

North American Edition

TIME FOR

DEMOCRACY

**CASE STUDY:**

## Stewardship Messaging

*From: Mammoth Lakes*



Mammoth Lakes  
CALIFORNIA





As more and more people flocked to wilderness areas during the global pandemic, Mammoth Lakes launched a stewardship messaging campaign in 2020 to help improve visitor behaviour

## ABOUT

Mammoth Lakes was starting to see destruction and degradation of beautiful places and natural spaces across the region. The DMO had begun to plan for messaging around stewardship just before the global pandemic hit in early 2020. This worldwide crisis sped up the need for environmental messaging as many people flocked to Mammoth Lakes during the pandemic because the outdoors felt like a safe, nurturing place. However, many of these people were inexperienced in the outdoors and had no idea how to behave in wilderness environments. Trash and human waste became the biggest issue facing the area in the summer of 2020. The local community became outraged.

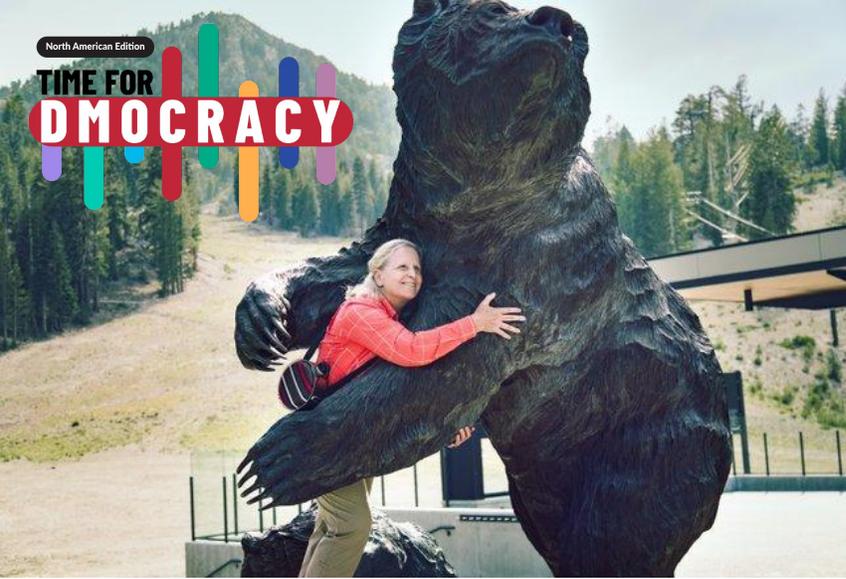
*“At first we thought we were just talking to visitors, but over time we have realized we need to talk to both locals and visitors”*

As the DMO began to talk with the local community, certain issues were brought up repeatedly – not enough trash cans in popular recreation spots, not enough bathrooms and poor visitor behaviour in the outdoors were three commonly cited issues.

This highlighted the need to work with both visitors and local agencies to help solve the problem of environmental degradation and encourage positive stewardship.

Mammoth Lakes began working with local agencies to kick-start conversations about the need for better infrastructure to help support visitor efforts to behave better, including more trash cans and public bathrooms. Better signage has also been discussed.

For visitors, the challenge was to achieve cohesive messaging that was communicated with an appropriate tone. Given the stress many people were under in 2020, the tone of the messaging was crucial if it was to be effective. Working with partners across the region, Mammoth Lakes settled on a light-hearted but instructive campaign brief – ‘Camp Like a Pro’.



Starting from a place of respect for the environment and respect for others, the campaign developed into a series of tips for outdoor novices – such as how to start a wildfire, how to clean up trash, how to toilet appropriately in wilderness areas and how to choose a campsite. The Mammoth Lakes community wanted to inspire visitors to feel a responsibility towards the land and take ownership of their behaviour when visiting the region.

The **Hug What You Love** campaign was born – with a fun, ‘tongue in cheek’ humorous tone, this campaign encourages visitors to ‘*hug what you love*’ and includes digital, print and video executions to reach the intended audience.

## TAKEAWAYS

Rather than just inviting people to visit Mammoth Lakes, the DMO actively promoted environmental stewardship and it appears to have had an immediate positive impact.

While the broader issues are still being addressed, in the summer of 2021, the community did see improvements in overall visitor behaviour, particularly around waste management.

The core focus for Mammoth Lakes remains on the summer months (July 1<sup>st</sup> – August 15<sup>th</sup>) when annual visitation hits its peak and poor visitor behaviour is most likely to occur. Stewardship messaging will continue to be actively pushed through the media, and ongoing discussions with local authorities to solve infrastructure issues are still being had. Mammoth Lakes are committed to this campaign long term.

The DMO offers this advice to others considering a similar campaign:

- Work with community partners from the outset.
- Listen to community feedback – even if it means altering messaging and campaign executions after launch. Mammoth Lakes pulled an entire song from their stewardship campaign when the broader community cited their concerns with the messaging.

*“Work with partners to solve problems and amplify messaging. You can’t do it all on your own, especially if you want problems to be solved across the region”*

## RESOURCES

- Mammoth Lakes Promise: [Sign the Mammoth Lakes Promise - Visit Mammoth](#)
- Mammoth Lakes Love Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aFCKgnUITY>

# WELCOME TO THE REAL UNREAL



## UPDATE

Following on from the success of this campaign, Mammoth Lakes continued to conduct consumer research and competitive analysis to identify new ways to engage with the community and visitors to the region.

One of the key insights:

*‘Sustainability is no longer about doing less harm, it is about doing more good.’*

The ‘Real Unreal’ Campaign was launched in October 2022 and has been positively received by the community. It encourages visitors to embrace the region as if it was their own and to experience ‘unreal’.

## RESOURCES

- Creative examples: [The Real Unreal - Visit Mammoth](#)

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