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| | Chamber of Commerce | | |
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Community Focus Statement E: Provide economic development opportunities that capitalize on the natural environment, attract visitors, and provide entertainment for residents.

Action Statement E.1: Establish a marketing strategy to promote the natural environment and associated activities to encourage of ecotourism businesses.



Benchmark: Promotional materials are available for the development of ecotourism businesses.

Champion: Volunteer group or person or can be identified by the community

Cost Estimate: \$5,000 - \$150,000 dependent upon marketing strategy



Family dogsledding as an outdoor activity. Photo source: Anonymous

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 those in the Lake Arrowhead communities offer numerous opportunities to explore the relatively untouched natural environment and take advantage of various summer- and winter-based recreational activities. Currently the Lake Arrowhead Communities Chamber of Commerce promotes ecotourism-related activities through a section of its website dedicated to adventures. On this page is a directory listing numerous recreation- and tourism-based businesses, including ATV rentals,

camps, retreats, fishing gear rentals, arts, and cultural activities.

Part of attracting businesses to an area for ecotourism-related activities is having the resources available to promote the area as a tourism hotspot. Similar to the process for attracting any type of business, the more information that can be made available to potential investors, the higher 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 Lake Arrowhead 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 amenities of the area. Important steps in assessing and growing tourism-related businesses to create an increase in tourist activity include the following:

- Conducting a market analysis of existing conditions.
- Organizing stakeholders from the community, from residents to nonprofits leader and decision-makers.
- Easing requirements and providing 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.

| Action | Action Leader | Timeline | Resources |
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| 1. Hold a meeting to create an Economic Enhancement Committee | Champion | Month 1 | Lake Arrowhead Communities Chamber of Commerce http://lakearrowheadchamber.com/ |
| 2. Contact local ecotourism businesses and organizations and discuss their barriers to success. | Committee | Month 1 | San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency, Site Selection http://www.sbcountyadvantage.com/For-Site-Selectors.aspx |
| 3. Research ecotourism resources and guidebooks (see objective resources). | Committee | Months 2–4 | Lake Arrowhead Community Website http://www.lakearrowhead.com/ |
| 4. Coordinate with San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency to discuss the promotion and listing of existing leasable spaces. | Committee with Lake Arrowhead Communities Chamber of Commerce | Month 4 | What is Ecotourism https://www.ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism |
| 5. Gather community input on areas to designate as ecotourism hotspots and compile information. | Committee with Lake Arrowhead Communities Chamber of Commerce | Months 4–6 | Handbook for Practical Steps to Marketing Tourism 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. | Committee with Lake Arrowhead Communities Chamber of Commerce | Months 6–12 | |