

2026

ANNUAL PLAN



MAINE.
FORGED BY NATURE™



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WHO WE ARE

The Maine Office of Tourism (MOT) is a state agency within the Department of Economic and Community Development that leads, convenes, and advances the state's tourism economy. We provide resources and education to strengthen the tourism industry, foster stakeholder collaboration, and develop strategy and best practices to promote and enhance the Maine experience for all.

In 2025 we launched the Forged by Nature brand platform, expanded further into international markets and delivered \$9.37 billion in direct visitor spending across Maine's tourism economy. The 2026 Annual Plan builds directly on that momentum — deepening the brand, advancing culinary tourism, and driving year-round visitation in alignment with our Destination Management Plan.

VISION

Maine ignites a sense of curiosity and adventure that inspires generations.

MISSION

The Maine Office of Tourism markets the state in ways that work to preserve and celebrate the authentic character of Maine and foster collaboration to pursue economic vitality.

POSITION

The Maine Office of Tourism was established to administer a program to support and expand the tourism industry and promote the state as a tourist destination.

SECTION 2

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN RESET

A 5-YEAR STRATEGY FOR MARKETING & MANAGEMENT

The Maine Office of Tourism Destination Management Plan is a living document, setting a direction rooted in long-term goals and values while remaining nimble and responsive to current conditions. The 2025 Reset re-engaged stakeholders and residents statewide, pairing new data and trends with a deep dive into related plans for economic development, outdoor recreation, arts, culture and other key industries — grounding our goals and focus for the next five years.

This plan seamlessly integrates MOT's five-year marketing and development strategy, reflecting our values and commitment to Maine's economic, social and environmental vitality. The full plan can be accessed at MOTPartners.com.



FIVE STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

1. Optimize Long-Term Economic Impact

- Amplify the essence of Maine to attract Values-Aligned Travelers who can act as stewards of Maine's experience and ethos
- Invest in marketing intelligence and resources to improve effectiveness and enhance ROI for MOT and industry partners
- Continue to expand diversification of new Values-Aligned Travelers to and within Maine

2. Promote Destination Stewardship

- Build awareness of destination stewardship resources for partners
- Integrate responsible visitor messaging into all MOT communication channels
- Support industry programs that encourage destination stewardship for natural and cultural resources

3. Advance Destination Development

- Build industry and community awareness of destination development opportunities and programs that support this work
- Equip and empower local communities with the tools to advance destination development
- Support and expand programs that improve tourism experience and facilitate product development
- Ensure tourism's voice in infrastructure investment

4. Prioritize Collaboration & Partnership

- Evaluate and expand stakeholder communications and engagement to strengthen relationships with the tourism industry
- Build and nurture the partnership network and identify collaboration opportunities
- Fill the role of convener to facilitate collaboration and partnerships outside of MOT

5. Enhance Organizational Effectiveness

- Foster positive and productive MOT team culture and work processes
- Strategically invest in MOT staff professional development

Maine seeks out and welcomes visitors who demonstrate stewardship, appreciation and care for Maine's people, landscapes, and industries. Values-Aligned Travelers come from diverse backgrounds, all income levels and interests, and positively contribute to all parts of Maine. MOT's marketing is designed to match visitors with experiences across the state that benefit and enrich both the visitor and the community.



Scan here

To read more of the Destination Management Plan 2025 Reset

SECTION 3

FORGED BY NATURE CREATIVE STRATEGY

Launched in 2025, Forged by Nature is our enduring brand platform — a declaration that Maine’s people, landscapes, food, culture and spirit have been shaped by the natural world in ways that are raw, real and utterly one-of-a-kind. The platform debuted to strong industry reception, completed its trademark filing process, and immediately anchored campaigns across paid, earned and owned channels throughout 2025.

In 2026, Forged by Nature evolves beyond its outdoor adventure origins to embrace the full spectrum of the Maine experience: from the forge of the open sea to the hearth of a coastal kitchen, from ancient working forests to vibrant small-town main streets. The culinary chapter is the defining creative expansion of the brand in 2026.

Building on the Forged by Nature launch, 2026 creative executions will deepen the cinematic quality of our storytelling, elevate food and culture as primary drivers alongside outdoor recreation, and continue to showcase Maine through the lens of the people who live and work here year-round. Our photography, video and social content will be guided by the following principles:

**Warm, natural light and real environments
— no over-produced studio aesthetic**

**Hands, faces and human moments
at the heart of every frame**

**Geographic diversity that pushes beyond
the coast to Maine’s interior, western
mountains and Aroostook**

**Seasonality balanced across all four seasons,
with elevated focus on shoulder seasons**

**Diverse representation across race, ethnicity,
age, ability and LGBTQ+ identity**



SECTION 4

DATA & MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

For decades, state tourism offices have relied on year-over-year visitation growth as the primary measure of success. But this single metric fails to capture the quality of the visitor experience, the distribution of economic benefit across communities, or the long-term sustainability of tourism's relationship with residents and natural resources.

More visitors doesn't always mean more economic benefit. A high-spending five-night guest creates far more value than a day-tripper. A visitor that's satisfied with their trip is more likely to talk about their experience and share it with friends and family. This is why we've intentionally invested in a curated stack of data and resources that allow us to measure and track additional metrics of success aligned to the goals and objectives outlined in our Destination Management Plan. These measures of success include, but are not limited to:

- Total Direct Tourism Spending
- Total Economic Impact
- Spend Per Visitor Per Trip
- Total Visitors
- Visitor Days
- Room Nights
- Diversity of Visitors
- Shoulder Season and Off-Season Visitation
- Length of Stay
- Visitor Satisfaction

By adopting a balanced scorecard framework, we can tell a richer, more compelling story of success.



