Sustaining our delicate natural environment
- Ensuring that residents also have a strong quality of life and experience

"Tourism with a Conscience"



How do we balance the "head" of tourism with the "heart" of tourism?

OUTER BANKS LONG-RANGE TOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN MAY 2023



1. Strengthen resident and visitor engagement

2. Adopt an integrated approach to improving environmental stewardship

3. Support infrastructure development that benefits the vitality of the community for residents and visitors

4. Collaborate to advocate for an increase in housing diversity for all residents

LRTMP: CREATING THE PLAN

Community engagement was critical in identifying **key opportunities and challenges** for the Outer Banks as a destination for visitors ... and a quality of place for residents to live, work and play.

4,538 Resident survey responses

179 DestinationNEXT stakeholder surveys

19 Task Force members who met for 4 working sessions

15 In-depth 1-on-1 interviews with community leaders

7 Focus groups

2 Resident town halls (Buxton and Kill Devil Hills)



GOAL 1: STRENGTHEN RESIDENT AND VISITOR ENGAGEMENT

- Continue to partner with local not-for-profits and expand our voluntourism strategy
- Lead a resident engagement program
- Convene a Task Force to help implement the plan
- Hire a Community Engagement Manager to champion the implementation of this plan
- Develop a Visitor Pledge to communicate the important values of responsible behavior to visitors



GOAL 2: ADOPT AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

- **Lead investment in analytics for targeting and education**
- **Continue to grow as a recognized leader in outdoor recreation and stewardship**
- **Collaborate with leading environmentally conscious partners (CSI, NCCF, NPS, etc.)**
- **Advocate for increased investment in roads, sidewalks and clean mobility**
- **Convene a Sustainability Committee to provide ongoing input on tourism strategies that minimize environmental impacts**



GOAL 3: SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT THAT BENEFITS THE VITALITY OF THE COMMUNITY FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

- Partner with municipalities, counties, the region, and state to ensure infrastructure and development initiatives consider sustainability, and resident and visitor needs
- Partner with the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce to develop a diverse talent attraction campaign
- Continue to pursue development of an Event Center
- Improve accessibility for all age groups and abilities
- Undertake a density study as part of a capacity management plan
- Support a pedestrian safety plan to understand different mobility needs on the OBX
- Advocate for initiatives that will help maintain and preserve the vitality of our shorelines.



GOAL 4: COLLABORATE TO ADVOCATE FOR AN INCREASE IN HOUSING DIVERSITY FOR ALL RESIDENTS

- **Collaborate with Dare County and other partners to advocate for an increase home ownership options for a broader base of residents**
- **Develop an awareness and advocacy strategy to educate about the needs for more housing**
- **Collaborate with Dare County and other partners to advocate for a balance in short and long-term rental and home ownership opportunities**
- **Collaborate with Dare County and other partners to advocate for the development of public transportation, other mobility options and workforce accessibility**
- **Partner with local groups to explore public-private housing development opportunities**



COMMUNITY COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION

As the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau doesn't own many of the assets and experiences related to the visitor economy, **we cannot single-handedly move the LRTMP forward without a lot of community collaboration, communication and support.**

ADVOCATE:

Advocate for the advancement of strategic initiatives that will advance the area for the benefit of visitors and residents.

CONVENER:

Conveners of groups and those in positions to advance initiatives.

OUTER BANKS LRTMP: DCTB, OBVB, COMMITTEE

LEADER:

Take the lead as the organization to advance initiatives.

SUPPORTER:

Support or partner with other leading organizations on advancing important initiatives outside their mission and scope of work.

