

# PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ONE POST AT A TIME



**Jackson Hole, Wyoming, consists of 97% protected lands, making it a compelling destination for travelers seeking adventure, authenticity and rugged beauty. But with more people visiting than ever before, these fragile landscapes were threatened.**

**The culprit? Geotagging. What was once an intimate moment in a remote place of beauty was now being instantly broadcast to millions. Social media was leaving digital trails that were putting Jackson Hole's wilderness at risk.**

**Yet insight into our audience revealed that their actions contradicted their beliefs. Visitors to Jackson Hole strongly value conservation, yet were unaware of the environmental harm they were causing with a simple geotag.**

**From there our strategy was born: Keep Jackson Hole Wild.**

**With a clever hack, we created a generic location called Tag Responsibly, Keep Jackson Hole Wild. Through social content, posters and print, we encouraged people to ditch geotags and use our generic tag instead.**

**With only \$23,000, we delivered over 217 million free media impressions, inspired other regions to launch Tag Responsibly efforts and prompted the founding of a sustainable tourism coalition. Most importantly, we inspired a national conversation about responsible tourism, all while growing tourism in Jackson Hole by 4.6%.**



# DRIVING TOURISM WITHOUT RUINING JACKSON HOLE

**97% OF JACKSON HOLE'S  
LANDS ARE PROTECTED.**

That's the largest protected wilderness in the lower 48. Travelers come to Jackson Hole to experience the wild nature of its mountains, nightlife, skiing and local flare. In fact, 3.2 million people come to the area in the summertime alone to visit the natural wonders of Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park. The beauty and protection of these places was imperative in continuing to drive tourism.

With more people than ever before traveling to the area, there was an increased threat to these important protected lands. We wanted to increase tourism, but we needed to do so without ruining Jackson Hole. So rather than simply talking about it, we aimed to get locals and visitors involved in the importance of sustainable tourism.

# MAKING JACKSON HOLE'S TOURISM MORE SUSTAINABLE

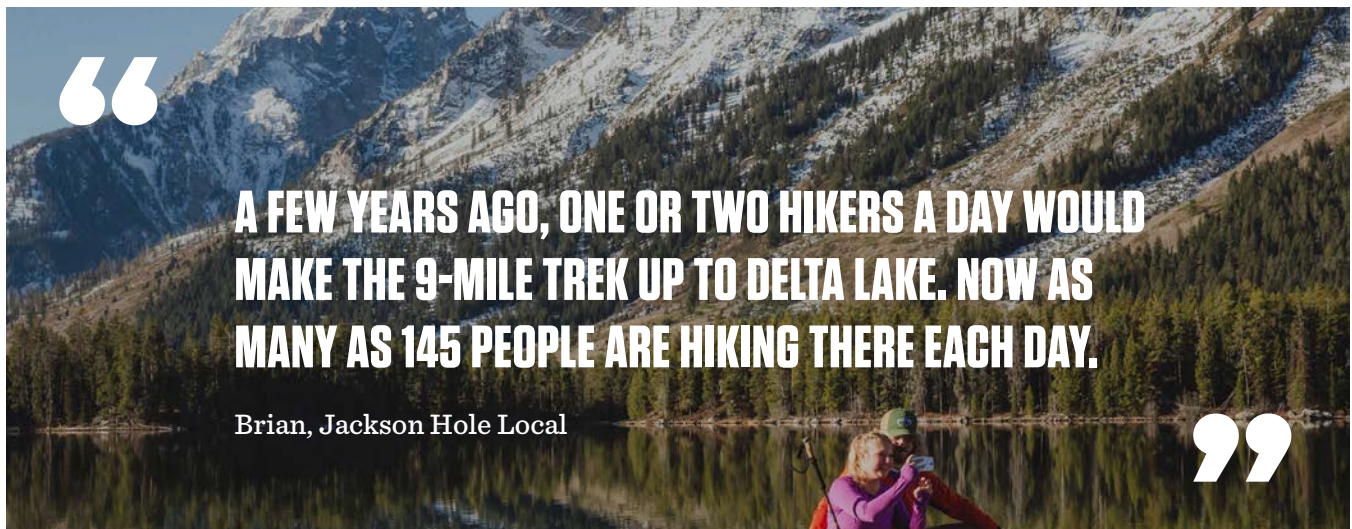
Through our experiences traveling to Jackson Hole, it became clear that although locals were happy that the tourism business was booming (the majority of their livelihoods depend on tourism), there was a growing concern that the “gems” of Jackson Hole were going to soon be overrun. That secret trail head, the outlook only a few have experienced, the backcountry ski line known to only those who... know.

