



**BORREGO EXPERIENCE**  
**Sustainable Destination Management and Marketing**

**PROGRAM ACTION PLAN 2020 - 2021**

“Utilizing a community stakeholder engagement process designed to develop and strengthen destination partnerships to support economic development, celebrate local culture, conserve natural and cultural assets, and enhance the well-being of residents through sustainable tourism management and marketing”

James Dion  
Executive Director  
Borrego Village Association

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February, 2018 the Borrego Village Association (BVA) began implementing the Geotourism Program strategic planning methodology designed to develop and strengthen destination partnerships and identify actions that will catalyze economic development, celebrate local culture, conserve natural and cultural assets, and enhance the well-being of residents through sustainable tourism management and marketing.

Over a two-year period beginning February, 2018 continuing through December, 2019 the BVA raised over \$270,000 from public grant making agencies and private donors to successfully implement a suite of program activities.

The 2018-2019 list of program deliverables were initially detailed in the *INSIDE ANZA-BORREGO Sustainable Destination Management Plan - "PROPOSAL"* that was submitted to the BVA in January, 2018. In summer 2018 we completed a three-year *Tourism Strategic Plan* outlining a series of program activities based on the Geotourism Approach to sustaining destinations. The approach utilizes a community stakeholder engagement process designed to develop and strengthen destination partnerships to support economic development, celebrate local culture, sustain natural and cultural assets, and enhance the well-being of residents through sustainable tourism management and marketing. In 2019 we developed the EXPEREINCE BORREGO PROGRAM ACTION PLAN 2019 - 20 based on the recommendations from the Tourism Strategic Plan. The 2020 – 2021 plan submitted here is an update to the 2019 – 2020 plan that includes ongoing program activities that continue into the current year and proposed new activities that will extend into 2021. These action plan recommendations are based on our three-year strategic plan and on what we learned over the last year so we can best mobilize our resources in ways that maximize the potential for Borrego to evolve as a sustainable destination that is a great place to live, work and play.

The programs and activities detailed in this 2020-21 ACTION PLAN will enable the Borrego Village Association to continue our on-going mission to create and sustain a thriving and attractive community, surrounded by Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, where residents enjoy a quality lifestyle, prosperous businesses meet community needs, and tourism enhances the character and well-being of our village.

Funding for activities from 2018 through 2019 was achieved from a combination of private donors, local civil society organizations, San Diego County and Federal grant programs.

### **2018 – 19 Program Deliverables**

1. Inception Report
2. Tourism Visioning Workshops
3. Tourism Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021
4. Inside Anza-Borrego Website
5. Destination Management Organization – Economic Development and Community Enhancement Program

Based on what we learned from implementing the program in 2018 and developing a comprehensive Tourism Strategic Plan we initiated our next round of program activities time-lined for the funding cycle January 2019 through May 2020.

### **2019 – 2020 Program Deliverables**

1. *BORREGOEXPERIENCE.com* website - Design, develop, create content for over 100 points of interest; post 40 original articles and blog posts; market and disseminate the site to inform and inspire visitors in markets ranging from California, the USA and globally.
2. Destination Marketing and Management
  - Communications and Social Media Platforms (Facebook; Instagram)
  - Creating the digital Borrego Experience branding, complimentary print collateral and market outreach strategy
  - Organizing sanitation infrastructure, facilities management and initiating a community integrated planning approach to maximize visitor satisfaction and benefits to the community during the Spring 2019 Wildflower Bloom
  - Participate in the Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce co-operative marketing *Borrego Days* events
3. Work Force Development - Hospitality Skills Training
  - National Association for Interpretation (NAI) Certified Interpretive Hosts and Guide Programs as a for credit elective course for Borrego Springs High School – 15 juniors and seniors achieved NAI accreditation
  - NAI Certified Interpretive Host (CIH) courses for community members associated with Borrego’s hospitality industry from private, public and civil society sectors – 24 community members achieved accreditation

Following on with the success of those activities we are fund raising to support the continuation and expansion of these ongoing efforts while also seeking funds to initiate at least two additional program action tracks as intended in our three-year Tourism Strategic Plan. Our goal is to implement the following activities with support anticipated from a mix of local funding; Borrego Valley Endowment Fund, Borrego Water District, Rotary Club and Civic Foundation who together in 2019 provided more than 75% of the costs for the Borrego Springs High School Interpretation Course; San Diego County CEP / NRP grant programs – in 2019 the County’s NRP Grant program funded the creation of the *BorregoExperience.com* website. County CEP Grants provided critical support to partially fund all of the 2018 and 2019 deliverables listed above, with additional funding coming from the United States Department of Agriculture RBD grant, and local private donor support.