**THIS ISN'T ABOUT ABANDONING GROWTH.
IT'S ABOUT PURSUING BETTER GROWTH.**

SECTION 5

INDUSTRY TRENDS & WORLD EVENTS

Understanding the macro forces shaping travel behavior is essential to positioning Maine effectively in 2026. Our marketing strategy is informed by the following trends and conditions:

THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY DEEPENS

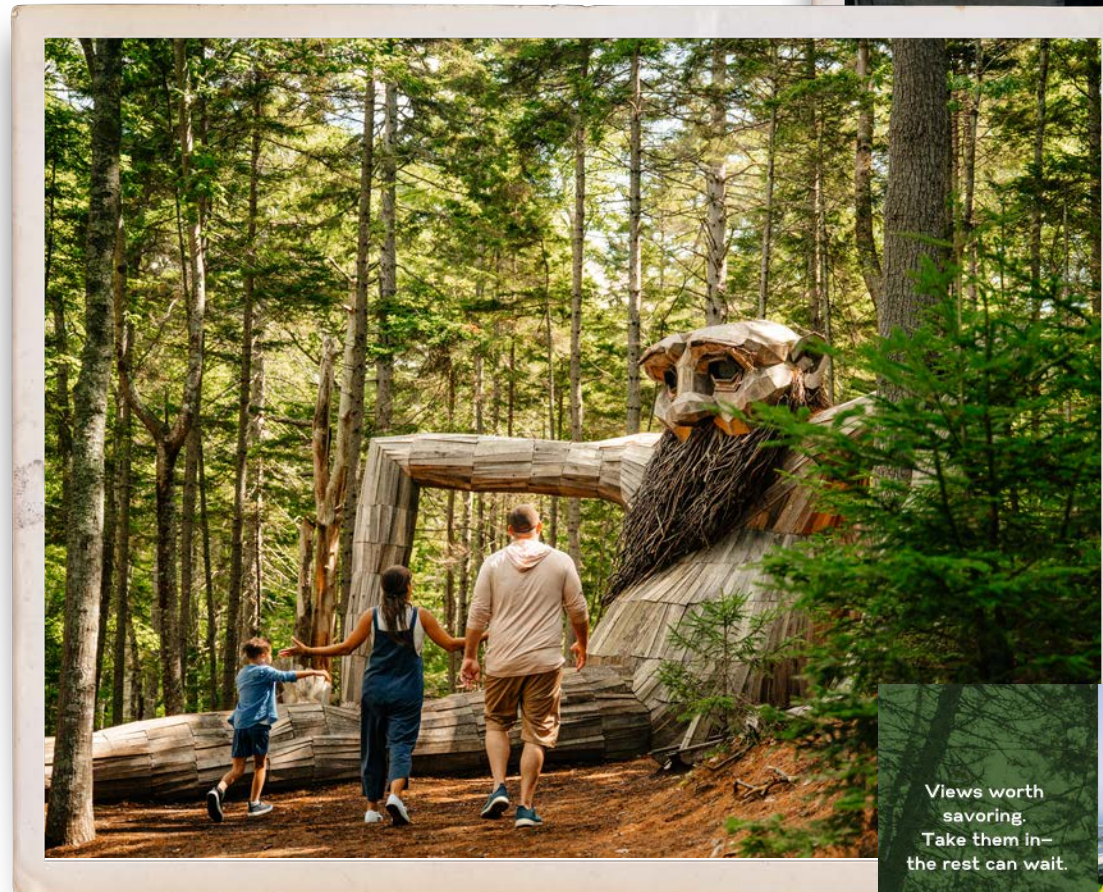
Travelers continue to prioritize experiences over destinations. Culinary tourism, wellness travel, outdoor adventure and authentic cultural encounters drive booking intent — all areas where Maine punches well above its weight. We lean into these motivators across every channel.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL GOES MAINSTREAM

Sustainability and destination stewardship have moved from niche to expectation. Travelers are asking harder questions about their impact. Maine's Look Out for ME 2.0 campaign and Destination Management Plan position MOT as a national leader in this space and a key differentiator in the competitive Northeast landscape.

THE CONTENT COMMERCE CONVERGENCE

The line between inspiration and booking continues to collapse. Short-form video, creator content and social-first storytelling drive not just awareness but direct travel intent. Our Creator Program and modular Bountiful Plate content strategy are purpose-built for this environment.



AI-POWERED PERSONALIZATION

Advances in AI are reshaping how travelers discover and plan trips. In 2025, MOT added Mindtrip and Weglot to VisitMaine.com, expanding AI-assisted trip planning and multilingual accessibility. The 2026 media plan incorporates AI-powered tools — Google Performance Max, demand generation and predictive targeting — to serve the right message at the right moment.

WORKFORCE & QUALITY OF LIFE TOURISM

Post-pandemic shifts in remote work and lifestyle priorities have created a unique opportunity for Maine to attract not just visitors, but potential new residents and workers. Our dedicated Workforce Development campaign speaks directly to this audience with targeted messaging in key feeder markets.

SPORTS & EVENTS TOURISM SURGE

Sports tourism — from destination races to collegiate events and outdoor competitions — is one of the fastest-growing travel segments. Maine's partnerships with the Sea Dogs, Mariners and Hearts of Pine in 2025 established a foundation for deeper sports marketing investment in 2026 as well as maximizing relevance of Maine to the 2026 World Cup narrative.

