Community Focus Statement C: Create affordable outdoor recreation activities that capitalize on the natural environment, attract visitors, and provide entertainment for residents while also reducing the associated impacts to the communities.
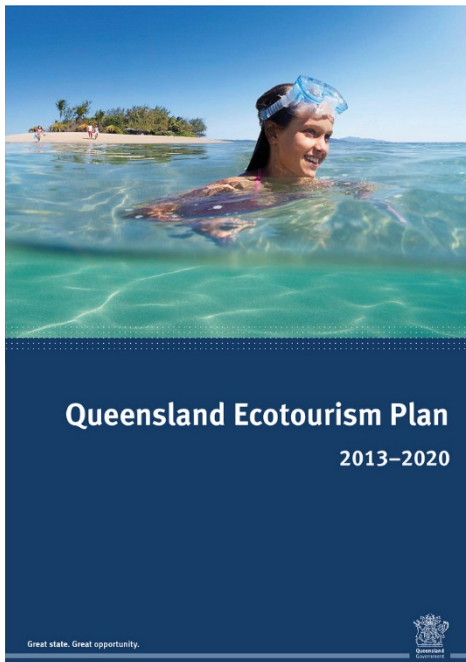
Action Statement C.5: Encourage the establishment of ecotourism businesses.

C5

Benchmark: Promotional materials are created and available for the development of ecotourism businesses.
Champion: Volunteer group or person or can be identified by the community
Estimated Cost: $0 - $25,000 for volunteer time and potential consulting needs.

Ecotourism plan prepared by Queensland. Photo source: Ron Mader

Ecotourism is defined by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education." Mountain areas such as the Crest Forest communities offer numerous opportunities to explore the relatively untouched natural environment and take advantage of various summer- and winter-based recreational opportunities. Currently, Crestline and Lake Gregory promote recreational activities such as hiking, mountain biking, fishing, paragliding, and birdwatching on their web page, but little information is made available to the public regarding businesses related to tourism.

An important part of attracting businesses to an area for ecotourism-related activities is having the resources available to promote the area as a tourism hot spot. Similar to the process for attracting any type of business, the more information that can be provided for potential investors, the greater the likelihood of consideration during the site selection process. One issue is that tourism-related businesses must also be versatile so as to not negatively impact the economy during the off-season. Marketing strategies must show that the tourism industry is strong enough in the Crest Forest communities to support permanent establishments, as opposed to seasonal ones.

Outside resources, such as the "Practical Steps for Marketing Tourism Certification" handbook from TIES, are available to help areas foster, legitimize, and promote environmentally friendly businesses. These certifications not only provide advertising material for businesses, they set strategies and objectives to enhance the abilities of the area. Important steps in assessing and growing tourism-related businesses to create an increase in tourist activity include:

- Conducting a market analysis of existing conditions.

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- Organizing community stakeholders, including residents, nonprofit leaders, and decision-makers, to gather resources and support to assist new businesses.
- Easing requirements and supplying resources to guide business owners through regulatory difficulties, including how to acquire benefits and use permits.
- Establishing a clear marketing plan to pursue companies or recreational areas that are deemed to have the most potential benefit for the community.
- Focusing on creating effective and informational policies and procedures. As part of the Countywide Plan efforts, an eco-tourism overlay is being proposed for all of the mountain communities, including Crest Forest, that would allow more flexibility in regards to land use for eco-tourism related uses.

Ecotourism enhancements are currently underway through coordination with San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency, Mountain Transit and the Chamber of Commerce through events and social media. Mountain Transit has started an informational ambassadors program on village area routes in coordination with the Mountain History Museum.

Action	Action Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Hold a meeting to create an Ecotourism Committee	Champion	Month 1	Crestline/Lake Gregory Chamber of Commerce
2. Contact local ecotourism businesses and organizations and discuss their barriers to success.	Ecotourism Committee	Month 1	http://www.crestlinechamber.net/

San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency, Site Selection |
| 3. Research ecotourism resources and guidebooks (see objective resources). | Ecotourism Committee | Months 2–4 | http://www.sbcountyadvantage.com/For-Site-Selectors.aspx |
| 4. Coordinate with the San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency to discuss promotion and listing of existing leasable spaces. | Ecotourism Committee with Crestline/Lake Gregory Chamber of Commerce | Month 4 | Ecotourism: https://www.ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism

Crestline Recreation |
| 5. Gather community input on areas to designate as ecotourism hotspots and compile information. | Ecotourism Committee with Crestline/Lake Gregory Chamber of Commerce | Months 4–6 | http://www.cityofcrestline.com/recreation.html

Ecotourism Handbook and Marketing http://www.ecotourism.org/sites/ecotourism.org/files/document/Certification/Ecotourism%20Handbook%20III%20-%20Practical%20steps%20for%20Marketing%20Tourism%20Certification.pdf |
| 6. Compile and make available information on existing spaces, tourism statistics (visitors, activities), permitting processes, and a market analysis report if available. | Ecotourism Committee with Crestline/Lake Gregory Chamber of Commerce | Months 6–12 | Eco-Business http://www.eco-business.com/media/uploads/ebmedia/fileuploads/shutterstock_265122803.jpg |

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