### **2020 – 2021 Program Deliverables**

1. Interpretive Master Plan – On site interpretation / Panels and Signage
2. Managing and Maintaining *BorregoExperience.com*.
3. Destination Marketing – Communications and Social Media
4. Product Development / Investment Promotion
5. Work Force Development – Hospitality and Interpretation Skills Training

## **2020 – 2021 PROGRAM DELIVERABLES - ACTIVITIES AND IMPELMENTATION**

### **1. INTERPRETIVE MASTER PLAN - ON SITE INTERPRETATION**

According to the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) an interpretive plan is *“considered the documentation of a thoughtful decision-making process that blends management needs and resource considerations with visitor desire and ability to pay to determine the most effective way to communicate the message to targeted markets. An interpretive organization is considered an agency or organization that manages a site or company that employs methods of interpretation in their daily business.”*

According to NAI an Interpretive Plan has the following objectives:

- Advocacy - Interpretive organizations must have advocates and be advocates for their resources.
- Audience Analysis - Understanding the audience is critical to the success of the plan.
- Civic Engagement - Successful interpretive plans usually include stakeholder involvement and/or public input.
- Evaluation should be built into the planning process at multiple stages
- Management Objectives - Interpretation methods and content should align with management objectives.
- Marketing Factors Understanding the market climate and niche can help in achieving success.
- Media Descriptions-The interpretive plan clearly indicates the mix of media required to convey the message(s) to specific audiences
- Message Elements- include central theme, subthemes, and storylines.
- Operational Commitment - The best plan cannot be implemented without support.
- Partnerships - Most interpretive organizations require partners for cost-effective operations.
- Staff / Volunteer Training - Staff and volunteers are usually responsible for implementation of the plan.
- Stakeholder Involvement - Stakeholders may include partners, volunteers, staff, governance, user groups and others
- Terminology - Consistent vocabulary helps avoid costly misunderstandings.
- Visitor Experience - Ultimately, the interpretive plan defines the visitor experience.

### ***Needs***

A qualified practitioner to develop an integrated Interpretive Master Plan.

BVA proposes to engage Tustin, California based *The Acorn Group* to develop a comprehensive Interpretive Plan. The resulting Interpretive Master Plan will be implemented and managed by the BVA and associates.

The Acorn Group offers a range of services in interpretive and educational master planning, exhibit design, curriculum development, and evaluation.

The Acorn Group and the catalog division, Acorn Naturalists, are long established firms in the fields of education and interpretation. They are incorporated in the State of California and certified as a Small Business and Women's Business Enterprise.

### **About The Acorn Group**

From: <http://www.acorngroup.com>

Bringing together the skills of interpretive planners, writers, and designers, The Acorn Group offers award-winning services creating panels, exhibits, and print media that bring your stories to life. For over 28 years, we have helped our clients create engaging and inspiring experiences for their visitors.

Our capabilities include interpretive master planning, panel and exhibit design, visitor studies, and management of large scale environmental education projects. Our clients are diverse, ranging from governmental agencies to private and non-profit institutions. Project sites include interpretive centers, ecological reserves, museums, botanical gardens, zoos, parklands, and educational institutions.

The Acorn Group was established in 1990 and incorporated in California in 1995. Our team is dedicated to the field of interpretation and actively involved in the National Association for Interpretation, as well as other complementary professional organizations. We are passionate about our work. Our greatest satisfaction comes from seeing plans and drawings become reality and watching visitors take delight in new experiences.

For a list of projects of The Acorn Group, please [click here](#).

### ***On Site Interpretation / Tourism Information Center***

The Interpretive Master Plan informs a Borrego Springs Tourism Information Center (TIC), which can be a (i) physical location (ii) a series of on-site interpretation signs, kiosks, collateral and / or (iii) an online customer service through website and social media. A *Tourism Information Center* can be installed on-line on Borrego Experience.com and / or in an existing facility such as the Chamber of Commerce's Welcome Center, and / or exist as visitor information panels and kiosk(s) placed strategically in Borrego Springs and Borrego Valley. Informing visitors about our place performs multiple roles that maximize the visitor experience and benefits our destination stakeholders including the following:

- Encouraging higher per capita spending: The TIC should try to “up-sell” the destinations, encouraging tourists to spend more money on their visit.
- Handling requests for pre-visit information: People will contact the TICs for information prior to leaving for the destination. The TIC will respond to information requests received by phone, e-mail, social media service, or online messaging service.
- Interpreting local history, culture and nature: The TIC could include displays or show videos that interpret the most important tourism-related resources of the destination.

- Merchandising information hub for tourism stakeholders. A place where tourism stakeholders can publicize their products and services.
- Providing information during visits: This is the traditional role of TIC and tourists expect them to provide accurate, detailed, and up-to-date information on all aspects of the destination.
- Recommending itineraries: TIC staff can recommend customized itineraries based on people's particular interests and time constraints.
- Selling travel-related literature and local souvenirs by guiding visitors to our destinations recommended retail operations where tourists can buy maps, guidebooks, clothing, and local souvenirs.