SECTION 6

PAID MEDIA STRATEGY

The purpose of the 2026 paid media campaign is to develop a year-round, integrated program for the Maine Office of Tourism that promotes travel to Maine — growing awareness, deepening consideration and driving measurable visitation and economic impact to the state.

Building on the success of key partnerships from years prior, the 2026 campaign brings in innovative ideas from our trusted partners to build upon the Forged by Nature brand ambition. The approach is structured in two phases:

- **Phase 1:** Ensure we're actively engaging and staying in front of our audience year-round. This results in extending winter in January/February, prioritizing spring in an earlier launch in March, and layering our seasonal messaging to capture both early planners and last-minute travelers. Seasonality is kept fluid, allowing the campaign to focus on immersive Maine experiences.
- **Phase 2:** Launch with new partners and tactics to reach new audiences, while still building upon the success of established relationships like that of National Geographic, AFAR, Outside and many others.

Our media objectives ensure we reach travelers during every stage of their vacation planning. To start, we focus on **awareness** tactics that increase brand awareness of Maine as a destination through precise audience targeting, broad reach and relevant content. From there, we move to the **consideration** phase to engage with our audience through content on VisitMaine.com, highlighting Maine's welcoming experiences for all visitors. Lastly, we drive measurable visitation to Maine through platforms tracked via Tourism Economics and Zartico through the consideration phase.

TARGETING STRATEGY

The overall targeting approach prioritizes travel intenders, layering on geographic targeting and behavioral attributes, and then focuses on niche areas of interest wherever possible. Our target markets include the following:

- **Primary:** Boston, Springfield-Holyoke, Providence-New Bedford, Hartford & New Haven, Washington, DC, Burlington-Plattsburgh, New York City, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Albany, Rochester
- **Expansion Markets:** Charlotte, Chicago, Detroit, Atlanta, Orlando, Tampa, Raleigh-Durham, Denver (summer only)
- **National US/Canada**
 - Through media partners like National Geographic, Outside, Brand USA
- **Local (In-State):** Maine
 - In-state promotions for local sports partnerships and Look Out For ME initiative

SEASONAL FLIGHTING

The campaign maintains year-round presence through always-on SEM and social, with seasonal flights activating against key travel planning and booking windows. In 2026, we are prioritizing fluid seasons, with messaging overlapping throughout the year to capture audiences throughout their planning journey.

- **Spring:** March – May (earlier launch than prior years, prioritized for 2026)
- **Summer:** April – September
- **Fall:** September – November
- **Winter:** November – February



CAMPAIGN TACTICS

The 2026 campaign deploys an integrated mix of tactics spanning the full consumer journey, from broad awareness through intent and conversion:

- **Connected TV & Online Video:** Evergreen programmatic CTV, premium streaming via Hulu, Peacock, Prime Video, Netflix and Paramount+, Pause Ads (Magnite), online video through Vox Media, Hearst and People Inc., and YouTube TrueView. Video is Maine's strongest awareness driver and runs in some form year-round.
- **Display, Native & Rich Media:** Evergreen native and display run always-on alongside premium placements on TripAdvisor, Kayak and People Inc. Native Canvas units carry the Bountiful Plate culinary story, with Article Skins for seasonal and Leave No Trace 2.0 content. New in 2026: Life360's UpLift Footfall Study measures real-world visitation impact. Kargo's Runway Wheel adds custom rich media reach.
- **Audio:** Spotify, Pandora and iHeart Radio extend Maine's reach into leisure and daily-routine moments, targeting travel intenders in key markets.
- **Digital Out of Home:** Vistar Media delivers programmatic DOOH in primary and expansion markets spring through winter, serving ads only when and where target audiences are most likely to be present. A 2026 test will explore retargeting by tying OOH impressions to mobile device IDs.



