



**MC**  
HOSPITALITY  
HIGHLIGHTS



# UNTAPPED POTENTIAL:

LEVERAGING LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS TO  
ELEVATE THE CAMPING EXPERIENCE

Conducted by



**MODERN  
CAMPGROUND**



**CAIRN  
CONSULTING  
GROUP**



# LETTERS FROM THE CEOs

**W**elcome to the third edition of MC Hospitality Highlights, “Untapped Potential: Leveraging Local Partnerships to Elevate the Camping Experience.” This report is a collaborative effort between Modern Campground and Cairn Consulting Group, aimed at providing data-driven insights tailored to the unique needs of campground owners and operators.

As the founder and CEO of Modern Campground, I am thrilled to partner with the team at Cairn Consulting to bring you regular, in-depth analyses of the trends shaping our industry. Our mission is to empower the outdoor hospitality sector with the knowledge and tools needed to thrive in an increasingly competitive market. By joining forces with Cairn Consulting, we aim to provide you with comprehensive, reliable data and actionable strategies to enhance your business operations and drive revenue growth.

This month’s report focuses on two interconnected topics: collaborating with local businesses and experts, and leveraging these collaborations to create unique demand for your campground. By fostering strong relationships within the local business community and identifying gaps in local offerings, campgrounds

can expand the depth and breadth of their hospitality services, ultimately elevating the guest experience.

In addition to the valuable insights within the report, we have gone the extra mile to provide actionable tips that you can implement at your campground today. Visit the Modern Campground website to discover effective ways to generate innovative collaboration ideas and create opportunities to enhance campground revenue. We’ve also created a YouTube video and 10 blog articles exploring these strategies in greater depth, as well as bite-sized social media content to keep you informed and inspired throughout the month.

As always, your feedback is invaluable to us. If you have suggestions on how we can refine future reports or additional data points you’d like us to explore, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me directly at [brian@insiderperks.com](mailto:brian@insiderperks.com). Together, we can continue to raise the bar for data-driven decision-making in the outdoor hospitality industry.

Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership.



*Brian Searl*

Founder & CEO  
Insider Perks & Modern Campground

I am pleased to present the findings from our March 2024 research study, which delves into the untapped potential of local partnerships and innovative strategies for creating demand in the outdoor hospitality industry. Cairn Consulting Group is committed to providing actionable insights and data-driven recommendations to help campground owners, operators, and managers enhance their offerings and strengthen their position as cornerstone businesses in their local communities.

This report focuses on two interconnected topics: collaborating with local businesses and experts, and leveraging these collaborations to create unique demand for your campground. By fostering strong relationships within the local business community and identifying gaps in local offerings, campgrounds can expand the depth and breadth of their hospitality services, ultimately elevating the guest experience.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of these opportunities, our team employed a multi-faceted research approach, gathering both quantitative and qualitative data from a variety of sources. We analyzed the August 2023 edition of the KOA Monthly Research Report, which offers valuable insights into camper attitudes and behaviors during holiday seasons and

celebrations. We conducted a proprietary survey of campground guests to better understand their food preparation preferences and needs. We examined findings from the North American Camping & Outdoor Hospitality Report, the most extensive annual study of camper trends across the U.S. and Canada. We engaged in conversations with park managers and owners to gain first-hand perspectives on successful collaboration strategies and local partnerships. And we conducted secondary research on five small tourist communities in the U.S. to identify best practices and innovative approaches to local collaboration.

By synthesizing these diverse data points, we have compiled a set of novel and exciting strategies for campground owners, operators, and managers to further embed themselves in their local business community and culture. We believe that by positioning your campground as a cornerstone business and purveyor of outdoor hospitality, you can create a unique and compelling value proposition that sets you apart from competitors.

I hope that this report provides you with the insights and inspiration needed to forge powerful local partnerships and create new avenues for growth in your outdoor hospitality business.



*Scott Bahr*

President  
Cairn Consulting Group







## UNTAPPED POTENTIAL:

LEVERAGING LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS TO ELEVATE THE CAMPING EXPERIENCE

The latest version of MC Hospitality Highlights is focused on two separate, yet highly related topics: collaborating with other local businesses and experts, and seeking to create your demand based on these collaborations, or gaps in local offerings.

Once again, our approach was to gather information from a variety of

resources to put together some of what we hope are novel and exciting ways for the park owner/operator/manager to further develop the breadth and depth of the hospitality that they offer. By embedding themselves further into their local business community and culture, the campground or park can be viewed as a cornerstone business and purveyor of outdoor hospitality.

## METHODOLOGY

The information provided in this report is a compilation of both quantitative and qualitative data. The primary resources that were utilized include accessing the KOA Monthly Research Report which offers information on attitudes and behavior toward the holiday seasons and celebrations during camping trips (August 2023 version of the report), a

survey of guests conducted by Cairn Consulting Group that was used to evaluate guest preferences for food preparation, the North American Camping & Outdoor Hospitality Report, conversations with park managers and owners, and secondary research on five small tourist communities in the U.S.

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## KEY INSIGHTS

- Collaborating with local businesses can provide benefits such as enhanced guest experiences, increased visibility and reach, access to specialized skills and knowledge, and support for the local economy.
- Identifying gaps in local offerings for tourists provides opportunities to develop strategic partnerships. Rural areas often lack services like equipment rentals, guided tours, pet care, and transportation.
- Restaurants, shops, and attractions with limited hours, such as those closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, present partnership opportunities for campgrounds.
- Guest interests and behaviors reveal prospects to create demand for experiences like outdoor cooking classes, local music events, and equipment demos.
- Many guests are inherently curious about trying different accommodation types while camping. Campgrounds can enable the trial of RVs, glamping, and tents through local collaborations.
- Unique partnership ideas leverage emerging trends like virtual reality nature tours, wilderness survival skills workshops, artisanal cooking classes, and mindfulness retreats.
- Special events and activities can add revenue streams through packaged deals, co-branded marketing, on-site vendor spaces, and commissions on local bookings.
- Practical steps to identify collaboration opportunities include networking events, community surveys, visiting local businesses, tracking trends, and engaging staff and customers.
- A proactive, creative approach focused on enhancing the guest experience and supporting local communities is key for fruitful partnerships.