### ***On site Signage / Wayfinding and Routes***

- Signage – display boards; interpretive panels. Design and color palate should be complimentary to what is displayed in the TIC. Printed guide to the interpretive signage and panels. In 2020-21 signage would include four interpretive panels at Christmas Circle; and at a shaded kiosk located at the parking area on Palm Canyon Drive adjacent to the Art Farm where the current “Welcome to Borrego” sign is placed.
- Develop paths, biking routes and walkways that connect POI's within the community of Borrego Springs, the Borrego Valley and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. These routes can be signed using existing byways or may require, at relative high cost of investment in appropriate infrastructure.
- Pending additional support from the Avery Foundation possible additional interpretive panels at the Galleta Meadows sky art at installations north and south of the town center.

### ***Measures of Success:***

- Stakeholder engagement and meaningful participation by tourism service provisioners, civil society organizations, County Revitalization Committees
- First Draft Interpretive Master Plan in six months
- Final version in 12 months
- Develop proposal for on-site interpretation and wayfinding – 6 months
- Complete a needs assessment for trails and route development program – 10 months
- Develop proposal for trails and route development program – 10 months
- Achieve funding for the programs – 10 to 14 months
- Complete a needs assessment for the TIC – 14 to 18 months
- Install on site 6 to 8 interpretive panels and one shaded kiosk

### ***Cost:***

- Master Interpretive Plan - \$50,000
- Interpretive panels (8 high quality panels and shaded kiosk) design, materials, shipping and installation - \$20,000

## 2. MANAGING AND MAINTAINING *EXPERIENCE BORREGO* WEBSITE

San Diego County’s Neighborhood Reinvestment Program funded the Geotourism themed website *ExperienceBorrego.com* which after 9 months of design, content creation and stakeholder outreach was set live to the public in December 2019.

There are certain activities that are required for the ongoing maintenance of the Borrego Experience website and ensure there is added value to the program.

These activities include:

- Payment of the annual hosting fee and periodic technical and maintenance
- 2-days per month for a program coordinator (editor) to:
  - Review new or pending nominations that are submitted to the website
  - Help partner sites with their content and activate content as needed
  - Upload or update events and festivals on the website
  - Answer comments or enquiries to the website
- Organizing and hosting periodic website related meetings and stakeholder workshops

### *Operational Activities for Maintaining the Website*

Basic maintenance of the website is relatively simple, it just requires that it is on someone’s work-plan and regularly checked and updated. The following information provides the basic steps and useful hints in managing the website.

<b>What</b>	<b>When</b>
• Check/approve pending nominations	1x week
• Review/approve any public comments	1x week
• Review updates to existing nominations	1x week
• Review/upload/approve featured content and events	1x month
• Circulate announcements	1x quarter
• Organize Geotourism Meetings and Workshops	4x year (minimum)

### *Operational Activities for Maintaining the Website*

1. Once per week log into the website and check to see if there are any pending nominations. Also check the inactive nominations to see if there are new additions that people have added.

2. Review new nominations to determine that they have all the required information and that they meet the editorial guidelines for the Geotourism Program.
  - The nomination should have at least the following:
  - Good descriptive text with limited spelling and grammatical errors (edit if needed) Two good photos (four to six better)
  - Basic contact information
  - Accurately pinpointed on the map
3. Follow up with new or past nominations that have content or edits pending or that you have communicated with previously to check on their progress.
4. Check/approve pending nominations (weekly)
5. Review/approve and public comments (weekly)
6. Review updates to existing nominations (weekly)
  - Once each week run a report of content that has been recently updated or edited by nomination authors.
  - Review the report and do a quick audit (open these entries and review the changes) to ensure that there were no fundamental changes to these nominations that would disqualify them from the site.
7. Review/upload/approve featured content and events (monthly)
  - At least once each month, review the content selected as ‘Featured.’ This is content specially selected to appear on the home page of the website.
  - Adjust and update to reflect seasonality and key events that *BorregoExperience.com* would like to highlight or highlight sponsors/advertisers if appropriate. For example, if there is a big event or festival that is upcoming, feature content related to that can be placed on the home page.
  - Make sure the home page featured content has the most compelling and interesting images.
8. Circulate Announcements (At least Quarterly) / Blog Posts / Articles  
There are two sets of contact information that the website gathers; “Users” who have nominated sites and created a profile on the website and “Subscribers,” who have signed up to receive updates from the website. These people are those directly engaged with the Geotourism program, which include partners as well as sites, attractions and businesses in the region.

An announcement should be sent at least every quarter, but can be more regularly if there is information to share.