GETTING STARTED

Hired Community Engagement Manager (Aug 2023)

Created DCTB Special Committee – Nov 2023
– 3 Meetings (Feb, Mar, Apr 2024)

Continued collaboration local Non-Profit organizations

- 93 listings in NPO Directory
- Mission Mixer (Apr 2023 + 2024)
- Hosted OBX Community Services Collaborative mtg (Mar 2024)
- OBX Tourism Summit - 'Tourism for Good' theme (Nov 2023)
- NPO Knowledge Series (Sept 2023)
- Monthly NPO/Community eNewsletter communication

Strengthening Voluntourism Strategy –

OuterBanks.org/Voluntourism

- 42 NPOs have volunteer opportunities listed on profile
- *Our State* Voluntourism event at EG (May 18, 2024)



**Chicamacomico
Lifesaving Station
Historic Site**

📍 23645 N.C. Hwy 12



11 reviews

[Volunteer >](#)

[Visit Website >](#)

[Quickview](#)



**Children & Youth
Partnership for Dare
County**

📍 534 Ananias Dare Street

[Volunteer >](#)

[Visit Website >](#)

[Quickview](#)


GETTING STARTED (CONT.)

Prioritized transparent LRTMP communication to community stakeholders

- Monthly email updates to LRTMP lists, including meeting recaps
- Increased outreach to local media to share updates
- Continued LRTMP 'Road Shows' presentations/discussions within the community - 12
- Revamped LRTMP website – **OuterBanks.org/LRTMP** (Mar 2024)

Collaborating to advocate for an increase in housing diversity for all residents

- Of the 26 members of the Dare County Housing Task Force, 8 have a direct connection to the LRTMP
3 DCTB - 4 Committee - 1 OBVB Staff



Outer Banks LRTMP Update - March 2024

Thank you for your interest in staying connected to our work on the [Outer Banks Long-Range Tourism Management Plan](#) (LRTMP). This plan was created with extensive feedback from throughout the community and your involvement with its implementation will be just as critical. We look forward to sharing these updates on a regular basis and welcome any thoughts you have about these efforts.

Dare County Tourism Board Special Committee Meeting Recap - March 13, 2024

[Agenda](#) | [Recap Video](#) | [Community Engagement Report](#)

The Dare County Tourism Board Special Committee held its [second meeting](#) on March 13. Much of the meeting discussion focused on the structure of the committee and its role in implementing the [Long-Range Tourism Management Plan](#) (LRTMP). This is an ambitious 10-year roadmap and while the Tourism Board, Outer Banks Visitors Bureau and Special Committee can take a lead role in several aspects of the plan, there are items that require significant community collaboration and support. Understanding these roles will play an important part in achieving results. A few key action items emerged from the meeting.



TAKING THE NEXT STEP - OPPORTUNITIES

GOAL 1: Resident and Visitor Engagement

- Establish a resident engagement program
- Develop a destination pledge

GOAL 2: Environmental Stewardship

- Collect LRTMP survey info and sustainability plans from local municipalities, agencies and non-profit organizations to identify and prioritize the environmental challenges we are trying to address and help solve
- Help to establish and promote environmental stewardship communications to residents and visitors based on the priority issues that are identified



TAKING THE NEXT STEP - OPPORTUNITIES

GOAL 3: Infrastructure Development

- Define "infrastructure" – roads, sidewalks, high-speed internet, schools, transportation, emergency services, beach nourishment, childcare, etc.
- Create an inventory of local infrastructure partners and collaborate with these groups to **offer a tourism perspective on the areas that overlap with LRTMP**
- Collaborate with local stakeholders to gain a better understanding of accessibility efforts and related inventory in Dare County and enhance the awareness and communication of that access



TRAIL TOWN STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM
ACCESSIBLE OUTDOORS



TOURISM FOR GOOD

How can we leverage the power of tourism to do more good in and for our Outer Banks community?

The Dare County Tourism Board and Outer Banks Visitors Bureau are committed to these efforts that embody **Tourism for Good** and welcome your involvement and input.





THANK YOU!

Jeff Schwartzberg

Community Engagement Manager

Outer Banks Visitors Bureau

schwartzberg@outerbanks.org

252.473.7155

