



## Trade Show Report International Roundup – Fargo, ND May 14 – 18, 2022

### Glacier Country Representation:

- Glacier Country Tourism – Debbie Picard
- Destination Missoula – Kara Bartlett
- Discover Kalispell – Dawn Jackson
- Travelers' Rest Preservation & Heritage Assoc.– Molly Stockdale

### Overview:

As a Marketing Partner of the Great American West, Glacier Country attended the Summit Meeting on Saturday May 14, 2022, and listen to the proposals presented by each GAW overseas representative.

- 31 tour operators, 3 US receptive tour operators, and 7 GAW reps from France, Italy, UK, Germany, Benelux region, Nordic region and Australia. These tour operators specialize in group travel, FIT, and fly/drive programs.
- Glacier Country Tourism met with all of the tour operators and reps for 10 minute appointments.
- Next IRU will take place in Boise, ID April 22 – 25, 2023

### European Travel Updates

- Benelux Update (Marjolein Fraanje) – The Dutch market is strong. People of Benelux receive an 8% bonus for vacation paid annually. They take 30 days of vacation each year and usually take 14 days per vacation. The last year saw them staying closer to home, but with desire to visit the US. They utilize the internet for inspiration then call on either a tour operator or travel agent to book their travel. They are looking for unique experiences (something different than all their friends are doing, for bragging rights) They are going to smaller tour operators to get that unique experience instead of the larger cookie cutter vacations. Many Dutch tour operators are extending Canadian holidays to include the GAW region.
- France Update (Emmanuelle Blondin) – French people are booking more on their own to easy destinations like NY, Orlando but still utilize a tour operator for more unknown areas like our region. Most of the French tour operators are utilizing Rocky Mountain Holiday Tours as a receptive operator in our region. The French people get 5 to 6 weeks of paid vacation and will use 2 weeks of it when traveling to the US. They want slow travel and want to travel responsibly. Travel remains strong for the higher end, and the GAW region is trendy. The French are looking for niche and tailor-made trips to our region.
- Italy Update (Olga Mazzoni) –The Italians love to travel and they love to eat! While they don't have as many travel days as other European countries their average spend on a



holiday is the highest. Many tour operators wanted to come to IRU but she had to decline. The Italians get about 12 to 15 days of vacation per year. A trip to the USA is preferred destination and a trip to the GAW region is a very sophisticated trip. It's the more "mature" Italian traveler who comes to our region, maybe their 3-4th visit to the US, and they are looking for a more authentic and experiential experiences. Motorcycle tours and honeymoon destinations are very popular. They recommend we promote the Amtrak service more due to the Italians love of train travel.

- UK Update (Lisa Cooper and Mandy) – The UK economy has the same inflation problem that the US has. However, the outlook for travel to the US is positive, especially for the over 50 market, but the testing to come into the US remains a problematic issue. Advertising from Canada and Australia remains strong, and it's cheaper than the US and we may see some drop-down into our region. They get 4 weeks of paid vacation per year. They are spending 36 million overseas on travel each year. Most use tour operators for booking (albeit a shorter booking window) their travel needs due to insurance. Covid solidified this when people were trapped and couldn't get a flight home. Value is very important so including things like breakfast is nice. Luxury market is very strong, and they feel that a great Holiday is a RIGHT for them. They will save and not go out to eat if it means a better holiday. They like to watch videos when researching on where to go for vacation.
- Germany/Austria/Switzerland Update (Susanne Schmidt) – They have usually always had the strongest economy in Europe but there is a definite rise in the cost of living. The war in Ukraine is not affecting travel to the west and there is a strong appetite for travel. Germans get 30 days of paid vacation a year and feel that travel is a RIGHT. There are far more FIT travelers and small escorted bus tours. Many Germans have been to the US and the RMI region is a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> trip to the US. Covid solidified the use of tour operators due to insurance that brought them all home while others were stranded. 2023 will be back to 2019 travel.
- Nordic Region Update (Hanna Johansson) – Covid is over and people don't want to talk about it anymore. The region is very big into social media and will trust bloggers over other forms of media. Airspace is closed to the east due to Russian war, so are looking for destinations to the west. Also, the Mediterranean is popular now. They too want experiential travel and will look to the US for that. RV travel is up. They are very socially conscious and want to see Americans recycle and reuse and not waste so much. Canada is a major competitor for the traveler.
- Australia Update (Caroline Davidson) – the economy is strong even with rising inflation & interest rates. Australia's #1 long haul destination remains the US however, airlift to the US is down 45%. They are looking for active vacations with authentic experiences. Products that interest Australian tourists are National Parks, cowboy and Native Indian heritage and events, museums about history, ranch experiences, ski resorts and winter experiences, adventure activities, shopping and the RV and motorcycle rentals. High end corporate is also drawn to the GAW region. The most popular months are May-October and December. She thinks our niche should be winter activities.