Announcements may include, but are not limited to:

- Updates on the activities of the BVA and the Geotourism Program
- Updates on newsworthy events, activities, etc. that effect tourism in the region.
- Reminders to update content on users’ nominations, etc.
- Post new blogs and stories weekly

9. Organizing and hosting periodic BVA meetings and stakeholder workshops

Staff and select stakeholders should meet at least quarterly to review new nominations since the last time they met to ensure they are appropriate, review new content, suggest fresh content and ideas, review financial and management issues, review activities being implemented and develop a plan for the upcoming period.

*Measures of Success*

- Hosting and maintenance of the website
- Organize and host periodic BVA and stakeholder workshops
- Develop annual work plans
- Review, edit and update new nominations, stories, events and other content on the website in accordance with the principles of the Geotourism program
- Promote attractions, activities, events and businesses
- Publish a periodic e-newsletter for program partners, supporters and sites
- Promote the website and implement programs to market the tourism product of the region through stories and other content about the region, social media, blog, e-newsletters and marketing.
- Support the sites, attractions and business that are nominated on the site
- Fundraising
- Other communication and outreach activities to support the program objectives
- Support work force development, education, and entrepreneurial initiative

*Cost* \$35,000 per year to cover personnel and expenses to manage, maintain, edit, curate and create new content, support promotion of and host the website

### 3: DESTINATION MARKETING – COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The goal of a social media communications plan is to organize an expanded social media presence by:

- providing regular periodic updates of BVA’s Geotourism website
- organizing and managing a blog that encourages interaction with the website’s visitors
- managing our primary off platform social media tools, Facebook, Instagram and our YouTube Channel, to underspin the communications plan on BVA’s own website that also provides a platform for influencers to expand dialogue between the global on-line community that opens up new markets.

#### ***Media Relations***

To promote the launch and ongoing dissemination of the BorregoExperience.com website, we will develop a regional and national media relations campaign that raises awareness of the website through positive media coverage. This will also elevate our *Borrego Experience* brand and bring attention to the transformation taking place. We will engage local, regional and expert storytellers to develop a compelling story line of Borrego and position the BorregoExperience.com website as the leading platform for travelers and residents to discover things to do, where to stay and sites to see.

We will engage outlets in San Diego, Los Angeles and Orange County as well as top-tier travel magazines to secure media opportunities in both local and national publications. We will work with a wide-variety of media types including print, online and broadcast media to achieve the greatest results. In addition, we will coordinate with local travel bloggers to target niche audiences that are especially interested in travel and hospitality services. Through earned media exposure, we will establish Borrego Springs and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park as a thriving community with rich history and culture and drive visitors to your website and social media pages.

#### ***Digital Advertising***

Advertising is another powerful tool to build brand awareness and an effective means for reaching key audiences. Target individuals based on demographic information, geographic location, preferred language, marital and family status, online behavior, device, carrier and other information. Audiences can be further defined by their specific interests and online behavior. We can also leverage existing email database to target current consumers.

In 2020 we began compiling data bases of affinity travel groups, business and individuals in the outdoor recreation, arts and culture sectors to develop a targeted audience to outreach through digital “post card” mailings and formatted newsletter style text announcements on a subscription Mail Chimp platform aligned with our website content management system. In early 2020 we also partnered with Borrego Outfitters, Borrego Art Institute and the Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce to send out through their data bases over 10,000 electronic postcards and / or text announcements. Our goal is to send out an average of up to 5,000 digitally generated promotional postcards each month to an ever-expanding data base of contacts promoting the BorregoExperience.com and to

raise awareness of a global audience of the travelling public of the value proposition for them to visit the community of Borrego Springs and Anza-Borrego Desert state Park. To increase engagement and followers on Facebook and Instagram we will develop and implement both free and paid social media campaigns. These outreach strategies will help reach our social media goals of 10,000 Facebook, 20,000 Instagram followers and 100,000 website visits in 2020 as quickly as possible and bring awareness to a wider range of potential visitors to Borrego Springs and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

### ***Influencer Marketing***

An influencer-marketing program can get BorregoExperience.com in front of individuals whose interests align with ours. We have engaged and, in some cases, contracted with influencers in 2019 to provide blog and article content on the Borrego Experience website and on our Facebook and Instagram platforms. In 2020 we will research travel influencers in select cities including San Diego, L.A., San Francisco, Portland, Seattle and others in the mid-west and Eastern markets, Mexico, Canada, Europe and Asia where we want to gain exposure and coordinate with them to promote the website. Securing partnerships with travel influencers allows Borrego to reach individuals who are looking to travel to our unique destination. We will work with micro-influencers, individuals with less than 10,000 followers and larger influencers to promote Borrego Springs and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Collaborating with content creators can successfully elevate our brand, drive traffic to our website and reach audiences that might not come across our site organically.