## BENEFITS OF LOCAL COLLABORATIONS

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF COLLABORATING WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES?

When considering collaboration, there are both short and long-term benefits for both the campground and the local community. Most importantly, it places the campground solidly in the greater community as a good citizen, but results in greater reach and loyalty among guests.

#### Enhanced Guest Experience:

Collaborations with local businesses can provide campers with a more comprehensive and enjoyable experience, offering them a variety of services and activities to choose from.

#### Diversified Amenities:

Partnering with local businesses allows campgrounds to offer a diverse range of amenities, services, and activities that may not be feasible to manage independently.

#### Attraction of New Visitors:

Collaborations can attract new visitors to the campground who are drawn by the combined offerings of both the campground and local businesses.

#### Community Support:

Collaborating with local businesses fosters a sense of community support, helping to strengthen ties between the campground and the local community.



#### Marketing Opportunities:

Joint marketing initiatives create opportunities for both the campground and local businesses to reach a broader audience, often at a lower cost than individual marketing efforts.

#### Differentiation and Uniqueness:

Collaborations allow campgrounds to differentiate themselves by offering unique and exclusive experiences, setting them apart from competitors.

#### Local Economic Impact:

Supporting local businesses contributes to the economic development of the surrounding community, creating a positive impact on the local economy.

#### Enhanced Reputation:

Positive collaborations can enhance the reputation of the campground, making it more attractive to campers who value community engagement and local partnerships.

#### Adaptability to Trends:

Collaborating with local businesses helps campgrounds stay adaptable to changing trends and preferences, as they can incorporate new and popular offerings through partnerships.







### Cross-Promotion Opportunities:

Engaging in cross-promotional activities, such as joint events, discounts, or loyalty programs, can increase brand awareness and customer loyalty for both the campground and local businesses.

### Shared Resources:

Collaborations may involve the sharing of resources, expertise, or facilities, allowing both parties to optimize their operations and reduce costs.

### Special Events and Activities:

Partnering with local businesses enables the organization of special events, workshops, or themed activities, creating memorable experiences for campers.

### Increased Accessibility:

Collaborations can provide campers with easier access to services, amenities, and attractions offered by local businesses without having to travel far from the campground.

### Increased Revenue:

Shared promotions, special packages, and cross-promotional efforts can lead to increased bookings, activities, and overall revenue for both the campground and local businesses.

By implementing some of these approaches, campgrounds can spearhead an **information exchange** for local businesses with campers and provide maps or directories highlighting nearby attractions.

Encourage local businesses to share information about the campground with their customers. Another is to **collect feedback** from campers about their experiences with local businesses and use the information to improve collaborations. Foster open communication with local businesses to address concerns and continuously enhance the partnership. By fostering strong relationships with local businesses, campgrounds can create a more vibrant and appealing experience for campers while contributing to the economic growth of the surrounding community.

All of the mentioned items include some fairly straightforward benefits of local collaborations. Yet one of the most important considerations in these collaborations is the ability to **identify opportunities for unique offerings, to fill the gaps** the local array of services might be missing, and in the long-term, to **create your own demand** for the amenities, events, and collaborations that are being spearheaded by your campground or park.





# IDENTIFYING GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN RURAL AREAS

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE GAPS THAT CAN CREATE OPPORTUNITY IN RURAL AREAS?

When visiting rural areas, tourists often have specific needs that may not always be readily available. Understanding and addressing these needs can enhance the overall visitor experience.

Here are some types of services that tourists may require in rural areas, which may not always be easily accessible:

### Wi-Fi Hotspots:

Reliable internet access or Wi-Fi hotspots, particularly for travelers who need to stay connected during their visit.

### Pet-Friendly Accommodations:

Accommodations and services that are pet-friendly, catering to travelers who bring their pets along.

### Local Events and Festivals:

Information about and access to local events, festivals, or cultural celebrations happening during the visit.

### Wellness and Spa Services:

Wellness services such as spas, massage therapy, or yoga classes for relaxation and rejuvenation.

### Outdoor Equipment Rentals:

Rental services for outdoor equipment such as hiking gear, bicycles, kayaks, or camping equipment.

### Emergency Services Information:

Clear information about local emergency services, medical facilities, and contact details for assistance in case of emergencies.

### Guided Tours and Activities:

Guided tours led by locals to explore the natural beauty, historical sites, or cultural aspects of the rural area.

### Local Transportation:

Shuttle services or transportation options to explore nearby attractions.

### Information Centers:

Information centers provide helpful local information, maps, and brochures. Information on business hours for local businesses and attractions is crucial for planning visits, given the varying operational days of many local businesses.

To identify specific needs and opportunities for services in a particular rural area, it's essential to conduct market research, engage with local communities, and understand the preferences of the target tourist

demographic. Collaborating with local businesses to provide these services can enhance the overall tourist experience and contribute to the sustainable development of rural tourism.



# STRATEGIC COLLABORATIONS FOR CAMPGROUNDS

## WHICH COLLABORATIONS ARE WORTH CONSIDERING?

Collaborating with local businesses can be a mutually beneficial strategy for campgrounds. It can enhance the overall experience for campers, attract more visitors, boost the local economy, and offer opportunities for increased revenue.

Below are some ideas on potential ways campgrounds can collaborate with local businesses:

### Activity Partnerships:

Partner with local tour operators, guides, or adventure companies to offer outdoor activities and excursions for campers. Host events or workshops with local experts, such as nature guides, artisans, or outdoor educators.

### Food and Beverage Collaborations:

Partner with local restaurants, food trucks, catering services, or outdoor cooking experts to offer diverse dining options and educational opportunities for campers. Host food festivals or themed dinners featuring local cuisine.

### Wellness:

Collaborate with local service providers, such as spas, massage therapists, or yoga instructors, to offer wellness services at the campground.