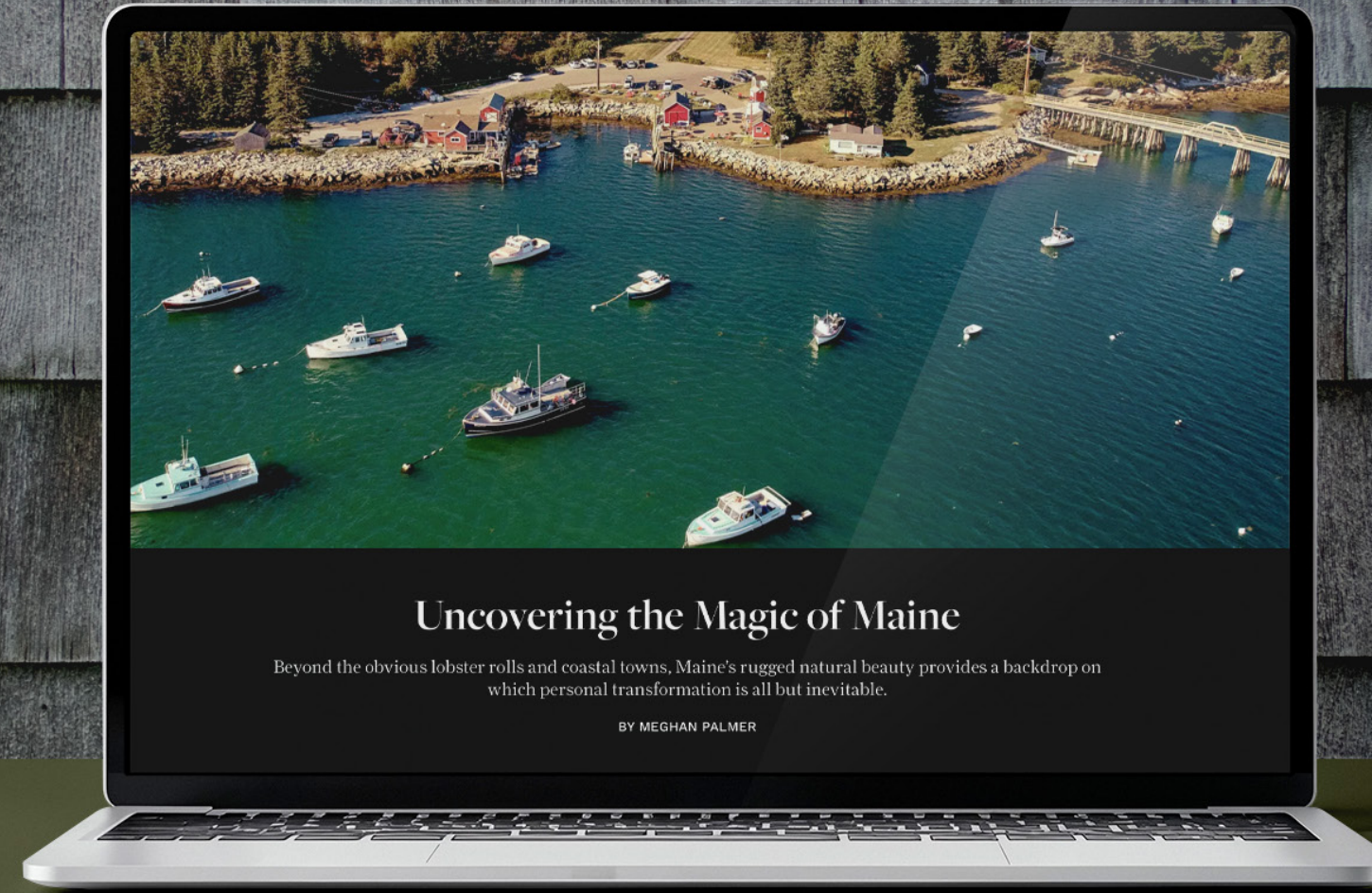
- **Paid Search / SEM:** Always-on Google Paid Search evolves in 2026 with three enhancements: Demand Generation campaigns to inspire upper-funnel trip planning across video, Discover and Gmail; Thematic Performance Max groups for Things to Do, Seasonal, Hospitality and Weddings; and Google's AI-Powered Max feature for smarter search term matching and real-time bid adjustments.
- **Paid Social:** Meta (Facebook/Instagram) runs a full-funnel strategy in 2026, with the awareness campaign shifting to optimize for engagements rather than views alone, a greater emphasis on native UGC-style content, and retargeting expanded to link to planning pages across all site pillars. Reddit joins the mix as a new brand partner reaching an unduplicated audience in travel, outdoor and culinary communities.
- **Broadcast & TV:** Weekends With Yankee Season 10 underwriting plus four custom print and eNews feature stories span across the year. Maine Life sponsorship will also reach in-state and New England audiences.
- **Traditional, Print & Regional Partners:** Inclusion in upcoming publications with Down East Magazine, Maine Invites You, Maine Campground Association, Maine Boats, Homes & Harbors and UMaine Alumni Association to cover traditional print. 2026 also includes an innovative new partnership with Northeast Charter for a full bus wrap and mobile billboard.

CUSTOM CONTENT PARTNERSHIPS

Custom content partnerships are the cornerstone of MOT's premium brand-building strategy — delivering co-created storytelling through trusted editorial voices that reach high-value audiences at scale.

The 2026 roster:

- **National Geographic:** Four years of partnership have generated 88M+ social impressions and 500K+ engagements. 2026 focuses on immersive custom film, social-first micro-moments and a new Maine Mondays vertical video series on @NatGeoTravel socials.
- **People Inc. / Travel + Leisure / Food & Wine:** A cohesive culinary program built around Best New Chef Jordan Rubin, connecting Maine's Forged by Flavor story to Travel + Leisure and Food & Wine audiences through co-created articles, social content and an in-person activation at the Food & Wine Classic in Aspen. This activation will help bring Maine culinary to a high-end, food-lover audience in Colorado.
- **Condé Nast Traveler:** Maine Characters — a 360 social-first documentary series and bookable itinerary program bringing real Maine locals to life. This partnership includes a dedicated Maine footprint at CNT's First to Market Travel Bazaar in New York City.
- **Outside:** Building on success in 2025, Maine plans to activate at the expanded Outside Days festival (40,000+ attendees) with a premium activation space and programming integration. The Leave No Trace Social Series also continues in 2026, alongside a print spread aligned with Attract distribution.



- **Calm:** Positioning Maine as a place that restores mental clarity — not wellness tourism, but nature-led restoration. The partnership includes two Maine soundscapes, two mindful moments, a Maine-focused sleep story and 2,000 gift codes used as strategic relationship currency. Calm's audience mirrors Maine's strongest traveler segments.
- **AFAR:** A Maine-led Journeys itinerary series enhanced with MindTrip AI integration, transforming editorial content into actionable trip-planning tools. This partnership includes a brand-supplied page and custom content in AFAR's summer Water 2026 issue.
- **Nativo:** High-impact Canvas units will carry the Bountiful Plate story, plus Leave No Trace and seasonal Article Skins. Destination Rank tracks perception and consideration throughout the flight for better optimization opportunities.
- **Wildsam:** This partnership includes two custom 100% SOV emails and two print advertorial and ad placements reaching 2.6M email subscribers and 674K paid print readers — road trippers and outdoor enthusiasts with strong Maine affinity.

