

## Staff Report

Encourage Responsible & Respectful Use  
of Sedona Throughout the Year



## City of Sedona Tourism Program

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**Meeting Date:** September 4, 2024

**Board:** Tourism Advisory Board (TAB)

**Project Summary:** TAB input on visitor behavior messages for educational campaign

**Action Requested:** Provide feedback on materials listed above.

**Staff Recommendation:** n/a

**Report Prepared By:** Andrew Grossmann, Tourism Manager



### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 2024-2025 Sedona Tourism Plan includes an initiative to *Encourage Responsible and Respectful Use of Sedona throughout the Year* within the *Manage and Steward the Destination* imperative. Successful implementation of this strategy will result in an always-on educational campaign that builds awareness of positive behaviors on public lands and within the community.

The Tourism Program is in the beginning stages of advancing this initiative and is currently focused on identifying the priority behaviors to focus on as a destination. We are also validating whether different locations or times of year have different priority behaviors to focus addressing through strategic messaging.

### BACKGROUND AND EXPLANATION

The Tourism Program has a commitment to deliver a stewardship message to all Sedona visitors. In addition to setting a general expectation with visitors before they arrive and while they are here, a key goal of this initiative will be on educating visitors on ways to avoid negative behaviors that occur due to a lack of awareness. We also want to explore ways to model positive behaviors and to encourage visitors to donate their time and dollars to local non-profit organizations that enhance visitor experience.

The timing of the messaging needs to correspond with the timing of when visitors make the decisions that are tied to the negative (or positive) behavior they make. An example of unsuccessful behavior messaging is telling visitors to not bring in out of area wood to reduce invasive species when they arrive to the campground instead of before they pack their car to drive to the campsite. An example of successful behavior messaging is telling visitors to bring enough water for their hike when they leave the hotel instead of when they arrive to a trailhead that does not have a water station.

Visitor decision making is typically organized with the five stages of inspire, plan, book, trip, and share/reflect. Although many organizations have the ability to deliver messages to visitors within multiple stages, no single organization reaches visitors during every stage. As a result, it will require a collective effort by the tourism-related organizations in Sedona to work together to influence visitor behavior. It will also be important that there is agreement on the priority behaviors to address and that there is consistency with the way messages are shared as visitors move through the destination.

A final note is that we are already exploring ways to further segment out trip into multiple stages where key decisions are made for this project, such as leaving a hotel, getting on a shuttle, or starting a hike.

### EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUS BEHAVIOR MESSAGING IN SEDONA

The Tourism Program recognizes that this type of campaign is not a new strategy for Sedona. The immediate focus is to learn from past examples and to build momentum around the launch of a new visitor behavior messaging campaign that can meet the current needs of the destination.

Examples of previous messaging campaigns include:

1. Sedona Cares
2. Respect Red Rock Country
3. Leave No Trade
4. Bring Your Own Sedona



## YES, ADD MY NAME TO THE SEDONA CARES CHALLENGE, SHOWING MY COMMITMENT TO:

1. The rocks are red and the silence is golden. I vow to respect the natural quiet of Sedona's open spaces and neighborhoods.
2. I will be mindful of Sedona's arid environment by minimizing my water and energy use and I will be extremely careful with fire.
3. I'll make my own memories, but not my own trails.
4. I won't risk life or limb (human or sapling) for more likes. I won't get killed for a killer photo.
5. When playing outside, I'll be ready for rapid changes in weather and random episodes of magic.
6. Leave No Trace and pack out trash - that includes TP and pup poo!
7. I will discover art in Sedona's galleries rather than making my own. Carving on trees or rocks, stacking stones, or defacing the environment diminishes nature's art.
8. If I can't find a parking spot, I will not invent my own. I will go with the traffic flow, using my turn signal often and my car horn seldom.
9. I'll be caring and considerate wherever I go, because that's the Sedona way.



Ultimately, the tone of the visitor behavior messages is also important to their success. The most successful efforts include invitations for positive behavior without using a condescending tone. It will be important that the final work product strikes the right tone at the right time. These past examples provide strong case studies for the Tourism Program to build upon.

**NEXT STEPS**

The discussion during the September TAB meeting will be the first of several that the City intends to have with members of the Sedona community around the priority behaviors to address through an always-on educational campaign. The initial goals include validating the behaviors to address throughout the year and to build a coalition of organizations that can distribute of messaging across the tourism value chain. Future action items will include developing the key messages, producing a messaging toolkit for local partners, and community-wide distribution of messages.