### Local Product Integration:

Stock local products in campground stores or vending machines, showcasing regional specialties.

**Collaborate with local farmers** or food producers to supply fresh and local produce for campers.



### Community Events:

Organize joint community events or festivals that bring together local businesses, campers, and the surrounding community. Sponsor or participate in local fairs, markets, or parades to increase visibility.

### Environmental Initiatives:

Collaborate with local environmental organizations or conservation groups to organize clean-up events, nature walks, or educational programs. Implement sustainable practices and source supplies locally to support eco-friendly initiatives.

### Gear and equipment dealerships, and retailers:

Partner with a local RV dealership, ATV dealer, outdoor equipment retailer, etc. to offer on-site demos, try new gear, and capitalize on guests' curiosity about new experiences.

### Discounts and Loyalty Programs:

Establish loyalty programs that encourage campers to frequent local businesses for special discounts or perks. Negotiate discounts for campers at nearby businesses, creating a sense of community and encouraging repeat visits.



# INNOVATING FOR LIMITED LOCAL OFFERINGS

WHAT TYPES OF BUSINESSES MAY HAVE LIMITED HOURS, AND ALSO REPRESENT OPPORTUNITY?

Businesses with limited or inconvenient hours of operation can be challenging for tourists, as they may disrupt travel plans and limit access to essential services.



Some types of businesses that might have less-than-ideal hours for tourists include:

- Small, Local Shops
- Traditional Banks
- Local Post Offices
- Certain Museums and Attractions
- Dine-in Restaurants
- Local Markets
- Some Tour Operators
- Hair Salons and Spas
- Certain Public Transportation Services

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE WHEN THERE AREN'T A LOT OF LOCAL OPTIONS?

## BUSINESSES CLOSED MONDAY AND/OR TUESDAY

% of restaurants closed **89%**

% of coffee shops **72%**

% of local attractions **91%**

% of stores/merchants **64%**

A review of businesses in five small, yet highly trafficked tourist towns reveals that there is a great deal of opportunity for any business to fill the gaps in closures during the early days of the week.

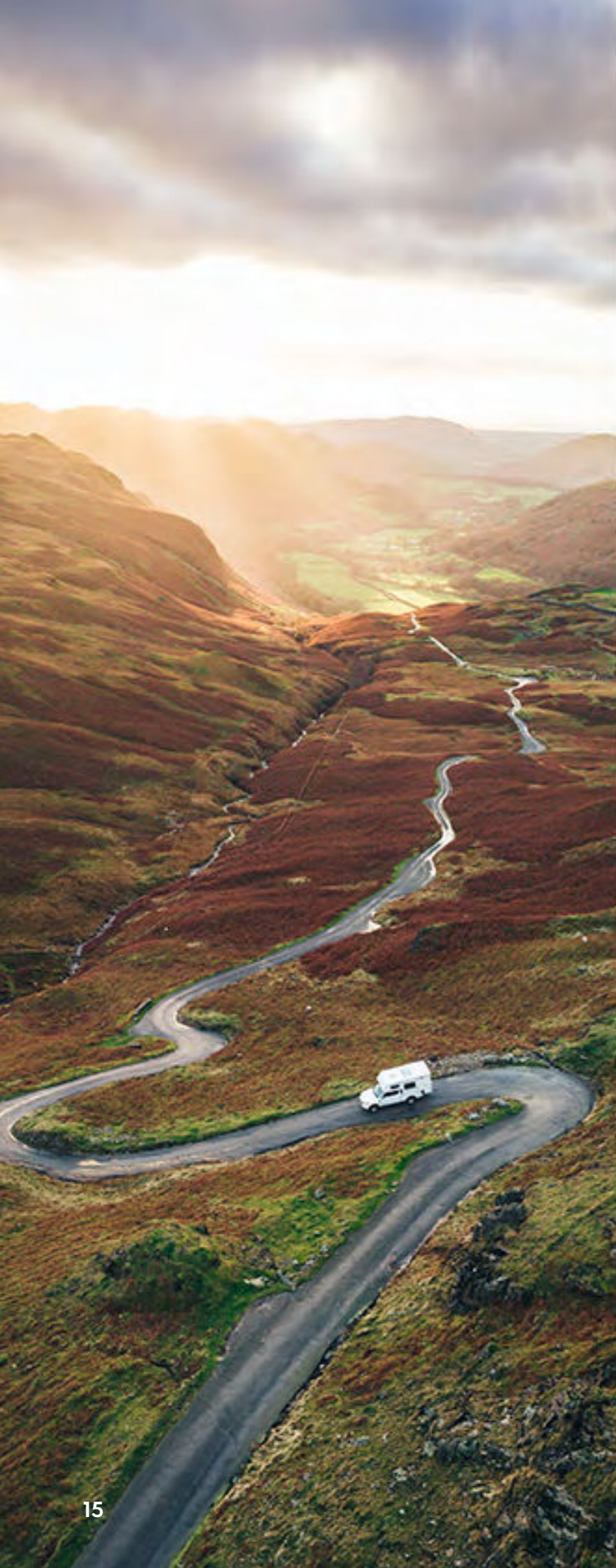
What this means to other local businesses, including campgrounds, is that your guests, many of whom would seek off-site dining options, are

unable to do so. While many can seek backup at the campground, it does suggest that there is an opportunity to fill that void by collaborating with a local food truck or other restaurant to do an onsite food service.

Restaurants, still reeling from the impact of COVID on staffing, are unlikely to be open on Mondays or Tuesdays, including many who are only open on a Thursday through Sunday cycle.







# LEVERAGING GUEST HABITS FOR OPPORTUNITY

## HOW DO GUEST HABITS REPRESENT OPPORTUNITY?

Nearly all guests (87%) report that they leave campgrounds for other activities, whether it's taking a drive or participating in outdoor recreation. However, a review of the list suggests that there might be opportunities for on-site activities or services that will allow guests to stick around, engage more with staff and other guests, and potentially enhance revenue.