While most tourism campaigns seek to expose as much about the area as possible, we wanted to hide it. Well, kind of. If Jackson Hole was going to stay wild, we had to make sure it wasn't just the skiing and the nightlife that remained so.

We looked to other outdoor destinations to see what practices we could borrow. Surely someone else had experienced the impact tourism was having on their protected lands and was doing something about it. No one was. Apparently sustainable tourism was something many areas were worried about, yet no one had given it a platform.

Our charge was clear. We needed a strategic platform that could achieve our opposing goals: driving tourism *and* protecting Jackson Hole's wilderness at the same time.

## KEEP JACKSON HOLE WILD



“

**A FEW YEARS AGO, ONE OR TWO HIKERS A DAY WOULD MAKE THE 9-MILE TREK UP TO DELTA LAKE. NOW AS MANY AS 145 PEOPLE ARE HIKING THERE EACH DAY.**

Brian, Jackson Hole Local

”

# ONE LITTLE TAG, ONE BIG PROBLEM

The goal of the Keep Jackson Hole Wild effort was to get visitors and locals involved in keeping the place as wild tomorrow as it is today. After all, it was why people loved visiting and why locals were hell-bent on staying.

As we examined local and national outdoor tourism trends, we identified a growing threat to some of the natural wonders around Jackson Hole and across the world: Instagram geotagging bringing harmful levels of traffic to fragile nature areas. That's when devising a way to help alleviate the unintended harm of geotagging in Jackson Hole became our mission.

Thanks to geotagging, we can tell our friends where we've been. It creates cachet and even a sense of community and connection (especially for our audience). But when that destination is as fragile as nature, and hundreds, then thousands, tell their followers about it, the great outdoors is at risk.

Our primary audience, the Experience Chaser, craves unique experiences and social media likes. They seek outdoor adventure, value conservation and vote with their wallet.

From there, our insight was born: Although our audience strongly values conservation, they are unaware of the environmental harm caused by the simple act of sharing their adventure experiences.

Oops. There was an obvious need to raise their awareness of an environmental problem they were a part of.

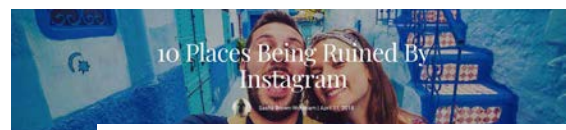
So how could we get the word out? Talking about the damaging effects of social media isn't anything new (think issues with concentration, relationships and mental health). But talking about its harmful effect on the environment was.



Protecting Wildlife and Nature from  
Exploitation

## Is Instagram Ruining the Great Outdoors?

Social media can expose tens of thousands of people to places in an instant. That's a double-edged sword.



The Instagram Generation is Really Bad  
News for Beauty Spots

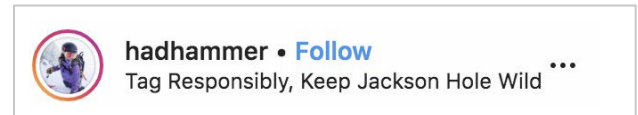
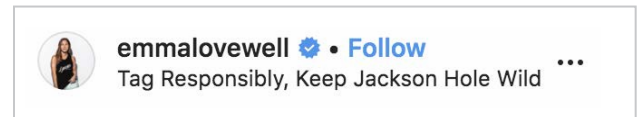
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Instagram is destroying the nature it  
celebrates