### ***Social Media***

In 2019 we established *Borrego Experience* on the leading global social network, Facebook, which boasts more than a billion active users. Facebook is our “flagship” social network due to its versatility, ease of use, advertising opportunities, and seamless integration with smaller social networks. We have also created an Instagram page to compliment our Facebook page and set up a YouTube Channel to disseminate original videos on the globe’s largest video sharing platform. Borrego’s ongoing activities will focus on showcasing the region’s unique cultural and environmental assets as well as activities and news from the region to drive traffic to the Geotourism website.

### ***Media Promotions***

Borrego Experience’s promotions and sweepstakes will occur through the brand page, with syndication to other partner pages as applicable. In order for someone to enter Facebook sweepstakes or redeem promotions, they will have to “like” the page, regardless of whether they access the promotion through other partners pages. In this way, Borrego’s brand page will benefit from exposure with growth.

The promotions strategy will incentivize website, Facebook and Instagram visitors to click through and register on the website and social media platforms.

Example program can be designed as:

***“Register to Win! Sign up on BorregoExperience.com***

*Get periodic news, updates, inspiring stories and chances to win tours, lodging and meals in Borrego Springs! Sign up now and register to win:*

- Half day tour to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park with California Overland Tours
- One-night lodging (one room or cabin / max 4 people) at La Casa del Zoro Resort.
- Tour of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Archaeology and Paleontology Labs with the Anza-Borrego Foundation
- Half day e-bike tour of Galleta Meadows Sculpture Gardens
- Two-hour - morning interpretive nature and bird watching or night time Dark Sky Tour with a naturalist from Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association
- Dinner for two at Ram's Hill 19th Hole Restaurant (entrees only)
- Dinner for two at Keslings Kitchen (food only)
- \$100 Gift Certificate from Borrego Outfitters (in store purchase only)

Provides the opportunity for BVA to partner with local public and private sector providers on a mutually beneficial program that promotes their entity, promotes our destination and incentivizes potential visitors. The "prizes" can be either discounted or "donated" from the suppliers - in exchange for free or discount they get mentioned / profiled in the offer Could do something like this monthly; either as a "choice of" or "Prize of the Month". One different "prize" each month allows us to plan for seasonality

#### *Objectives*

- Showcase Experience Borrego product portfolio through strong brand representation
- Expand social media audience
- Convert social media audience into newsletter subscribers
- Drive website traffic

#### *Requirements*

- Partnership with Cook and Schmid, who developed the BorregoExperience.com website with us in 2019. They are a full-service marketing firm with specific expertise in delivering impactful digital marketing and media relations. Headquartered in San Diego since 2001, Cook & Schmid has successfully conducted regional, national and international public relations and outreach programs for a variety of clients. They are experts adept at a wide range of tactics that effectively communicate messages and launch important initiatives.
- BVA Staff / Contractors / Social Media Manager / Content Specialist

#### *Measures of Success*

- 100,000 BorregoExperience.com visitors in 2020-21
- 10,000 Facebook and 20,000 Instagram Followers
- 1,000,000 media impressions

*Cost \$30,000*

#### 4. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT / INVESTMENT PROMOTION

BVA should be involved in tourism product development and part of this role is really a form of investment promotion. BVA becomes active in seeking out investors for selected new tourism development projects in Borrego. This will help differentiate the role of BVA in and set BVA apart from the traditional Chamber by taking the lead as the region's tourism sector center for innovation and development.

BVA can provide different roles in investment promotion ranging from:

- Providing information and advice for tourism stakeholders who wish to engage in product development.
- Take an active role in identifying opportunities for product development and find strategies to realize these opportunities.
- Make financial, staff, or other resource investments in product development, leading strategic partnerships with other tourism stakeholders.
- Organize a special committee for tourism product development and to engage with potential investors and developers in various ways and through different communication channels. For example, BVA could create a special section on the website devoted to attracting new investment in tourism.

*Action Item: Experiential Travel - Develop and promote one day / multi day themed itineraries, guides and resources*

To guide potential travelers between points of interests in the Borrego Springs and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park (ABDSP), develop self-guided thematic cross cutting routes that inspire visitors to visit the region in ways that will maximize their visitor experience. Offer visitors an “insiders” opportunity to experience “Borrego” as a holistic destination that couples the Park and the Town. The traveler may choose these tour products as “packaged” examples they can mix from a diverse variety of suggested itineraries, researching and choosing among the suggested points of interest along themed itineraries, or as information points of departure that help them customize their own personal journey to Borrego.

These sample itineraries will productize the asset inventory of Borrego by showing travelers how they can connect the dots between points of interest while also informing and inspiring them of things they can do, stay, dine and experience.

Themed itineraries can be one day, weekend, 3-days, 7 – 10 days in length. Itineraries can also include features and the towns amenity's as well as festivals events and special people.