Source: KOA North American Camping and Outdoor Hospitality Report





## DO GUESTS' APPROACH TO MEAL PLANNING REPRESENT AN OPPORTUNITY?

Guests in general are unlikely to plan all of their meals for their stay, and from the previous information, we know that they are likely to leave the

campground for dining options. This result demonstrates that by proactively offering some food options, guests can gain benefits by:

- Exposure to local food options, including local specialty and cultural options;
- Learn about outdoor cooking including techniques and recipes;
- Save time, and offer convenience;
- Provide certainty to guests about having some type of alternative food option.

Each meal is planned in detail prior to leaving **29%**

"Some of our meals are planned, but sometimes are changed when we are camping" **51%**

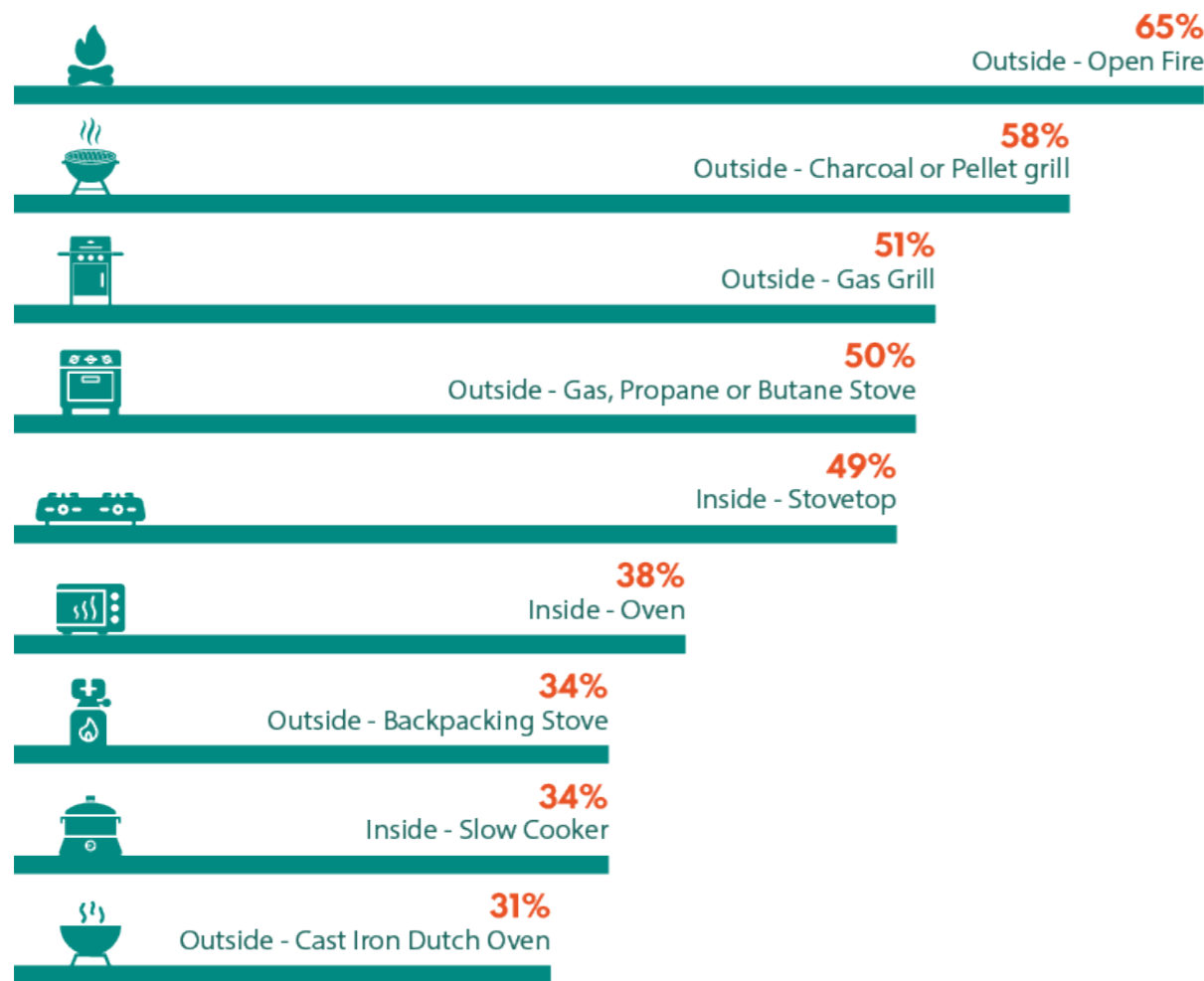
"Few of our meals are planned, the meals tend to be based on the situation" **14%**

"We do not plan meals, we 'wing-it' during our travels" **7%**

Source: KOA North American Camping and Outdoor Hospitality Report



## WHICH METHODS DO GUESTS LIKE TO USE FOR COOKING ON THEIR STAYS?



Source: KOA North American Camping and Outdoor Hospitality Report

Guests love to cook outdoors, but from our research, many do not know some of the basics of cooking over an open fire (or even know how to start a fire). Even experienced guests would enjoy the chance to interact with someone who is an expert at outdoor cooking over an open fire.

And don't sleep on the cast iron cooking. It is popular, and many people shy away from it due to lack of knowledge and exposure.



By bringing in an expert, guests can learn about the nuances of open-fire cooking in an interactive setting, gain pointers, learn about fire building (and maintenance), and what foods to bring along on their trips, resulting in a feeling of independence.





Close to nine out of ten guests (87%) are interested in trying a new type of accommodation.

## EXPANDING ACCOMMODATION HORIZONS

### CAN CAMPGROUNDS HELP INTRODUCE GUESTS TO OTHER TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS?

We live in an era where leisure travelers are seeking new experiences of all kinds, and that includes exposure to other types of accommodations. Research shows that half of tent campers have interest in RVs or glamping accommodations, 4-in-10 RVers are interested in tents or glamping, and about 4-in-10 glampers are interested in tents or RVs.

opportunity to capitalize on this desire for new experiences by partnering with local RV dealerships to entice trial of different types of RVs or local gear shops that sell tents and other outdoor gear.