SECTION 7

CULINARY TOURISM, A YEAR OF STORYTELLING

THE BOUNTIFUL PLATE

2025 was Maine's culinary foundation year, building on a quarterly newsletter, food-focused content partnerships and starting the Bountiful Plate pre-production work establishing culinary tourism as a genuine strategic priority. 2026 is the full activation: a cinematic multi-chapter series that redefines what it means to eat, drink and gather in Maine, distributed across premium paid media, PR, social and film festival channels.

The campaign is built on five cinematic chapters — plus a prologue and finale — that tell the story of Maine's culinary identity through the people who forge it every day. Forged is reinterpreted not as hardship but as connection: the act of making, gathering, transforming and sharing at the table.

A cinematic multi-chapter series that redefines what it means to eat, drink and gather in Maine.



THE SEVEN CHAPTERS

Prologue — The Forge

Themes of Origins, Creation and Tradition. Maine's untamed winter landscape — crashing waves on jagged coastlines, snow-dusted farm fields — establishes the raw natural force behind its cuisine. Focus on the refinement of nature rather than something somber or elemental.

Chapter 1 — The Harvest

Themes of Renewal, Community and Connection. The grit and grace of gathering during the spring thaw — seaweed farmers on the coast, foragers looking for fiddleheads, the first signs of new growth on a farm.

Chapter 2 — The Makers

Themes of Creation and Craftsmanship. The quiet, intimate act of creation — bakers, cheesemakers, distillers. The hypnotic rhythm of focused human activity. The "real Maine ethos" of good, simple sustenance alongside high artisan craft.

Chapter 3 — The Fire

Themes of Transformation and Ingenuity. Fire-grilled seafood and the warm glow of ovens. The dance of flames against snow and ice, showing the ingenuity required to cook in Maine's climate. Fire as community and craft, not just survival.

Chapter 4 — The Table

Theme of food as connection. A collage of tables — from counter stools to fancy linens — showing the variety of dining experiences. The joyful, unscripted reactions of people sharing a meal. Food as community bond.

Chapter 5 — The Tradition

Themes of Cultural Heritage, Love and Pride. Intimate portraits and interviews of BIPOC, immigrant and LGBTQ+ chefs and makers. Food as an act of love, pride and cultural heritage — highlighting traditions like potato farming and lobstering.

Finale — The Invitation

A breathtaking twilight coastal dinner scene with a plentiful and celebratory feel, aligning with the Bountiful theme. Revisits talent and locations from previous shoots. An open invitation to experience Maine.

Production started in 2025 and will continue this spring to capture a variety of season and creative assets for this series. The MOT is working with local chefs and producers to capture their authentic story and why the state of Maine provides them with the inspiration to perfect their craft.

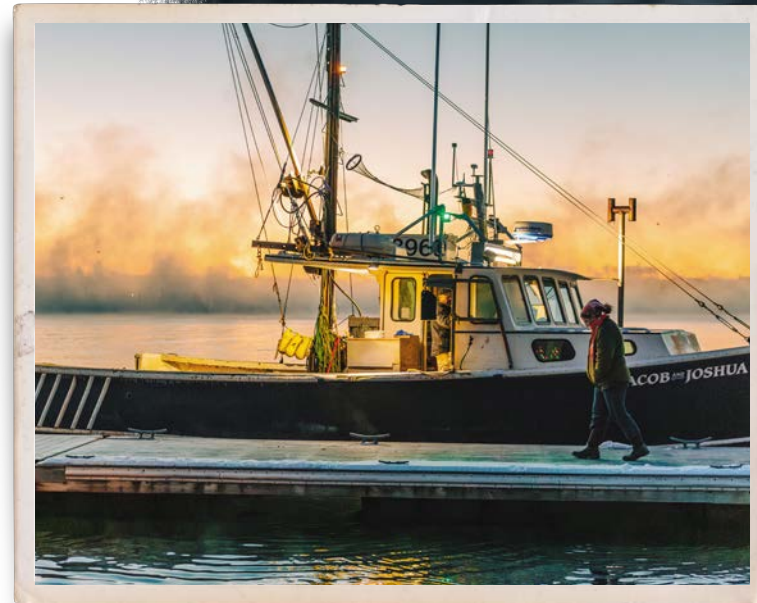
DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY

The Bountiful Plate content is built for a dual-tier distribution model designed to maximize both brand prestige and sustained year-round reach. The anchor asset is a 7- to 10-minute cinematic Hero Film — a short documentary built for film festival submissions and the VisitMaine.com content hub, launching in late summer/early fall 2026. Alongside it, a library of modular content (15- to 90-second short films, reels and story fragments) will be produced and released on an ongoing basis throughout the year, optimized for paid social, content partnerships, earned media pitching and brand partnerships.

FILM FESTIVAL STRATEGY

Submitting the Hero Film to prestigious festivals is a deliberate strategy to build brand credibility, generate earned media coverage and position Maine as a leader in destination storytelling, reaching audiences and press that paid media alone cannot.

Along with the new series, the MOT will also be prioritizing a culinary-focused landing page to house unique content from recipes, experiences, chefs and locally written content on VisitMaine.com.



SECTION 8

SPORTS MARKETING & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Sports Tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments in travel. With the 2026 World Cup on the horizon, the opportunities to reach new, diverse audiences continue to grow as well. In 2025, MOT established partnerships with the Portland Sea Dogs, Maine Mariners and Hearts of Pine, building a foundation for deeper sports marketing investment in 2026.