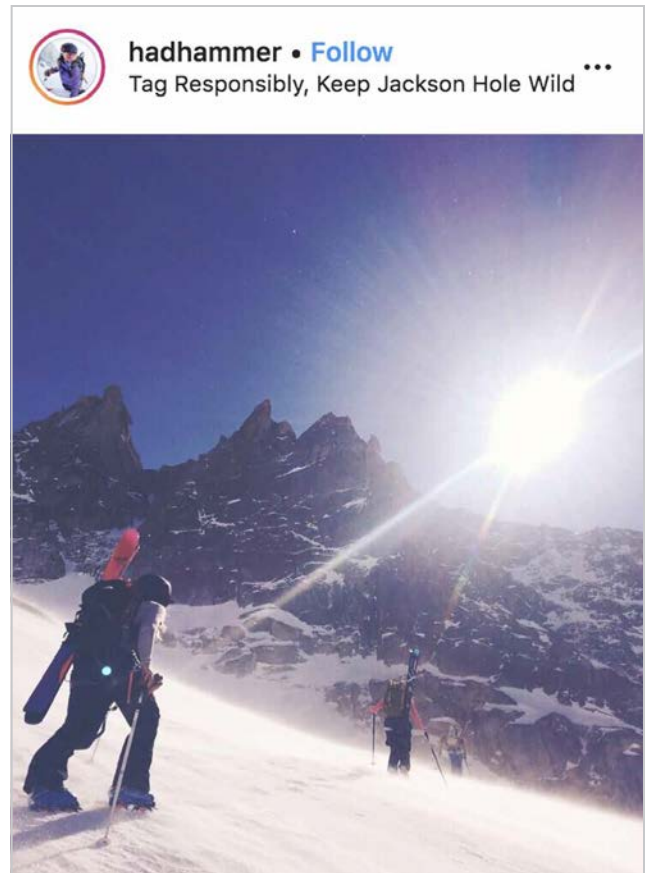
# THE CREATION OF TAG RESPONSIBLY

To combat the unintended environmental harm caused by geotagging, we weaponized Instagram's location feature against itself. With the clever hack of creating a generic location tag called Tag Responsibly, Keep Jackson Hole Wild, we called on users to avoid tagging their exact whereabouts without deterring them from sharing their photos. In addition to being a memorable call to action, the first-of-its-kind generic location tag acts as an awareness driver that furthers the campaign's visibility every time someone posts a photo using it in the location field.

Once the generic location tag successfully appeared on Instagram, we launched the campaign with an announcement video on Visit Jackson Hole's social channels. From there, local influencers with a passion for the outdoors began sharing their Jackson Hole nature photos using the generic location tag to drive awareness and help our tag auto-populate on Instagram.



We leveraged paid media to hit our audience at the right place and time using geotargeted Instagram ads with contextual creative — so we could show someone taking photos in a place like Jenny Lake in Grand Teton National Park a message with an image of Grand Teton National Park. And for additional visibility, we placed posters at Jackson Hole Airport and around town, and bought placements in local newspapers and lifestyle magazines.



**This fall, I was asked by the Jackson Hole Travel & Tourism Board to be a part of the campaign. I wanted to take part...because the reality is, social media in itself isn't negative or positive. How we use it is a reflection of ourselves as humans — the good and the bad. This initiative is a reminder to me to be a bit more mindful about what and how I post.**