Campgrounds can also use the interest in glamping to talk to guests about their preferences and encourage them to try out any cabins or glamping accommodations they have on-site.

This inherent curiosity offers campground operators a unique

#### RVERS WHO WANT TO TRY . . .



14%  
A Tent



61%  
A Different Type of RV



24%  
Glamping/  
Cabin Camping

#### TENT CAMPERS WHO WANT TO TRY . . .



50%  
A Different Type of Tent



22%  
An RV



26%  
Glamping/  
Cabin Camping

#### GLAMPERS WHO WANT TO TRY . . .



18%  
A Tent



24%  
An RV



57%  
A Different Type of  
Glamping Accommodation

Source: KOA North American Camping and Outdoor Hospitality Report



# PROACTIVE OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFICATION

## HOW CAN A CAMPGROUND IDENTIFY NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY?

Creating new opportunities with local businesses requires proactive and creative thinking. Below are some strategies for campgrounds to explore and develop fresh collaborations:



### Networking Events:

Host networking events for local businesses and invite them to the campground. This can facilitate direct connections, idea sharing, and brainstorming for potential collaborations.

### Business Incubation:

Provide space or resources for local entrepreneurs to test and showcase their products or services within the campground. This could be a pop-up shop or a designated area for local businesses to promote themselves.

### Collaborative Events:

Organize joint events that involve both the campground and local businesses. For example, a nature-themed photography contest sponsored by a local camera shop or a wellness retreat in partnership with a nearby spa.

### Community Workshops:

Host workshops or training sessions led by local experts or businesses. This could include outdoor survival

workshops, cooking classes with local chefs, or wildlife photography sessions.

### Specialty Packages:

Develop special packages or experiences that involve local businesses. This could be a “Gourmet Camping” package that includes meals from a local restaurant, or an “Adventure Combo” that combines camping with activities offered by local adventure businesses.

### Theme Nights:

Collaborate with local restaurants or food trucks to organize theme nights where campers can enjoy local cuisine. This could be a weekly event that showcases different aspects of the local culinary scene.



### Corporate Retreats and Team Building:

Market the campground as a venue for corporate retreats, team-building events, and conferences, partnering with local team-building experts and caterers.







## CAPITALIZING ON TRENDS AND SEASONALITY

### HOW CAN CAMPGROUNDS CAPITALIZE ON SOME RECENT TRENDS IN GUEST EXPERIENCES?

Identifying new opportunities for campgrounds often involves creative thinking, understanding market trends, and exploring untapped potential. Below are some general opportunities that campgrounds may explore:

#### **Adventure Packages:**

Collaborate with local adventure or recreational businesses to create packages that include activities like rock climbing, zip-lining, or kayaking.

#### **Themed Events and Festivals:**

Host themed events or festivals in collaboration with local businesses,

such as music festivals, food fairs, or cultural celebrations.

#### **Educational Workshops:**

Partner with local experts to offer educational workshops related to outdoor skills, wildlife, or environmental conservation.

#### **Digital Nomad Packages:**

Cater to the growing trend of digital nomads by offering campsites equipped with reliable Wi-Fi, coworking spaces, and partnerships with local cafes or coworking hubs.

#### **Customizable Camping Experiences:**

Offer customizable camping experiences, allowing campers to choose specific amenities or activities based on their preferences.

#### **Outdoor Education Programs:**

Develop partnerships with local schools or educational institutions to offer outdoor education programs or field trips.

#### **Tech-Free Retreats:**

Promote the campground as a tech-free retreat, collaborating with mindfulness or meditation instructors to provide a serene and unplugged experience.



## WHAT ARE SOME CREATIVE CONSIDERATIONS?

While it's challenging to predict entirely novel ideas, below are some potential unique collaboration opportunities for campgrounds that may not have been widely explored:

### Stargazing Experiences:

Collaborate with local astronomy clubs or stargazing experts to offer guided stargazing experiences. Provide telescopes, astronomy talks, and night-sky photography workshops.

### Virtual Reality Nature Tours:

Collaborate with VR technology companies to create immersive virtual reality nature tours, allowing campers to explore different ecosystems without leaving the campground.

### Extreme Weather Preparedness Workshops:

Work with local emergency services or survival experts to offer workshops on extreme weather preparedness and survival skills in the great outdoors.

### Wildlife Conservation Programs:

Collaborate with wildlife conservation organizations to create educational programs and experiences, including guided tours with wildlife experts and involvement in local conservation projects.

### Geocaching Adventures:

Partner with geocaching communities to create geocaching adventures within the campground, encouraging campers to explore and discover hidden treasures.

### Sustainable Living Demonstrations:

Collaborate with eco-conscious businesses to host workshops and demonstrations on sustainable living practices, such as solar power, composting, and eco-friendly camping gear.

### Birdwatching Competitions:

Partner with birdwatching organizations to organize friendly birdwatching competitions within the campground, promoting bird conservation and environmental awareness.

### Foraging and Cooking Experiences:

Collaborate with foraging experts and chefs to offer foraging experiences followed by cooking workshops, showcasing local edible plants and sustainable cooking practices.

### DIY Outdoor Skills Workshops:

Partner with local artisans, crafters, and DIY experts to offer workshops on building outdoor furniture, crafting survival tools, or creating nature-inspired art.







## WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES WHEN THE WEATHER TURNS BAD?

In June of 2023, it rained 24 or 30 days in some parts of the Northeast, a full 2" to 3" above average. Creativity can turn a rainy day at the campground into a unique and enjoyable experience. Here are some creative ideas for campground activities on rainy days:

### Indoor Games and Tournaments:

Set up indoor game stations with board games, card games, and puzzles.

Organize tournaments for games like chess, Scrabble, or card games.

### DIY Craft Workshops:

Host craft workshops using materials that can be easily found around the campground, such as nature-inspired crafts or DIY projects.

