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# Tourism & Its Impacts on Rural Communities: Lima, Montana 2018

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# INSTITUTE FOR
## TOURISM & RECREATION RESEARCH
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# Tourism & Its Impacts on Rural Communities:
# Lima, Montana 2018

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A sample of visitors to Lima completed a questionnaire regarding their visitation.  Results show that most people are traveling through, but many are also hiking or biking the divide trail

# Tourism & Its Impacts on Rural Communities: Lima 2018

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Case Study Report 2018-22

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## Abstract

This study was a collaborative effort between the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research and the community of Lima, Montana to provide insight into the impacts tourism has on rural communities. Paper surveys were completed on site by 45 visitors during summer 2018. Results show that 23% of respondents were residents of Montana (outside of Beaverhead County) and 73% were from out-of-state or country. Visitors spent an average of 9.64 nights away from home and 2.5 nights on average in Lima. Most spending in Lima was on hotel/motel/b&b/ cabin rental ($3,132).  Respondents to the survey reported a total spending of $10,057 in the Lima area. Most visitors stayed in Lima because it was on their route but agreed that they visited Lima because it is less crowded, relaxing and quiet. Results provide the Lima community with useful data for future planning, marketing/promotion, and understanding the visitor spending associated with visitation.

## Executive Summary

Lima, MT attracted out-of-county Montana residents (22%) and out-of-state (73%) visitors to the Lima area.  The visitors upon arrival make important economic contributions to the Lima area. The results of the study are worth considering for future planning within the Lima community.

- 98% of visitors who reside outside of Beaverhead County spent at least three nights away from home. The mean number of nights spent in Montana was 7.62 nights; mean number of nights in Lima was 2.50.
- 81% of respondents who stayed in Lima reported staying at a hotel/motel/b&b/rental followed by 12% staying at a private campground.
- More money was spent by these out-of-county visitors in hotel/motel/b&b/cabin rental ($3,132), retail goods and services ($2,020), and guide/outfitters ($1,850) than other spending categories.
- 59% of respondents reported that they were spending for a travel group size of two (51% of visitors) or just themselves (41% of visitors).The average travel group size was 1.72 people (travel group spending size).
- Visitors were mostly traveling by themselves (34%). Other group types with high response were: couple (32%) & immediate family (16%).
- Respondents traveled with a variety of age categories in their group – the highest percentages were 55-64 (47%), 65-74 year olds (34%), and 35-44 year olds (18%).
- 49% of respondents indicated they planned to spend time in Lima the day they arrived with another 34% making plans to spend time 1-7 days before arriving.
- Visitors, whether on this trip or in past trips, were mostly in the area for camping (33%). Other activities with high response rates were: hiking (24%) & bicycle touring (18%).
- Visitors, whether on this trip or in past trips, were mostly in the area to visit or had visited the Continental Divide Trail (33%). Other places that were frequently visited were the Great Divide Trail and adjacent BLM lands with 29%, respectively.
- Overall, 76% of respondents indicated that they were either very likely or somewhat likely to visit Lima again.

## Management Implications

Current visitors are mostly traveling through the area, but in terms of activities, many are involved in hiking the Continental Divide trail or biking the Great Divide trail. These are good indicators of the type of visitor Lima reaches and will continue to serve.  Hikers and bikers like to have a good grocery store with fresh fruits and vegetables. If Lima were able to have hiking food and apparel available in town and share that on social media, that reputation might encourage these active travelers to stay a bit longer in town to recuperate from their travels. It is recommended that the citizens of Lima review the respondents' comments from Appendix B to gain more insight into people's likes and dislikes of Lima.

# Introduction

Lima, MT, located just 50 miles south of Dillon on Interstate 15 had a population of 228 in 2017. Lima is near to the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, the Continental Divide Trail, Great Divide Trail, and the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. Due to its' location near public lands, hiking, fishing, hunting, and bicycling, are the main activities visitors might engage in while visiting Lima.

The purpose of this study was to provide an understanding of the characteristics of visitors to Lima, visitor spending in Lima, and levels of satisfaction with different aspects of visiting the area.