Within 2026, MOT will continue their partnerships with Portland Seadogs with co-branded promotions and in-park Maine travel content. They will also work with the Maine Mariners (ECHL hockey) for in-arena activations, destination storytelling and seasonal campaign integration. The Hearts of Pine partnership will continue highlighting outdoor and adventure sports partnership aligned with the Forged by Nature brand as well as maximize heightened opportunities with soccer fans.

Community Partnership Framework MOT works alongside regional DMOs, chambers of commerce and community organizations to ensure sports and event activities generate authentic, lasting value for host communities.

- Co-investment with regional partners in event marketing
- Integration of Look Out for ME stewardship messaging at events
- Creator and media hosting at key events for earned coverage
- Collaboration with Maine Athletics and collegiate programs
- Community benefit requirements for MOT-endorsed events



SECTION 9

INCLUSIVE CREATOR PROGRAM

Maine's Inclusive Creator Program is a cornerstone of our content strategy, pairing the authenticity of independent voices with the reach of MOT's distribution channels to inspire a new generation of Values-Aligned Travelers. In 2025, the Inclusive Creator Program established a diverse roster of creators spanning outdoor, culinary, cultural and lifestyle categories. 2026 expands that roster with a particular focus on The Bountiful Plate and Look Out for ME 2.0 storytelling.

2026 CREATOR FOCUS AREAS

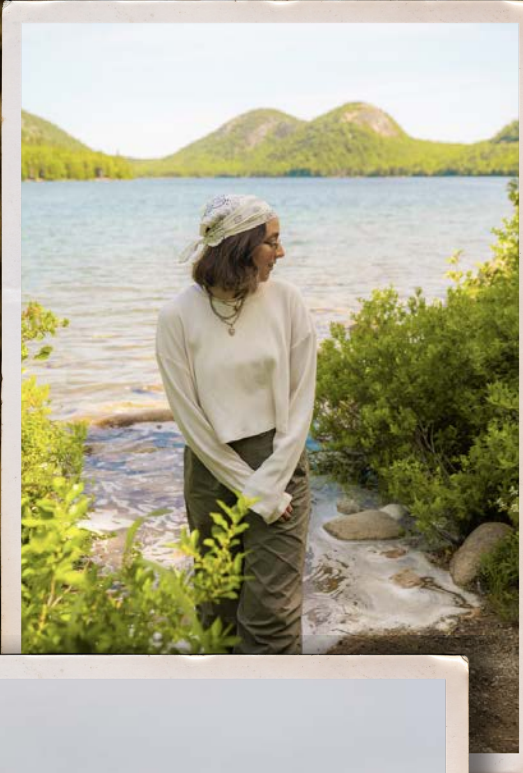
Culinary content tied to The Bountiful Plate campaign

World Cup watch parties and events

Sustainable / responsible travel storytelling aligned with Look Out for ME 2.0

Geographic diversity — Aroostook, Western Mountains, Downeast

BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and diverse cultural perspectives



SECTION 10

LOOK OUT FOR ME 2.0

Look Out for ME is Maine's destination stewardship initiative, serving as a call to action for visitors, residents and businesses to care for the places, people and culture that make Maine extraordinary. Following its 2025 revitalization as a joint media campaign with Leave No Trace, Version 2.0 launches in 2026 with an updated toolkit, deeper integration across marketing channels and expanded community reach.



The 2026 Campaign evolution will showcase a refreshed visual identity and updated messaging framework. An industry toolkit for regional partners, businesses and communities will be built out to ensure consistency across the board. A second paid social campaign with Outside is hosted by a Registered Maine Guide and Leave No Trace educator, targeted to users who had previously engaged with Maine travel content. The series brings authentic, credentialed voices to responsible recreation storytelling.

The **Look Out for ME 2.0 Industry Toolkit** gives Maine tourism businesses and communities turnkey resources to promote responsible visitor behavior and participate in the statewide campaign:

- Digital and print assets
- Social media templates and copy
- On-property signage and wayfinding materials
- Staff talking points and visitor education materials

Channel Integration Look Out for ME messaging appears throughout MOT's paid, earned and owned channels — in Outside Magazine, Wildsam, organic social, media relations pitches and visitor communications on VisitMaine.com. The Destination Management Plan empowers us to promote Maine sustainably. It is not less promotion — it is smarter promotion, and Look Out for ME is the proof point.

SECTION 11

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN

In partnership with Maine Outdoor Brands (MOB) and the Maine Tourism Association (MTA), the 2026 Workforce Development efforts continue to build off the success seen in the 2025 paid media campaign to help influence seasonal employees throughout the state. The goal of the MOT is to help connect potential workers to jobs, housing resources, and community integration support alongside employment messaging.

CREATIVE DIRECTION

Workforce creative showcases real Maine hospitality workers and the quality-of-life benefits of working in Maine — the landscape, the community, the lifestyle. Messaging emphasizes Maine as a place to build a life, not just a summer gig.

TARGET AUDIENCES

- **University + Post-Grad Students (Ages 15–24):** Seeking first career opportunities with lifestyle alignment.
- **Career-Minded Mobile Adults (Ages 25–34):** Open to relocation and lifestyle change; drawn to purpose-driven work environments.
- **Urban Relocators:** Individuals seeking quality-of-life improvements in smaller, nature-adjacent communities.
- **Hospitality Workers in Similar Markets:** Seasonal workers in Cape Cod, Lake Tahoe and other resort markets open to relocating.

