



Conference Report

Go West Summit – Las Vegas, NV

March 31 – April 4, 2026

Montana Representation:

- Glacier Country – Debbie Picard
- Visit MT – Emmie Bristow
- Visit MT – Nicole Gonzalez

Overview:

- Go West Summit gathers international and inbound receptive tour operators and travel agencies that focus on offering tours to the 27 western states. These tour operators specialize in group travel, FIT, and fly/drive programs.
- 31 countries were represented, and over 500 tourism professionals attended. We had a Montana booth, which was great with lots of walk-up questions.
- Glacier Country was matched with 36 buyers for 12-minute appointments.

Trends:

- The demand to visit the U.S. is still there, but weaker due to geopolitical issues. However, the strong dollar and our hotel rates make other destinations/countries more appealing/affordable. Mentioned were Japan, Africa and South America.
- National Parks and rural destinations are back to a second or third visit to the US, but first-time travelers to the US are incorporating on itineraries.
- The implantation of the non-resident America the Beautiful Pass for \$250 and the \$100/pp additional fee for the 11 most popular national parks was discussed. Along with the proposed ESTA changes and asking for family history and social media accounts for people who want to visit. Only Rocky Mountain National Park will have a reservation system for 2026, and that is good news to international visitors who book 6 to 9 months in advance and need to know they can get into a national park before spending all the money on deposits.
- International visitors are attracted to Montana for its wildlife viewing, wide open spaces, scenic drives, soft adventure, and unique culture that includes cowboys and Indigenous culture, as well as shopping.

Recommendations for 2027 and beyond:

- We will continue educating GC partners on the international travel trade and working with international inbound tour operators. Visitors want small, unique lodging options. Partners must realize that it costs little to make their inventory available for the travel trade. We've added a few unique properties this year.
- Recognize the developing need for multi-lingual step-on guides.
- Attending Go West Summit: Galveston Island, TX – Feb 2027.