# Methods

A community member of Lima took on the responsibility to coordinate the survey efforts with the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR). The survey instrument was designed cooperatively with Lima, printed by ITRR, and distributed in Lima by the community coordinator. Surveys were provided to the motel owners and restaurants, who were responsible for asking visitors if they would complete the survey. Surveys were disbursed from June through September 2018. Forty-five completed surveys were obtained. No documentation of the number of refusals was recorded.

### *Limitations*

As in all research, there are limitations to the study. Limitations for the Lima study included the dependence on business owners to ask visitors to complete the survey. Business owners are busy and distributing surveys is not their main focus, therefore a random sampling did not occur. In addition, ITRR personnel were not present during the data collection for quality control.

# Results

Of the 45 valid responses to the residence questions, 26 percent (12 people) were from Montana and 74 percent (33 people) were from out-of-state (see Tables 1 and 2). Of all Montana respondents, 17 percent (2 people) were from Beaverhead County while 83 percent (10 people) were from other Montana counties.

Respondents from out-of-state (33 in total) were mostly from California (25 percent, 8 people) followed by 9 percent (3 people) were from Utah. Four percent (2 people) were from Canada (see Table 2).

### Table 1: Residence of all Respondents

| Place of Residence | # of total | % of total |
|---|---|---|
| Beaverhead County | 2 | 4% |
| Other MT County | 10 | 22% |
| Montana=12 | | |
| U.S. State | 26 | 58% |
| Canada | 2 | 4% |
| International | 4 | 9% |
| Unknown | 1 | 2% |
| **Total all Residences** | **45** | |

**Table 2: Out-of-State, Canadian, and International Residences**

| Place of Residence | # of total |
|---|---|
| **US states** | |
| California | 8 |
| Utah | 3 |
| Colorado | 2 |
| Oregon | 2 |
| Washington | 2 |
| Arizona, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Missouri, New Jersey, Nevada, Texas, Wyoming | 1 each |
| **Canadian province** | |
| Alberta, British Columbia | 1 each |
| **Other international** | |
| Australia, UK, France, New Zealand | 1 each |

The mean age of respondents was 55 years old. Of the forty-two respondents residing outside Beaverhead County who responded to the survey, all three or more nights away from home. Of those nights spent away from home, the greatest percent of respondents (43%) spent ten or more nights in Montana. The mean number of nights spent in Montana was 7.62 nights. The mean number of nights spent in Lima was 2.50 nights with the majority (71%) spending only one night. A full breakdown of nights spent as well as results of all other questions in this survey can be found in Appendix A.

## Expenditures

Spending information was asked of visitors who reside outside of Beaverhead County. The survey asked that they report their best estimate of the total amount of money they and their family/travel group (if applicable) spent in the Lima area in the following categories: accommodations, restaurant or bar, groceries or snacks, gasoline, guides or outfitters, shuttles or taxis, retail goods and services, and entertainment or recreation.

Table 3 presents the expenditure data of only the non-resident respondents (those who reside outside of Beaverhead County) who reported spending money in the categories. The mean expenditure of those who spent money for each category can be found along with the percentage of people who reported that they spent money in that category. The last column provides the total dollars spent by those respondents in each category. The total reported expenditure for respondents who spent was $10,057.

**Table 3: Expenditure Data: Expenditures calculated using only non-residents (those who live outside of Beaverhead County) who spent.**

| Expenditure Category | Mean expenditures of non-residents groups who reported that they spent money in these categories | % of respondents who reported spending money in each category | Total dollars spent in each category by nonresident groups who spent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hotel/motel/b&b/rental | $104.40 (n=30) | 70% | $3,132.00 |
| Retail goods & services | $673.33 (n=3) | 7% | $2,020.00 |
| Guide/Outfitter | $925 (n=2) | 5% | $1,850.00 |
| Restaurant/bar | $52.45 (n=31) | 72% | $1,626.00 |
| Gas | $53.79 (n=14) | 33% | $753.00 |
| Groceries/snacks | $18.88 (n=17) | 40% | $321.00 |
| Shuttle/Taxi | $200 (n=1) | 2% | $200.00 |
| Campground | $19 (n=5) | 12% | $95.00 |
| Rented home/cabin/room | $60 (n=1) | 2% | $60.00 |
| Entertainment/recreation | $0 (n=0) | 0 | $0.00 |
| | | TOTAL | $10,057.00 |