Examples of potential themed itineraries and guided experiences:

- Discover Borrego - Three Perfect Days; an introduction to the recommended best of ABDSP and Borrego Springs for the first-time visitor
- One day tour to the best of Borrego
- Arts, Culture and Cuisine
- Suggested dates can focus on already scheduled Festivals and Events;
- Birders Borrego – focus on the spring and fall migration seasons. Opportunity to couple ABDSP and the town’s easily accessible birdwatching sites seamlessly. Opportunity to connect the town and Park experience.
- History and Places – Blair Valley / Emigrant Trail / Butterfield Stagecoach Route / Pony Express / DeAnza Trail / Native American settlements and migration routes / Mining and mine sites / WW II training sites / Pioneers / Settlers / Farmers
- Dark Skies – Stars / Stargazing / Astronomy / meteor showers. “How to” with experts / photography / Summer Star Gazing
- Nature Hoods – Explore local biodiversity and ecosystems. Big Horn Sheep / Volunteer with the seasonal sheep count / Water / Palm Canyons / People on the land, how we sustain our sense of place by sustaining our ecosystem. Include Cuyamaca, Agua Caliente and Vallecito County Parks in itineraries
- Science Happens Here; “Learning Journeys”– Paleontology; Geology; Geography; Botany; Biology; Bio Blitzes
- Relax, Rejuvenate and Refresh – Spa, Health and Wellness, Yoga, meditations – a how and where to guide of health and wellness opportunities.
- Quality of Life in Borrego Springs - Shop, Dine, Play, Rejuvenate
- Family focused (easy to moderate) interpretive bicycle tours utilizing the paved roads in the valley; short (couple of hours to half day) interpretive bicycling tours of (could also be self-guided with interpretive material).
- Electric cycle tours – Fish Creek; Coyote Canyon; Pinyon Wash; Blair Valley
- Overland cycle tours for more serious bicyclists. Can include the State Park; routes that link the Park and the Villages; road riding scenic tours and routes
- Road Races; Triathlons; 6K walks; half marathons
- Borrego Springs walking tours – self guided with interpretive material
- Sky Art interpretation and routing materials; step on guides; local informal guides
- Geo-caching; as component to any of the above or as a “stand alone” activity
- Mid-Century Modern Architecture - guided half day tours

*Product Idea:*

Guided by Locals - Take advantage of Borrego's trove of local experts as a resource for visitors. Retirees could offer half day "Expert" tours in their special area of interest. Anthropology, American Studies, Environmental Studies, Biology, Art History, Geography, Music, Theatre, Film.

Itineraries can be as simple as a focused conversation "Dinner with a Local"; a guided tour of ABDSP with a local naturalist; a half day tour of the Architecture, History and Style of Borrego Springs with a student. (High school / Soroptimists)

*Needs*

To develop tour products and inspire investments into them BVA will need to reach out to a broad segment of local stakeholders from multiple sectors including outfitters, guide service and hospitality providers, ABDSP, County Parks, agriculture, guides and outfitters, "clubs" and affinity organizations, NGO's and individuals; Festival and Events organizers and promoters. Each of these stakeholders will benefit from enhanced product development to better serve visitors, and inspire prospective visitors.

*Measures of Success:*

- 6 new tour products are developed, promoted, and marketed by the end of 2020 in partnership with local tourism concessioners, service and hospitality providers
- 2 itinerary packages are sold directly to visitors.
- 100 visitors are traveling on an itinerary inspired about what they found on the website, social media or promotion by Spring 2021

*Cost:*

\$25,000 for BVA staff time, travel, promotion, materials, marketing, advertising (outside of owned platforms)

## **5. WORK FORCE DEVELOPMNET – HOSPITALITY SKILLS TRAINING**

In the summer of 2018 BVA began a collaboration with the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) to conduct Hospitality Skills Training for local residents to become NAI Certified Interpretive Hosts. The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing the profession of heritage interpretation, currently serving about 7,000 members in the United States, Canada, and over thirty other nations. Individual members include those who work at parks, museums, nature centers, zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums, historical and cultural sites, commercial tour companies, and theme parks. Commercial and institutional members include those who provide services to the heritage interpretation industry. For more information about NAI visit:

<https://www.interpnet.com/>

In 2018 40 residents of our town attended a half day “Introduction to Hospitality” training program led by NAI. To date 20 Borrego Springs residents have successfully completed the Certified Interpretive Host program and 5 residents have become Certified Host Trainers. The program builds the capacity of local residents, enhance their ability to support the businesses that employ them, develop skill sets for local residents to be more employable, inspire young people about the opportunities in the travel and tourism trades and develop a cadre of local ambassadors to represent Borrego both in and outside of our destination.

