

**Coastal Georgia Tourism Discussions: Outdoor Recreation and Sports  
Breakout Discussion Notes  
November 6, 2020**

Breakout Question #1:

**What are our outdoor recreation assets on the coast?**

- 5 historic sites,
  - Reenactment sites
- Land access beaches: Tybee, SSI, Jekyll
- Barrier Islands (some public, some private)
- Rails to Trails (Savannah River to Tybee Island)
- Utilize new [Colonial Coast Birding Trail](#)
- Rich cultural heritage; PinPoint Museum, Spanish missions etc
- Native American history/society sites
- Loves Seafood
- Brunswick- GA DNR's Coastfest
- Events at Forsyth Park in Savannah
- Skidaway Island Marine Science Day
- Richmond Hill Seafood Festival
- Blessing of the Fleet events
- "Georgia on my Mind" Day
- Shrimp and Grits Festivals
- Historic dirt roads (check with Liberty County) from early settlements
- Paddling/kayaking/ canoeing
- Salt marshes and rivers, oceans and estuaries
- Intercostal waterway
- African American Preservation sites
- Recreational parks
- Various trails
- Wildlife viewing
- Outdoor scenic photography
- Boating
- Biking
- Fishing (fresh and saltwater)
- State parks (3 of them)
- Wildlife Management areas
- Hunting preserve at Dorchester
- Local seafood
- National wildlife refuges
- Aquarium
- Sporting camps

- Environmental education camps
- Birding
- Savannah Ogeechee Canal Museum, recreational trail and canal
- “Wild places” and habitats
- Oatland Island Wildlife Refuge
- Restaurants that support local fishing (cook your catch)

Breakout Question #2:

**What do you think are our best opportunities for collaboration to influence positive change?**

- Identify who our local outdoor recreation champions, passionate people to help promote
- Invite office of outdoor recreation and to convene local governments around new laws
- Work with CVBs, Chambers, and Restaurants
- Work with local governments to create more bike and water trails
- Work with GCTA to promote more outdoor recreation: [Visit Coastal Georgia - Georgia Coast Travel Association \(GCTA\)](#)
- Work with local tour guides (historical and environmental)
- Organizations “already on the ground” engaging with communities (how citizens can “plug in”)
- Work with elected officials
- Potential Partners
  - Ogeechee RiverKeeper (all coastal RiverKeepers)
  - Tide to Town
  - Healthy Savannah
  - Work with state agencies: CRD, EPD WRD
  - Forsyth Farmers Market
  - Keep Golden Isles Beautiful (and all KAB chapters on the coast)
  - One Hundred Miles (other Environmental NGOS)
  - Include organizations that represent minority interests
  - Marine Extension and GA Sea Grant
  - Ogeechee Audubon
  - Georgia Botany Society
  - Georgia Ornithological Society
  - County Parks and recreation
  - Local tourism boards, Chambers , CVBs,
  - Georgia Visitor Centers
  - Universities (UGA, Troy, Georgia Southern, Savannah State, College of Coastal Georgia, Coastal Pines)
  - Hotels
  - Outdoor fitters/tour providers
  - Historical societies

- Create an app to help plan an outdoor recreation business
- Develop websites or apps to find coastal resources
- Explore connections with Explore Georgia: [Explore Georgia | Official Georgia Tourism & Travel Website | Explore Georgia.org](https://www.exploregeorgia.org/)
- Use social media to cross market events and collaborate with local organizers (ex: Keep Liberty County Beautiful)
- Engage communities (in and out of state) through Facebook Live events
- Engage outfitters to help with research, profile visitors, and conduct surveys
- Collaborate on social media around coastal outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Develop a seafood trail along with strategic marketing plan and branding for a seafood trail
- Consider collaborating on marketing efforts for the entire coastal area
- Create a regional umbrella marketing tool to help connect users to the coast
- Work more with outdoor businesses
- Put together training and education programs on this topic
- Develop clam tours (photography, local seafood, and environmental education)
- Looks at St Simon Land Trust model of engaging visitors by charging 1% off purchases from select businesses that go back to stewardship
- Consider a regional branding effort for the coast related to outdoor recreation
- Target generation Z in marketing
- Word of mouth marketing of each other's programs activities
- Work with local chambers to tie in food, tourism and local parks
- Reach new visitors during local events on coast
- Market outdoor destinations as ways to safely host meetings/explore during pandemic
- Find ways to connect with restaurants related to outdoor recreation
- Initiatives across communities such as Super Museum Sunday

### **Additional Comments**

- Jonathan Tourtellot (former National Geographic), who spoke at the conference in April 2019, has launched a new initiative called [Future of Tourism Coalition](https://www.futureoftravel.com/) to look at [Destination Stewardship](https://www.futureoftravel.com/destination-stewardship/). His center also publishes a quarterly report on how to engage visitors in destination stewardship, and what local communities/government need to do to manage and maintain natural spaces
- Develop collaborative websites/apps for coastal resources (for instance, Marine Ext has a printed book with all the fishing spots, boat launch sites, etc., that was published years ago, and nobody uses it now and it's too expensive to print– would be great to have that kind of resource online)
- Create an app to let you plan your trip/develop your itinerary from all aspects of coastal resources
- Create a website that's a "landing spot" to connect up all the various organizational websites, and have categories to help people find what they are looking for

- Create a regional umbrella marketing tool/plan – Heath then mentioned that the CGTA has such a plan, and a website, that is supported by memberships – [VisitCoastalGeorgia.org](http://VisitCoastalGeorgia.org) – should get with them and see what improvements/enhancements might be possible to do with some of these ideas.
- Some sites in western states categorize activities by the level of effort required – for instance, attending a festival might be a 1 star activity, while hiking or kayaking would be a 4 star – helps people plan their itineraries for different activity levels
- We need to promote the entire region – provide a broader view of what the coast has to offer, and give local orgs/gov'ts the opportunity to highlight their city/attractions
- Add the [Georgia River Network](#) and [Adopt A Stream](#) and [Adopt a Wetland](#) programs to our list of assets/organizations to help promote outdoor recreation on the coast.
- Education and awareness for local governments, our citizens as well as tourists were common themes from all breakout sessions with a lot of obvious synergy and collaboration among this group already.
- Consider future training on Place Making:
  - Two potential speakers to invite to run this training include Ed McMann or Joe Veneto