CAMPAIGN TACTICS

- **Online Video (ADG):** 15/:30s workforce video targeting demographics including university/post-grad students, career-minded adults and relocators
 - **Meta:** Video, image ads, carousels and reels. Geo-targeted to key markets with interest targeting around job hunting, employment, customer service, entry-level and part-time jobs
- LinkedIn:** Sponsored content — video, image ads, carousels. Targeted by job titles, job seekers, career changers and hospitality industry professionals
- **Reddit:** Promoted posts targeting job posts, jobs, hospitality jobs, service jobs, relocating, tourism and Maine jobs communities

SECTION 12

REGIONAL CO-OP PROGRAM EXPANSION

MOT's Regional Co-op Program partners with Maine's regional tourism organizations to extend the reach of statewide marketing efforts into locally relevant contexts — amplifying destination development, supporting regional economic vitality and ensuring that all of Maine benefits from tourism investment.

The Co-op Program provides regional partners with access to MOT's media buying power, creative resources and brand platform. Regional organizations co-invest alongside MOT to extend campaigns into their specific markets and messaging needs.

Within 2026, MOT will continue partnering with the regions and explore new opportunities and offerings for partners at various investment levels.



SECTION 13

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

Maine's international marketing efforts focus on capturing Values-Aligned Travelers from key international markets. 2025 marked MOT's first significant direct-to-consumer international paid media push — expanding into the UK, Germany and France while substantially growing the Canada campaign. We invested in AI-powered technology to internationalize VisitMaine.com by incorporating translation via Weglot and personalized itinerary building via MindTrip.

2026 builds on those foundations with more sophisticated targeting and a new partnership with Black Diamond, a London-based integrated communications agency offering a complete skillset across public relations and travel trade representation, media planning and buying in the U.K. market.

Black Diamond aims to maintain Maine's visibility in priority overseas markets. 2026 activities include:

- Proactive media relations with UK travel press and broadcasters
- Participation in key international travel trade events
- International travel writer and media hosting in Maine



SECTION 14

PUBLIC RELATIONS, EARNED MEDIA & ORGANIC SOCIAL

Closely collaborating with the Miles Partnership team, Marshall Communications will continue to enhance the Maine’s “Forged by Nature” brand by reinforcing key messages and, through earned media, expanding the reach to larger audiences beyond the scope of paid advertising.

Using the revised Destination Management Plan, the evolved Maine brand, the Look Out for ME messaging and marketing pillars as a guide, we will create content and a steady stream of media coverage and engagement, both through traditional and social media.

PR efforts will focus on four key themes:

1. Outdoor recreation and natural assets
2. Cultural identity (including arts, heritage, communities and foodways)
3. Sustainable/responsible travel
4. Authenticity (showcasing the people of Maine)

TACTICAL APPROACH

Media Relations

- Monthly updates to national and international media.
 - 522 recipients on our email list
 - Posted on Trav Media and distributed to their members
 - Posted on the Visit Maine Media Room
- Attend Trav Media’s IMM media marketplace in New York City.
- Pitch story ideas to regional and national lifestyle and travel trade media.
 - Respond to leads that are appropriate for Maine
 - Proactively pitch relevant topic, news and key themes to MOT’s most-wanted media list
- Arrange familiarization visits for key media, influencers and travel trade to generate content that covers the depth and breadth of Maine travel experiences.
- Fulfill requests from the media for information, photos and footage in a timely manner.
- Plan the 2026 Taste of Maine Media Marketplace in New York City.
 - Set for September 2026
- Continued collaboration with the Miles Partnership team to implement the food tourism plan including the quarterly culinary newsletter, Bountiful, and the marketing of Bountiful, as well as leveraging the new video content captured late 2025.

- In partnership with MOT’s cultural consultant, partner with and feature Maine’s cultural offerings.
- Execute a collaboration with The FeedFeed to support the food tourism plan.
 - Early 2026 partnering with Sunday River
- Work in collaboration with Miles Partnership to expand upon and support paid media components.
- Leverage new content added to VisitMaine.com by using the topics for proactive pitching and media outreach.
- Seek out collaborations and partnerships that align with Maine’s brand and are mutually beneficial.
- Implement the Scenic Byways communications plan by incorporating byways messaging into our PR program.
- Draft and distribute press releases for newsworthy information and events.

Internal PR / Technical Assistance

- Provide PR support to the regional organizations and chambers of commerce when they have questions about media hosting, influencer advice, media vetting, social media tips and other topics.
- Maintain the PR Partners Program – a group of Maine hotels, inns, restaurants and attractions interested in helping host press visits.
- Participate in grant reviews as requested.
- Promote and publicize the successful work of grant recipients.
- Media training for MOT staff as requested.
- Provide technical training to tourism stakeholders related to PR, social media, crisis communications and grant writing.

Social Media & Content Integration

Using social media, the PR Program generates engagement with the media and the general public through social platforms, reaching a broader audience and presenting a wide variety of inspiring and informational content.

The overall tone and voice of @VisitMaine’s social media platforms is warm, helpful, friendly and genuine, mirroring many of the attributes of MOT’s brand guidelines.

In 2026, we will weave brand messaging throughout posts on an ongoing basis to be consistent for all consumer touchpoints:

- Aligned with the Destination Management Plan, posts that encourage visitors to stay longer and move around the regions will be worked into the schedule.
- Collaborating with the paid media program on social media campaigns to amplify the content.
- Continuing a daily presence on the top networks using a combination of tactics to elicit engagement.
- Thoroughly monitor across the platforms and capitalize on engaging with or sharing content from key travel outlets, influential news sources, the Maine tourism industry and others.
- Ensure that Maine is represented as a diverse and inclusive destination, including amplifying content created as part of the paid influencer inclusive campaign.
- Leverage new content that is developed for VisitMaine.com by posting, sharing and driving traffic to the website.