# Appendix A- Results

**Q1. Are you a resident of Montana?  n=45**

    **27%** Yes         **73%** No (skip to Q3.)

**Q2. Do you reside in Beaverhead County? n=12**

    **17%** Yes (Skip to Q12. on back)         **83%** No (Skip to Q4.)

**Q3. In what state, province, or foreign country do you reside?**

    **See Tables 1 and 2.**

**Q4. Is this your first time visiting Lima?  n=41**

    **59%** Yes         **41%** No

**Q5. What reasons are you visiting the Lima area? (Check all that apply.)  n=43**

    **40%** Vacation/recreation/pleasure   **63%** Just passing through    **7%** Business/convention/meeting

     **7%** Visiting friends/relatives       **0%** Shopping

**Q6. <u>For this trip</u>, how many nights will you spend <u>away from home</u>?  n=42, mean=9.64**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **0%** 0 (Skip to Q.10) | **0%** 1 | **12%** 3 | **5%** 5 | **5%** 7 | **0%** 9 |
| | **0%** 2 | **0%** 4 | **2%** 6 | **2%** 8 | **74%** 10 or more |

**Q7. How many of those nights are <u>in Montana</u>?  n=42, mean=7.62**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **0%** 0 | **12%** 2 | **2%** 4 | **0%** 6 | **5%** 8 | **43%** 10 or more |
| **10%** 1 | **10%** 3 | **7%** 5 | **10%** 7 | **2%** 9 | |

**Q8. Of your nights in Montana, how many will you stay <u>in Lima on this trip</u>?  n=42, mean=2.50**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2%** 0 (Go to Q.10) | **71%** 1 | **2%** 3 | **2%** 5 | **2%** 7 | **0%** 9 |
| | **17%** 2 | **2%** 4 | **0%** 6 | **0%** 8 | **0%** 10 or more |

**Q9. While in Lima in which types of accommodation(s) did you stay ON THIS TRIP?  (Check all that apply.)  n=41**

    **81%** Hotel/motel/B&B     **12%** Private campground     **0%** Resort/condominium

     **5%** Rental cabin/home      **5%** Home of friend/relative     **0%** Guest ranch

     **0%** Public land camping     **0%** Second home/cabin/condo     **0%** Vehicle in parking lot

**Q10. Please enter your best estimate of the TOTAL amount of money in US dollars you (and your family/travel group, if applicable) spent/will spend in Lima on THIS TRIP.** *If you did not spend money in a category, please leave it blank.* **(See Table 3 for expenditures)**

**ACCOMMODATIONS in Lima**
**Hotel/motel/bed & breakfast**

$ _____

**Campground**

$ _____

**Rented home/cabin or room**

$ _____

**FOOD in Lima**
**Restaurant/bar**

$ _____

**Groceries/snacks**
$ _____

**TRANSPORTATION in Lima**
**Gasoline/diesel**

$ _____

**Shuttle/taxi**

$ _____

**RETAIL/SERVICES in Lima**
**Retail goods/services**

$ _____

**Entertainment/recreation**

$ _____

**Guide/outfitting trip**

$ _____

---

**Q11.** **How many people does the above spending represent (including yourself, i.e., your travel group/family size)?**
**n=39; mean= 1.72**

| **41%** 1 | **3%** 3 | **0%** 5 | **0%** 7 | **0%** 9 | **0%** more than 10 |
| **51%** 2 | **5%** 4 | **0%** 6 | **0%** 8 | **0%** 10 | |

**Q12.** **What option best describes your travel group?  n=44**

| **34%** Self | **16%** Immediate family | **7%** Family/friends | **0%** Business associates |
| **32%** Couple | **0%** Extended family | **9%** Friends | **2%** Organized group/club |