Hadley Hammer, Influencer



# HOW MANY LIKES IS A PATCH OF DEAD WILDFLOWERS WORTH?

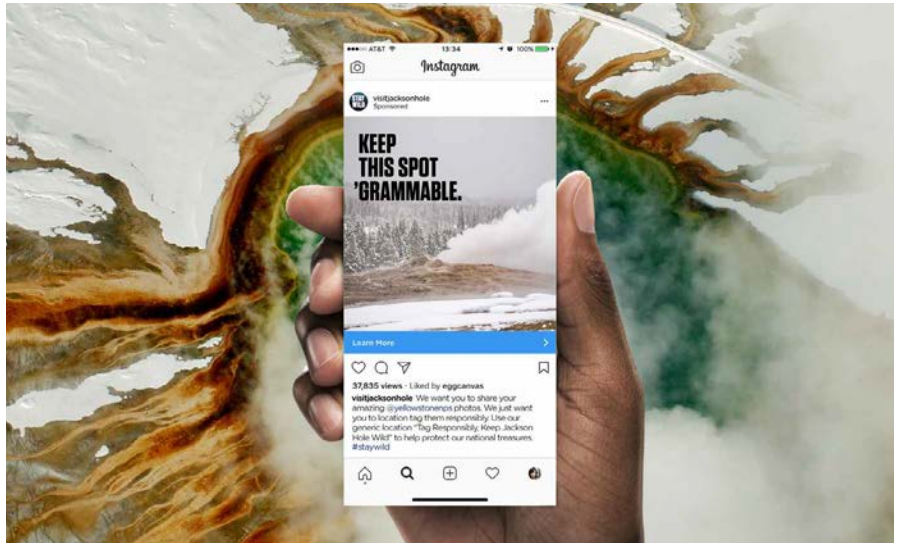


Sadly, it's a negative number. Because when you tag the specific location of a natural area on Instagram, you're helping to increase the number of people who visit the area. And that's not always a good thing. In fact, it's a big problem. Because when you tag a specific location, you're helping to increase the number of people who visit the area. And that's not always a good thing. In fact, it's a big problem. Because when you tag a specific location, you're helping to increase the number of people who visit the area. And that's not always a good thing. In fact, it's a big problem.



**JACKSON HOLE**  
EST. 1872

[visitjacksonhole.com](http://visitjacksonhole.com)



Instagram

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**KEEP THIS SPOT 'GRAMMABLE.**

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37,835 views · Liked by eggimas

visitjacksonhole We want you to share your amazing @jacksonhole photos. We just want you to location tag them responsibly. Use our generic location "Tag Responsibly, Keep Jackson Hole Wild" to help protect our national treasure. #staywild

# ONE LITTLE TAG. ONE BIG PROBLEM.



When you tag a photo with a specific location, the harm of excess traffic follows. Use the generic location "Tag Responsibly, Keep Jackson Hole Wild" in your posts to help preserve the beauty of the wild.

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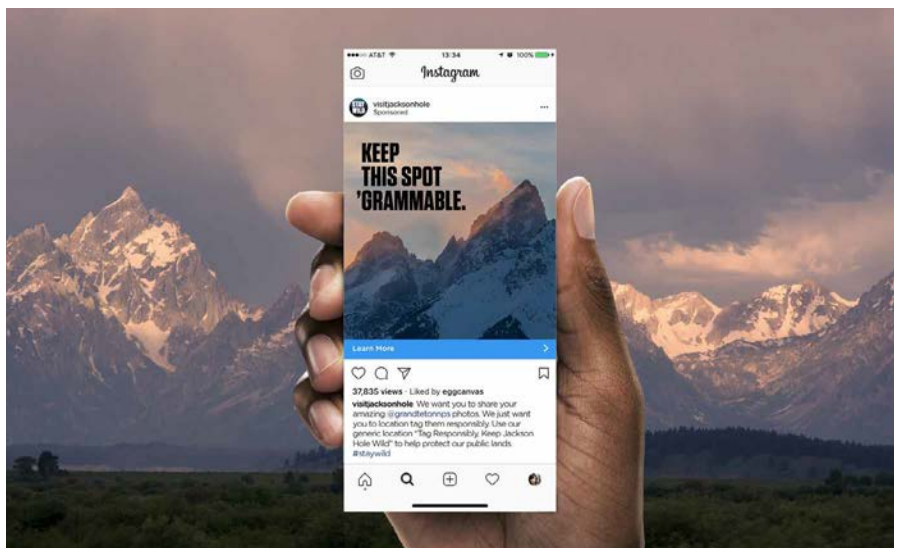
visitjacksonhole We want you to share your amazing @jacksonhole photos. We just want you to location tag them responsibly. Use our generic location "Tag Responsibly, Keep Jackson Hole Wild" to help protect our public lands. #staywild

# TAG LOCATIONS RESPONSIBLY. KEEP JACKSON HOLE WILD.

When you tag a photo with a specific location, the harm of excess traffic follows. Use the generic location "Tag Responsibly, Keep Jackson Hole Wild" in your posts to help preserve the beauty of the wild.