### Storytelling Sessions:

Create a cozy indoor space and invite campers to share their favorite camping stories or lead storytelling sessions.

### Cooking Classes:

Conduct indoor cooking classes where campers can learn to make simple and delicious meals using camping equipment.



### Nature-Themed Movie Marathon:

Set up a movie screening area and host a nature-themed movie marathon, complete with popcorn and blankets.

### Rainy Day Photography Contest:

Encourage campers to capture the beauty of the rainy day through photography and organize a contest with fun prizes.

### Campfire Cooking Challenge:

Move the cooking challenge indoors by organizing a campfire cooking competition using portable stoves or indoor kitchens.

### Science Experiments:

Conduct simple and safe indoor science experiments, demonstrating the principles of nature or weather-related phenomena.

### Book Exchange or Reading Corner:

Set up a cozy reading corner with a book exchange, allowing campers to share and swap books during the rainy day.

### Puzzle and Treasure Hunt:

Create an indoor treasure hunt or scavenger hunt with clues leading campers to different locations around the campground.



# ENHANCING REVENUE THROUGH STRATEGIC COLLABORATIONS

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO USE COLLABORATION AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE REVENUE?

Collaborating with local businesses can open up various revenue streams for campgrounds. Here are some ways to generate additional revenue through strategic partnerships:

## Package Deals:

Create package deals in collaboration with local businesses, bundling campground stays with services or products from nearby attractions, restaurants, or adventure companies.

## On-Site Vendor Spaces:

Provide on-site spaces for local vendors to set up temporary shops or stalls, creating a marketplace within the campground and generating revenue through vendor fees or commissions.

## Joint Marketing Campaigns:

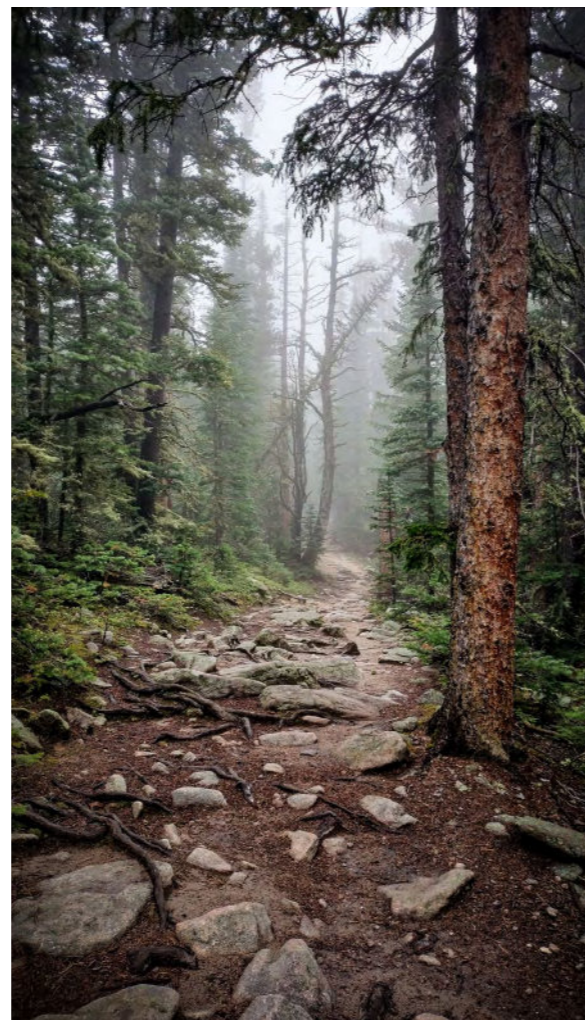
Partner with local businesses for joint marketing campaigns. This can include co-branded advertisements, social media promotions, or shared mailing campaigns to attract a wider audience.

## Exclusive Discounts for Campers:

Negotiate exclusive discounts for campground guests at local businesses, encouraging campers to explore and spend money in the community.

## Sponsorship Opportunities:

Offer sponsorship opportunities to local businesses for events or amenities within the campground, such as sponsoring a campfire area, picnic tables, or nature trails.



## Local Product Sales:

Sell locally sourced products in the campground store, such as crafts, souvenirs, or food items, and establish partnerships with local producers.

## Collaborative Events:

Host collaborative events with local businesses, such as themed dinners, wine tastings, or outdoor movie nights, where both the campground and businesses share revenue from ticket sales or participation fees.

## Shuttle Services:

Collaborate with local transportation services to offer shuttle services from the campground to nearby attractions or businesses, earning a commission on each ride.

## Concierge Services:

Provide concierge services that assist campers in booking experiences with local businesses, such as guided tours, outdoor activities, or spa services, earning a commission for each booking.

## Exclusive Member Discounts:

Create a membership program for campers that includes exclusive discounts at partnered local businesses. This can incentivize campers to become repeat visitors.

## Photography Packages:

Partner with local photographers to offer photography packages for campers, providing professional photos of their camping experience for an additional fee.



### **Pet-Friendly Services:**

Collaborate with local pet services, such as pet grooming or dog walking, and offer pet-friendly amenities to campers for an additional fee.

### **Workshops and Classes:**

Host workshops or classes conducted by local experts, such as nature guides, artists, or outdoor instructors, and charge campers a fee for participation.

### **Equipment Rental Services:**

Collaborate with local equipment rental companies to provide campers with rental options for outdoor gear, bikes, or water sports equipment.

### **Online Marketplace:**

Create an online marketplace or directory on the campground's website where local businesses can advertise and sell their products or services, generating revenue through listings or commissions.

By fostering strong relationships with local businesses, campgrounds can diversify their offerings and enhance the overall experience for campers while creating a positive economic impact on the surrounding community.





# PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE: CONVERSATION WITH NAVITOUR FOUNDER SHAY BELLAS

## HOW CAN LOCAL COLLABORATION WORK IN A PRACTICAL SENSE?

While much of this document offers feedback surrounding ideation and consideration for different types of collaborations that might work for identifying opportunity and extending the campground's brand. But in a real sense, there are individuals and organizations that are currently putting together businesses and consultancies that help to bring together the talent and expertise within the areas that are served by campgrounds and parks (and hospitality in general).