### ***Borrego Springs High School Interpretation Course***

In May of this 2019 the BVA engaged Borrego Unified School District Superintendent Mark Stevens and Elementary and High School Principal Victoria Baay about customizing the NAI Certified Interpretive Hosts and Guide programs as a for credit course elective for high school juniors and seniors. After presenting the course to 22 students in spring of 2019 17 of them expressed interest in taking the course in the 2019-20 school year. On August 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 the School Board approved the course curriculum.

The class initiated in August for the current 2019-20 school year. The fifteen high school juniors and seniors enrolled in the course recently completed the first semester of the class. They are all currently in process to complete the testing requirements to receive their professional level, internationally recognized, accreditations from the National Association for Interpretation as Certified Interpretive Hosts. In the second semester, starting in January 2020, they began classes for the NAI Certified Interpretive Guide accreditation program.

The class is being led by a National Association for Interpretation Master Trainer supported by Borrego’s 5 Certified Interpretive Host Trainers and 2 NAI Certified Guide Trainers. In addition to the classroom studies the students have also had six weeks of “Hospitality in an Internship Setting” which included guest speakers from Borrego’s civil society, government and private sectors (ABDSP, ABF, ABDNHA, California Overland Tours, Bike Borrego); field trip visits (guided tours of ABDSP Visitors Center, Archaeology and Paleontology Labs; Borrego Art

Institute; Community Art Farm; Steele Burnand UCI Desert Research Center, ABDNHA, ABF) and guided nature hikes (William Kenyon Overlook Trail, Narrows Earth Trail, Hellhole Canyon), including a tour of Clark Dry Lake Bed and Vista Malpais courtesy of California Overland Tours. They have also visited Ram's Hill and La Casa del Zoro resorts with opportunity to meet with personnel, managers and human resources staff.

The course includes the opportunity for practical internship and / or employment opportunities in co-operation with Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, Anza-Borrego Foundation, Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association, California Overland Tours, La Casa Del Zoro Resort and Ram's Hill.

The fifteen Borrego Springs High School Students enrolled in the 2019-20 class will achieve two professional level, internationally recognized, accreditations from the National Association for Interpretation as Certified Interpretive Hosts and as Certified Interpretive Guides. Students will also have access to NAI's Career Resources service. NAI certifications are recognized by, among others, California State Parks, U.S. National Park Service, Parks Canada, UNESCO World Heritage Center, and private sector tour companies.

Based on the success we have experienced in the current 2019-20 school year, and the enthusiastic interest from students and teachers, we are planning to offer the class to new a cohort of Borrego Springs High School rising juniors and seniors in the 2020-21 school year beginning August 2020. For 2021 we will hope to expand the program and develop curriculum for younger learners at the high school level and increase the rate of participation in the class to with the goal of offering this learning opportunity and professional accreditation to 100% of the Borrego High School Students.

#### *Course Overview*

For credit course elective for high school students 16 years and older leading to accreditation from the National Association for Interpretation as Certified Interpretive Hosts and Certified Interpretive Guides. Course participants will follow on after the course participating in an internship program in co-operation with Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, Anza-Borrego Foundation, Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association including opportunities with private sector outfitters and hospitality businesses.

This course is designed for and offered to as an elective course to:

1. Any Borrego Springs High School student 16 years old or older.
2. Any BSHS student interested obtaining skills in public communication, customer service,
3. Any BSHS student interested in obtaining professional certifications in the field of interpretation.

Upon completion of this course each student should be able to:

1. Explain a working definition of interpretation.
2. Discuss the history, principles, and philosophy of interpretation as it is practiced in natural resource settings (forests and parks), cultural settings (museums and

- historical sites), or a variety of other settings (e.g. grasslands, nature centers, zoos, arboretums, aquariums, classrooms, for profit and nonprofit organizations, etc.).
3. Describe the basics of visitor evaluation and visitor motivation.
  4. Illustrate skills in oral presentation development and customer service.
  5. Demonstrate ability to develop interpretive themes, goals, and objectives.
  6. Demonstrate competency in delivering a thematic oral presentation.
  7. Relate knowledgeably the issues of, opportunities in, and challenges facing the interpretive profession.

### *Course Materials*

Text: *Personal Interpretation*, Lisa Brochu and Tim Merriman, 2002, Fort Collins, CO, InterPress.

### *Course Format*

This course employs a variety of educational techniques including lecture, group discussion, Power Point presentations, small group activities, demonstrations, homework, individual presentation, extemporaneous presentation, field trips, and guest speakers. Class participation is a large part of the course grade.

### Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) and Certified Interpretive Host (CIH) Option:

Students have the option to obtain the CIG and the CIH professional certifications from the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). Certification fees will be donated by the Borrego Springs Village Association. This option will be explained in the first class meeting. The option must be selected by week four of class. If this option is selected the student must complete the following for each certification:

#### The GIG:

1. Must earn 80% or better on each of the required components (exam, outline and oral presentation) or will not receive the credential and will not be refunded fees.
2. Will receive a take home exam to complete by the mid-term. This exam is open book, however requires research in four different texts. The instructor will have at least one copy of these books available.
3. The student will have up to 90 days to resubmit any component if a grade of 80% is not obtained on the first attempt. Resubmitted items do not count in the course, only toward the credential.