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Instagram

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Learn More

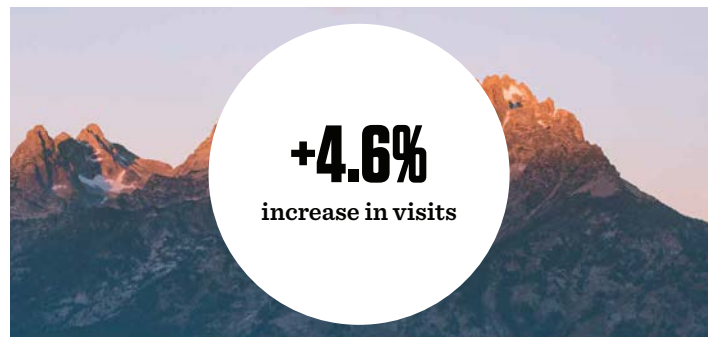
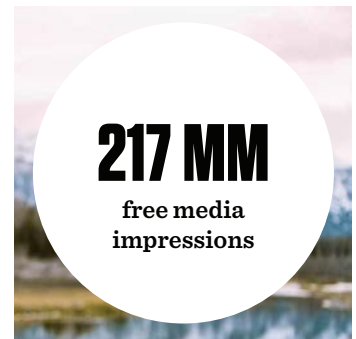
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# INCREASING TOURISM WHILE CREATING A REALLY (REALLY) BIG CONVERSATION

Despite a tiny media budget of \$23,000, our message has spread like wildfire. Our story is being talked about across the country and even the globe — 217 million earned impressions worth and counting. We've garnered stories about sustainable tourism for Jackson Hole in *The New York Times*, *Outside* magazine, *The Ringer*, *Uproxx*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Popular Photography*, *Forbes*, *Refinery29*, *Adweek*, *Contagious*, *CN Traveler* and more. Flight arrivals to Jackson Hole were up 15%, and we increased visits by 4.6%. Jackson Hole Mountain Resort's 715,100 skier visits marked the highest in the resort's history, surpassing the previous record set last year.



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BUCKRAIL



Jackson Hole News & Guide



The New York Times

Forbes

UPROXX



POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHY

People in other regions started reaching out for advice on how they could implement sustainable tourism, and the National Park Service in Washington, D.C., has gone out of its way to recognize Tag Responsibly as a best-in-class example of how to promote local sustainability.

Because of our effort, a sustainable tourism coalition of mountain towns across the U.S. has been created — the first of its kind. While destinations often compete with each other, this group has set aside those differences and joined forces to encourage responsible tourism on a national level. Copycat efforts are springing up all over the country, from Oregon, Maui and Florida to California, Utah and Colorado.

And the campaign has only just begun. As we head into the busy season — an average of 3.2 million people visit Jackson Hole every summer compared to only 200,000 in the winter months — we anticipate that the greatest rise in participation and impact is yet to come.

Through Tag Responsibly, Jackson Hole championed sustainable tourism by creating a really big conversation. Tag Responsibly sparked a dialogue about the toll geotagging is having on the environment and what we can do to protect it. And we're helping to keep Jackson Hole the way it was intended to be — wild.

**#tagresponsiblykeeplosangeleswild**

**#tagresponsiblykeepsilvertonwild**

**#tagresponsiblykeepidahowild**

**#tagresponsiblytho**

**#tagresponsiblyleavenotrace**

**#tagresponsiblykeepthespringstatewild**



**#tagresponsiblykeepbendbeautiful**

**#tagresponsiblykeepfloridawild**

**#tagresponsiblykeepcagreen**

**#tagresponsiblybro**

**#tagresponsiblyinthewasatch**

**#tagresponsiblykeepbeavercreekwild**