One, in particular, is a company called "NaviTour," which was founded by

Shay Bellas as a way for organizations and individuals to access guides and professionals who offer services geared toward outdoor enthusiasts, whether it's foraging, fishing, hunting, astronomy, geology, survival, or outdoor recreation in general (note: this is not a comprehensive list, you can seek more information at [navitour.com](http://navitour.com)).

Due to the topic of this report, we spent some time speaking with Shay about how campgrounds can collaborate with local guides or businesses that will benefit the campground as well as the local community.

### ? WHAT IS THE FIRST STEP A CAMPGROUND OPERATOR SHOULD TAKE?

Shay "First identify the audience; what are their interests, who are they, what do they expect during their visit? Sometimes they don't know what they don't know."



### ? HOW SHOULD THE CAMPGROUND APPROACH DECIDING WHAT THEY COULD PROVIDE TO GUESTS?

Shay "Most relevant is to enhance the attributes of what they (guests) are already coming to the campground for, but with the idea of a deepened experience in mind. What would enhance the experience? What are the natural features near the campground? Do you have a lake or river nearby to fish? What kind of wildlife is there? What are the features of the area that guests want to experience, and combine that with the talent and experts who are in your area, and it will again, provide campers with a much deeper and memorable experience. Give campers another reason to visit, or a reason to stay longer. Offer discounts or unique experiences on weekdays to get more weekday stays."

### ? WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TYPES OF EXPERIENCES THAT HAVE HAD THE BEST SUCCESS, OR THAT ARE ASKED FOR THE MOST?

Shay "A lot of the food and culinary guides and experiences are popular. To connect people with one of the local tribes, to learn how they forage, tracking, and meal prep using traditional methods. They learn about the culture, but have an amazing and authentic experience. We have also seen a lot of requests for learning about survival skills, plant identification (how to ID poison ivy is a common request), basic outdoor skills, which for many are lacking and quite popular."



### ? ARE THERE OTHER EXPERIENCES THAT MIGHT BE WORTHWHILE TO CONSIDER WHEN IT COMES TO GUIDES AND LOCAL EXPERTS?

Shay "Yes, I think that there is an interest in areas such as conservation and land stewardship using sustainable outdoor practices, to build on the desire for outdoor cooking and preparation using traditional methods. We have a guide who has a traveling smoker, and can fill a campground with the smoky smells of the food. To partner with not only local foragers, and especially some guides from the local tribes, and pair the food with local beer, wine, or spirits. We also have a guide who specializes in trips and experiences for people who may have difficulty with some of the physical aspects of the outdoors. He's in a wheelchair himself, and has the transportation and access to experiences for those who may have difficulties."

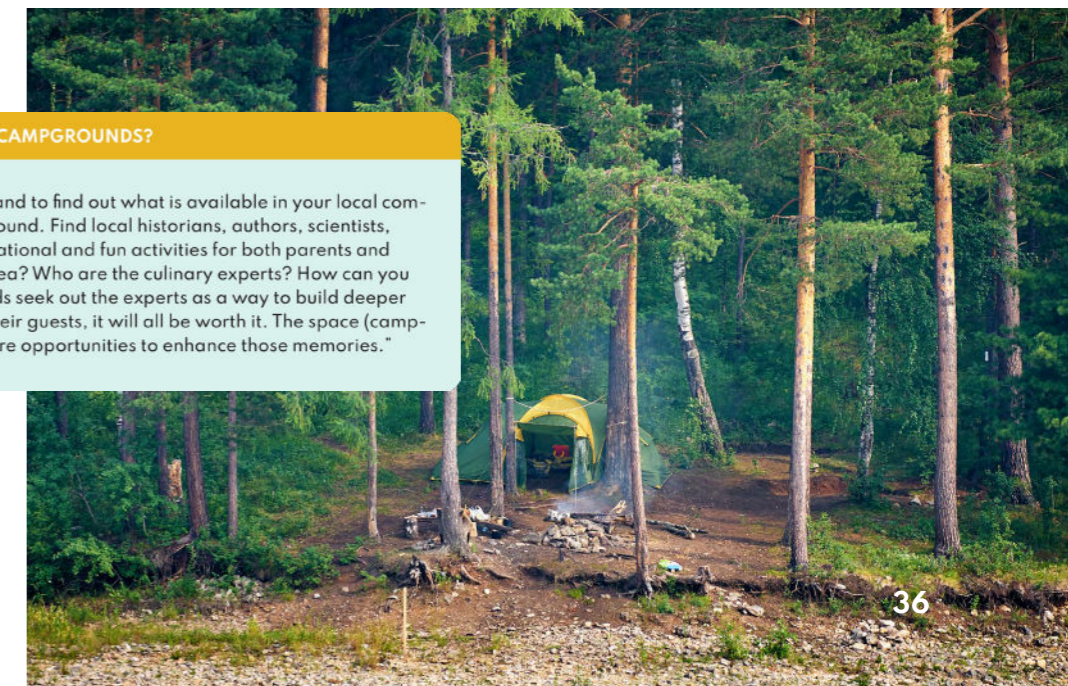


### ? ISN'T THIS A LOT OF EXTRA WORK FOR A CAMPGROUND OPERATOR?

Shay "It depends on what's available in the area, and what the goals are. Companies like NaviTour assume the bulk of the responsibility, and try to make it both customizable, but turnkey. The important thing to remember is that whether you want to cross-sell or upsell, these partnerships can offer both immediate and long-term financial benefit."

### ? ANY FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CAMPGROUNDS?

Shay "It is important to ask a lot of questions and to find out what is available in your local community that you can use at your campground. Find local historians, authors, scientists, anyone who is an expert and offer educational and fun activities for both parents and children. Is there native culture in the area? Who are the culinary experts? How can you bring them together? If the campgrounds seek out the experts as a way to build deeper and more meaningful experiences for their guests, it will all be worth it. The space (campground) provides memories, but there are opportunities to enhance those memories."