**Q13.** **Please select all the ages represented in your group:  n=44 for each age category**

| **5%** 0-5 yrs. | **0%** 11-17 yrs. | **14%** 25-34 yrs. | **11%** 45-54 yrs. | **34%** 65-74 yrs. |
| **2%** 6-10 yrs. | **5%** 18-24 yrs. | **18%** 35-44 yrs. | **48%** 55-64 yrs. | **9%** 75 and over |

**Q14.** **How long before this trip did you make plans to spend time in Lima?  n=41**

| **49%** The day I arrived | **5%** 1-4 weeks before arriving | **0%** Over 6 months before arriving |
| **34%** 1-7 days before arriving | **12%** 1-6 months before arriving | |

**Q15.** Please select the option that best corresponds with your level of agreement with each statement below*

| I visit Lima because it has or is…. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Total respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less crowded | 3% | 0% | 7% | 13% | 77% | 4.61 | n=31 |
| On my route | 0% | 0% | 0% | 5% | 95% | 4.95 | n=37 |
| A scenic drive | 3% | 0% | 13% | 32% | 52% | 4.29 | n=31 |
| Quiet | 3% | 0% | 9% | 24% | 64% | 4.45 | n=33 |
| Close to public lands | 7% | 3% | 13% | 20% | 57% | 4.17 | n=30 |
| Close to attractions I'm visiting | 10% | 3% | 10% | 20% | 57% | 4.10 | n=30 |
| Shopping | 40% | 20% | 20% | 7% | 13% | 2.33 | n=30 |
| Special places to eat | 24% | 17% | 27% | 0% | 31% | 2.97 | n=29 |
| Where family/friends live | 72% | 7% | 3% | 0% | 17% | 1.83 | n=29 |
| Outdoor Recreation | 6% | 0% | 25% | 22% | 47% | 4.03 | n=32 |
| A charming small town | 3% | 3% | 18% | 18% | 59% | 4.26 | n=34 |
| A vibrant small town | 7% | 21% | 24% | 10% | 38% | 3.52 | n=29 |
| Relaxing | 3% | 0% | 10% | 25% | 63% | 4.44 | n=32 |

*1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree

**Q16.** On this trip as well as past visits, what places have you visited in the Lima area (check all that apply). n=26

22% Red Rocks National Wildlife Refuge     2% Fossil hunting areas

20% Adjacent forest lands     33% Continental Divide Trail

29% Adjacent BLM lands     29% Great Divide Trail

**Q17.** On this as well as past trips, what activities have you participated in during your visit to the Lima area (check all that apply). n=27