#### The CIH:

1. Must score 80% on a multiple-choice open book literature review. Two books are required and will be provided by the instructor.
2. Must score 80% or better on a multiple-choice video review.
3. The student will have up to 90 days to resubmit any component if a grade of 80% is not obtained on the first attempt. Resubmitted items do not count in the course, only toward the credential.

### Why the CIG/CIH option?

The NAI certifications are a valuable asset for student future resume. These certifications, while no guarantee, may help the student toward employment or internship with several agencies

which utilize interpreters (e.g. the Forest Service, NPS, BLM, state parks and rec., museums, nature centers, zoos, etc.) Many employers in the private sector also recognize the CIG/CIH as a desirable qualification in hiring. As a NAI member, the association's website contains employment opportunities throughout the U.S. for internships, part-time, seasonal, and full time jobs in the interpretive field. The skills obtained in this course will serve the student in future pursuits and unrelated areas. Most professionals believe these are life skills for successful communication. An added benefit to certification is a one-year student membership to NAI and access to more information, employment opportunities, and activities.

### ***Hospitality Skills Training Program for Community Members***

The National Association for Interpretation Certified Interpretive Host (NAI CIH) category is designed for staff and volunteers at interpretive sites who have public contact but don't usually deliver interpretive programs. Receptionists, maintenance workers, law enforcement officers, campground hosts, greeters, and sales clerks are among the individuals who may find the program helpful. CIH training combines customer service with informal interpretation to help participants improve their responses to guests in general while helping achieve stewardship goals of the Borrego Village Association.

The program builds the capacity of local residents, enhance their ability to support the businesses that employ them, develop skill sets for local residents more employable, inspire young people about the opportunities in the travel and tourism trades and develop a cadre of local ambassadors to represent Borrego both in and outside of our destination

In 2019 the Hospitality Skills Training Program will implement the following activities:

- Advertise in the community and invite the participation of all members of our community to take a "tuition free, two-day Certified Interpretive Hosts training here in Borrego
  - Course led by qualified NAI Trainer assisted by our local Certified Interpretive Host Trainers (CIHT)
  - Course will allow the CIHTs to get experience in leading a course and benefit from NAI's expertise
  - Course planning will allow our CIHT and Certified Hosts to plan a course curriculum specifically for Borrego
  - Propose two, 16-hour, weekend, courses, TBD in October, 2020 and January 2021
  - Each course has a maximum capacity of 16 participants for a total of 32.
- Organize a three hour "Introduction to Hospitality" workshop in Spanish language for local Hispanic community
  - Target audience are members of the Hispanic community already working in the hospitality / services industry, the ABDSP, NGO's, or other business where they have contact with visitors. Assumption is they may be functional in English but will more readily absorb the course concepts and materials in their native language.

- Promote and Implement NAI-CIH two-day course on the NAI website in October 2020
  - Course “tuition free” for BVA sponsored local people (6 spaces)
  - Outside participants pay NAI tuition

*Measures of Success*

- 35 local people become NAI-CIH certified in courses in 2020 - 21
- 15 High School Students achieve NAI CIH, CIG accreditation in 2020
- 25 High School Students achieve NAI CIH, CIG accreditation in 2021
- 20 local people take Spanish language “Introduction to Hospitality” workshop

*Cost*

- \$40,000 - Fees and costs for locally based National Association for Interpretation CIGT, CIHT teachers to develop the day to day detailed syllabus and curriculum and class by class plan; provide one hour long in class lessons 5 days each week for a total of 180 in class teaching hours over the 2020-21 school year. Managing, organizing, and conducting up to 20 field trips and site visits and arranging for subject matter experts as in class guest speakers
- \$10,000 – Fees for NAI CIH tuition, Certification, and costs for logistics, planning, organizing two 16-hour Hospitality Skills Training Programs for up to 38 Community Members

**BUDGET SUMMARY: 2019 - 20 12-month Program Implementation Plan**

1. INTERPRETIVE MASTER PLAN- ON SITE INTERPRETATION / TOURISM INFORMATION CENTER PLANNING.....	\$70,000
2. MANAGING AND MAINTAINING <i>BORREGO EXPERIENCE</i> WEBSITE.....	\$35,000
3. DESTINATION MARKETING - COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA.....	\$30,000
4. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT / INVESTMENT PROMOTION.....	\$25,000
5. WORK FORCE DEVELOPMNET..... - HOSPITALITY SKILLS TRAINING	\$50,000
<b>TOTAL:.....</b>	<b>\$210,000</b>