## WAYS TO IDENTIFY COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES

Generating new ideas for collaboration with local businesses requires creativity, open-mindedness, and a proactive approach. Here are some effective ways to generate innovative collaboration ideas:

### Attend Local Business Networking Events:

Participate in local business networking events, trade shows, or chambers of commerce meetings. Engaging with local business owners and understanding their needs can spark collaboration ideas.

### Community Surveys and Feedback:

Conduct surveys or seek feedback from campers and local residents to understand their preferences and needs. Use this information to identify potential collaboration opportunities that align with community interests.

### Brainstorming Sessions:

Organize brainstorming sessions with your campground team to generate ideas. Encourage a collaborative and open environment where everyone can contribute their thoughts and insights.

### Local Trend Monitoring:

Stay informed about local trends and emerging industries. Consider how these trends might align with the interests of campers and provide collaboration opportunities with businesses in those sectors.

### Visit Local Businesses:

Visit nearby businesses and establishments to understand their operations, products, and services. Identifying synergies between your campground and local businesses can lead to creative collaboration ideas.

### Research Similar Collaborations:

Research collaborations between campgrounds and local businesses in other regions or industries. Adapt and customize successful models to fit the unique characteristics of your campground and community.

### Social Media Listening:

Monitor social media channels to gauge the interests and discussions within your community. This can provide insights into popular local businesses and potential collaboration ideas.

### Engage in Local Events:

Attend community events, festivals, or farmers' markets to connect with local businesses. Engaging in these events can spark conversations and reveal collaboration possibilities.



### Partner with Local Organizations:

Collaborate with local community organizations, environmental groups, or business associations. These organizations may have valuable insights into local needs and potential collaboration opportunities.

### Customer and Staff Suggestions:

Encourage campers, staff, and local residents to suggest collaboration ideas. Sometimes, those who are directly involved or live in the community can offer unique perspectives.

### Creative Thinking Exercises:

Incorporate creative thinking exercises or workshops into your planning sessions. These exercises can help break

down mental barriers and encourage innovative thinking.

### Explore Niche Collaborations:

Consider niche collaborations that might not be immediately obvious. For example, partnering with local artists, wellness practitioners, or educational institutions for unique experiences.

### Tour Local Businesses:

Organize tours of local businesses for your campground staff. This firsthand experience can provide inspiration for potential collaborations and build stronger relationships.

### Create an Idea Box:

Establish an idea box where campers, staff, and local residents can anonymously submit collaboration ideas. Review these suggestions regularly to discover hidden gems.

### Experiment and Iterate:

Be willing to experiment with new collaboration ideas and iterate based on feedback. Not every idea will be a perfect fit initially, but ongoing experimentation can lead to successful partnerships.

By combining these strategies, you can cultivate a culture of innovation and continuously explore fresh collaboration ideas that benefit both your campground and the local business community.





## FROM REPORT TO REALITY: TURNING INSIGHTS INTO ACTION

As we culminate our exploration in the March report, it's paramount that we translate these insights into tangible actions that campground owners can implement. This section, "From Report to Reality," is designed to guide you in harnessing the power of local collaborations and innovative offerings to elevate your campground's appeal and functionality.

### Embrace Community Integration

Begin by mapping out the local business landscape around your campground. Identify potential partners whose services and products complement the camping experience. This could range from local artisanal producers to adventure sports providers. Initiate conversations with these businesses to explore mutually beneficial collaborations, such as exclusive discounts for your guests or joint events that showcase local culture and talents.

### Host Collaborative Events

Consider hosting events that bridge the gap between your campground and the local community. For

example, organize a local food and wine night, where nearby restaurants and vineyards can showcase their offerings. Not only does this provide your guests with a unique experience, but it also strengthens your ties with local businesses and boosts the local economy.

### Fill Service Gaps

Conduct a survey or informal interviews with your guests to uncover unmet needs or desired services during their stay. This could reveal opportunities for you to introduce new offerings, such as on-site gear rentals or guided tours to hidden local gems. Partnering with local businesses to fill these gaps can enhance your guests' experience and create new revenue streams for your campground.

### Innovate and Educate

Leverage your partnerships to offer educational workshops or classes that engage both guests and locals. From outdoor survival skills to local history and ecology, these sessions can enrich the camping experience and foster a deeper appreciation for the natural and cultural environment surrounding your campground.

### Develop a Local Guide

Create a comprehensive local guide for your guests, featuring your business partners, upcoming events, and must-visit spots. This not only serves as a valuable resource for your guests but also promotes local businesses and

attractions. Make this guide available both physically at your campground and digitally through your website or a dedicated app.

### Share Success Stories

Document and share successful collaborations and guest experiences resulting from these partnerships through your newsletters, blog, and social media channels. Highlighting these stories can inspire further community engagement, attract more guests, and establish your campground as a pivotal member of the local business ecosystem.

### Seek Continuous Feedback

Engage your guests and local partners in feedback loops to continually refine and expand your collaborative efforts. Understanding what works well and what could be improved will help you adapt and innovate in ways that consistently enhance value for all stakeholders involved.

By implementing these actionable strategies, you can transform insights from the March 2024 report into reality, fostering a vibrant, collaborative, and guest-centric campground environment.





## SUMMARY

While this report offered a lot of different—and in some cases—somewhat unrelated information, the information converges at the nexus of local collaborations along with identifying opportunity and creating your own demand.

The roadmap in some cases is unclear, yet a closer look will reveal that taking the entirety of the information set will result in taking a layered approach to the development of campground service offerings.

Our goal was to generate some ideas and encourage operators to start a dialog with local businesses to see where the community can collaborate and offer a comprehensive and attractive experience for guests in these communities.

Campgrounds have the opportunity to be cornerstone businesses during peak months, positioning themselves as a hub for local services, amenities, and knowledge.

In the outdoor hospitality sector, it takes a complete set of offerings in order to fulfill the needs and desires of guests that are in some cases outside the realm of accommodations.





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