SECTION 15

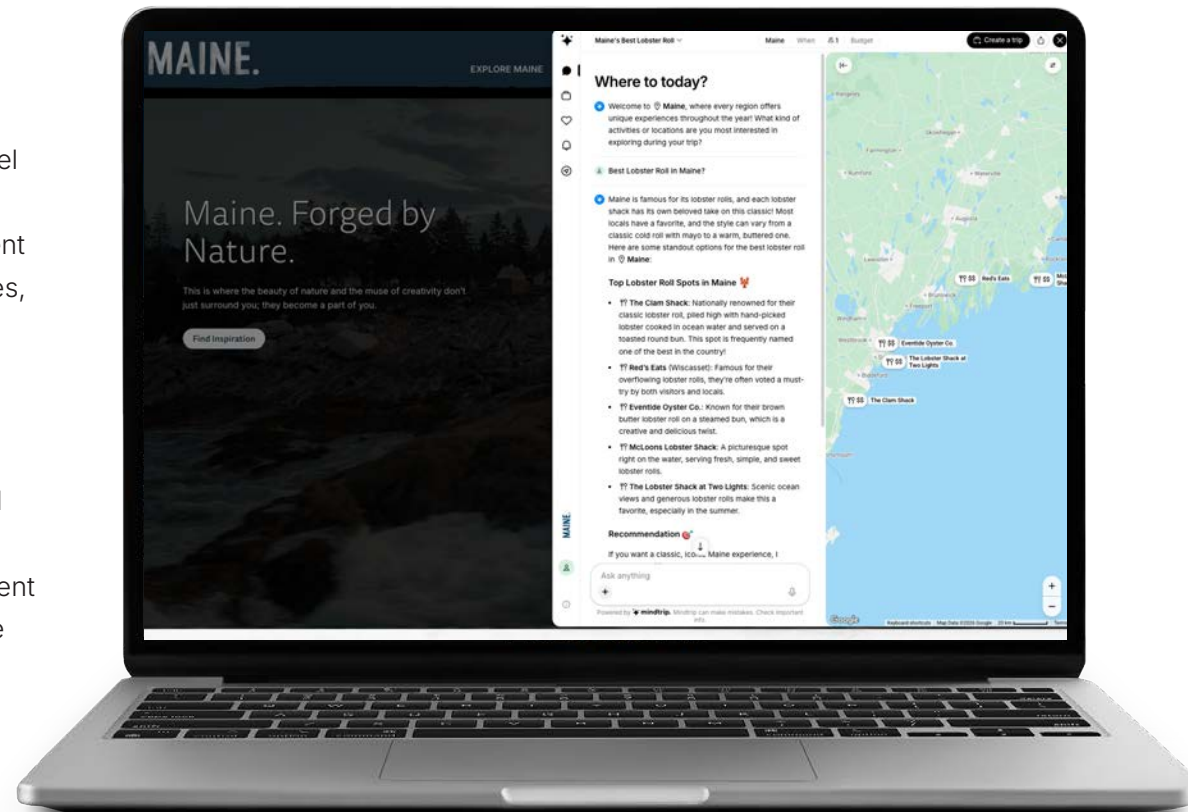
CONTENT, SEO & WEBSITE PROGRESS

VisitMaine.com is the hub of Maine's digital presence — the place where inspiration converts to intent and intent converts to plans. The 2024 site rebuild delivered a more user-friendly, navigable platform aligned with the Forged by Nature brand. In 2025, we focused on optimizing and organizing existing content to align with the new brand direction, look and feel of the website and immediate content needs. The 2026 content and website strategy builds on that foundation to deepen relevance, improve discovery and turn VisitMaine.com into the definitive travel planning tool for the state.

With the new addition of Mindtrip's AI-assisted trip planning tool, a priority for 2026 includes further integrating the tool within the site, expanding engagement and making trip planning easier than ever for viewers.

Moving forward, our SEO strategy includes analyzing keyword gaps and content prioritization for high-intent travel queries, working with guest writers like Maine the Way to begin developing a blog feature on the site. The blog content will showcase real-time experiences from local perspectives, giving potential travelers a realistic idea of what a trip to Maine could include.

Priorities for 2026 include a full technical crawl, a content priority audit, schema markup implementation for improved search visibility, development of a Maine Lobster Roll Trail destination hub, and a World Cup and soccer-themed content play tied to Boston — capitalizing on the sports travel surge anticipated around the 2026 FIFA World Cup.



SECTION 16

PRINTED GUIDE DEVELOPMENT

Printed guides are one of MOT's signature owned-media products, creating deep-dive editorial and visual companions that move beyond typical destination content to deliver genuine expertise, insider perspective and inspiring storytelling for travelers who want to explore Maine with intention. In 2026, MOT sets out to develop two unique print guide tools for in-market travelers: one showcasing Arts & Culture experiences throughout the state and one focusing on the variety of Outdoor Recreation experiences Maine has to offer.

The goal of these guides is to provide a planning tool to travelers that have already arrived to Maine looking for unique experiences. The long-form, beautifully designed content experiences will then translate to VisitMaine.com that cover an activity, season or theme with the depth of a travel magazine feature. They serve as both inspiration and practical planning tools and are optimized for organic search to drive sustained, high-intent traffic to the website.





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