33% Camping     7% OHV/ATV riding     9% Mountain biking     2% Rockhounding

24% Hiking     0% Horseback riding     4% Motorcycle touring     0% Snowmobiling

13% Fishing     0% Guided trip     11% Wildlife watching     0% XC skiing

0% Hunting     18% Bicycle touring     11% Bird watching

**Q18.** What is your age? n=42; Range=23-81, mean=55.45

**Q19.** What is your gender? n=42

60% Male     40% Female

**Q20.** How likely are you to visit Lima again? n=42

50% Very likely     26% Somewhat likely     24% Unlikely

**Q21.** Please tell us what you liked about Lima.

See Appendix B

**Q22.** Please tell us what you did not like about Lima.

See Appendix B

# Appendix B: Open-ended Responses

## Q21. Please tell us what you liked about Lima.

| |
|---|
| A very friendly group of people. Small, I would walk the whole town in 20 mins. |
| Access off I-15 |
| Centennial Valley and Peet's Bar and Mountain Vu Motel (not necessarily in that order)! |
| Friendly folks |
| Great charming town on my way to business |
| Great margaritas! |
| Had car trouble. Didn't plan to stay this long in hotel. |
| Had what I need to stock up and rest for the GDMT |
| Hiking section of CDT |
| I like Lima as a stop over place, it is about half way between my MT and WY places. Sometimes it works well to eat at Jans also. |
| I liked the people, the understanding of the modern services necessary to make a good trip great |
| It has hotel to sleep in and restaurant was good and people I met nice. |
| Jan's Cafe is always a stopping point. Nice Rest Area. |
| Motorcycle trip |
| Mountain View Motel and the Kitchen Unit |
| My amazing brother and his amazing girlfriend live here. And it really warms my heart to see them. Love the Peat |
| Near trail and freeway |
| On Great Divide Mountain Bike Route. Good location. Friendly people |
| Peat bar, tranquility, beauty |
| People are pleasant |
| Perfect for hikers/biker: small- everything close together, and good lodging options. Camping or motel (good prices)! Motel particularly good and friendly to cyclists. eg. laundry powder, showers for campers, stocking camping gas- all the little things which make life easier! |
| Quiet, friendly peopple |
| Quiet, friendly, peaceful |
| Reasonable RV Park rates. Very nice little town. |
| Riding the TD   Hospitable, comfortable, affordable |
| Simple, honest town |
| Sleeping inside and hot meals. Didn't get a lot of time to see the rest of the town but it seems nice |
| Small town-reminded me of time we lived in Wyoming |
| South Valley Road hiking, Mountain View Motel, Peat Bar! |
| Surrounding mountains and people- ranchers and towns people. Very friendly and helpful |
| The accommodations |
| The people, services we needed |
| The Red Rocks, The Peat |
| The rooms and the bar are great. The staff are awesome!! Thank you |
| Westin Great Spot |

## Q22. Please tell us what you did not like about Lima.

| |
|---|
| Can't get coffee at 6:00am |
| Grocery store closer but we can live with the drive to Dillon |
| How far it is from Dillon! |
| It was exactly what we needed! |
| Knowing it's likely going to change |
| N/A |
| N/A |
| No A/C |
| No air conditioning in hotel. Could use better place to buy groceries. Also no bike shop. |
| No shops to walk around and see. visited on Monday |
| Nothing |
| Nothing |
| Nothing |
| Nothing, great place |
| Rain. Please control the weather |
| Some trees would be nice |
| The interstate traffic is a little noisy at night, but not enough to prevent a good night's sleep |
| The pie was over-rated |
| Um...? How about a giant supermarket full of cheap fresh fruit and veg?! Maybe more toiletries in motel bathroom. not many of us carry shampoo. But prefer cheap motel than having shampoo |
| What's not to like? It's gorgeous! |

# INSTITUTE FOR TOURISM & RECREATION RESEARCH
### UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

To:     Lima Town Council and business owners

From:   Norma Nickerson, Director, Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research

RE:     Lima visitor survey

Date:   6/14/18

The Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) was approved by the Governor's Tourism Advisory Council to utilize our survey kit for five small towns in Montana. Lima, through the efforts of Mike Strang, has been selected to participate in this project. The other communities participating in the project are Shelby, Deer Lodge, White Sulphur Springs, and Thompson Falls.

The purpose of the project is to assist five small communities with their visitor data through conducting the survey kit customized to their community.

Objectives
- To assist communities in understanding their local visitor by waiving the $700 fee for up to five communities;
- To understand the visitor demographics, trip characteristics, activities, attractions to the community, and visitor planning time frame, and;
- To assess the spending patterns of visitors to the community.

The survey kit is conducted as follows:
1. ITRR develops the survey instrument template
2. ITRR works with a community leader to determine the survey methods best suited for the community
3. ITRR prints ~200 surveys and mails them to the community leader
4. The community collects the data based on the methods and time frame chosen
5. Upon completion of data collection, surveys are mailed back to ITRR
6. ITRR conducts data entry, analysis, and report for the community

Ffter discussion with Mike Strang, we decided the most efficient and useful way to collect data is to ask accommodation owners (motels, cabins, rented rooms, campgrounds) to assist by asking each guest all summer and possibly through September, to complete the questionnaire before they leave Lima. In addition, one or two restaurants in town could ask patrons to complete the survey while waiting for their meal. Finally, if time allows for some community members to survey visitors at the rest area, that would give us an idea of who stops in town, but doesn't necessarily spend the night.

We ask that the Town Council and business owners provide their 'blessing' and passion for this study. It can only be successful if everyone is on board and persistent throughout the summer in data collection.

The resulting data will provide Lima with information about their visitor behavior which can ultimately assist the community in economic development. If you have questions, please call or email me at: 406-243-2328; norma.nickerson@umontana.edu.

Thank you!

### UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA