

Crazy Horse Scenic Byway - Visitor Centers Planning Project

I. Basic Project Information

1. **Name/Title of Proposed Project:** CHSB - Visitor Centers Planning Project
2. **Applicant:** Oglala Sioux Tribe (OST)
3. **Name and Contact Information:**

Lynda Red Eagle, Administrative Assistant OST Department of Transportation lyndare08@gmail.com 605-867-5376 (office)	Courtney Two Lance, Director OST Credit & Finance Program ostfsloans@oglala.org 605-867-1265 (office) 605-407-8637 (cell)
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Cooperating or Partner Funding Entities: The OST Department of Transportation (OSTDOT) will serve as the applicant and primary contact throughout the project. The Tribe's Credit and Finance Program (OSTCFP), Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO), Tribal Elders, Economic and Business Development Committee, and Finance Committee, and Tribal Council will monitor and provide input and direction.

4. **Impacted Byway:** Crazy Horse Scenic Byway (CHSB)
5. **Designation Type:** Indian Tribe Scenic Byway
6. **Primary Project Type:** Planning for an improvement to a scenic byway that will enhance access and development and provision of tourist information to the public
7. **Additional Project Types:** None
8. **Project Abstract:** FHWA National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP) grant funding will be used to complete all necessary planning and preconstruction activities to construct six Visitor Centers with public facilities strategically placed along the Oglala Sioux Tribe's designated Crazy Horse Scenic Byway (CHSB). Currently, no public rest centers exist along CHSB within the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, hence they would enhance the CHSB experience by providing equitable access to public rest areas, support tourism growth within the Reservation, and provide a space for the Tribe to share their rich culture with visitors. The centers will be located at culturally popular scenes and provide public restrooms, unique interpretive signing, outdoor picnic and trail areas, tribal artisan space, and information about the CHSB. Planning and preconstruction activities at each site will include topographic and cadastral surveys, environmental surveys and clearances, utility designs for sanitary, water, and power supply, and site design for access roads, overlook areas, parking, and walking/hiking or equestrian trails. The project further includes architectural and engineering design of each building, with tribal

consultation and design of the interpretive signing unique to each visitor center, and with NSBP funding the project would be economically feasible, community supported, and encourage tourism growth.

Project Description: The OST proposes the development of six visitor centers placed along the CHSB. The visitor centers will ensure the most inspiring and enriching experience, connecting all visitors not only to the beauty of the landscape but also to the cultural and historic richness of the area. Each of the six proposed visitor centers will be equipped with accessible public restrooms, outdoor picnic areas, walking and hiking trails, interpretive signage and displays, and Tribal artisan spaces for visitors to utilize and view. Planning and preconstruction activities will include topographic and cadastral surveys, environmental surveys and clearances, utility designs for sanitary, water, and power supply, and site design for access roads, overlook areas, parking, and walking/hiking or equestrian trails. The project further includes architectural and engineering design of each building, with tribal consultation and design of the interpretive signing unique to each visitor center.

The Tribe has lead research on tourism, amenities, partnerships, and a tour route through the home of Oglala Lakota for over twelve years. In 2019, George Washington University International Institute for Tourism Studies brought together the nine tribal nations of South Dakota to form the SD Native Tourism Alliance (SDNTA) and has completed the draft Native American Tourism Development & Management Plan SD of which the CHSB Visitor Centers will align.¹

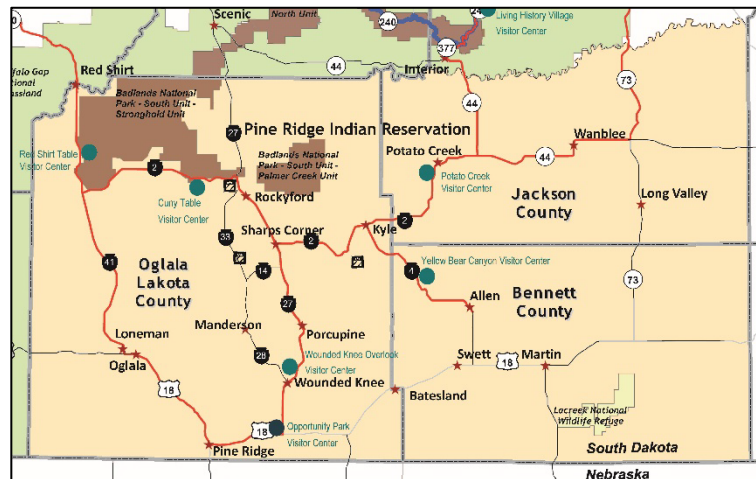
The Tribe collaborated with the OSTDOT, OST THPO, Natural Resources, The Heritage Center at Red Cloud Indian School, Oglala Lakota College Historical Center, Badlands National Park, and OST Districts during the development of CHSB.

Applicant Information: The OST with nearly 50,000² Tribal members, resides on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in southwestern South Dakota (SD). It is the second largest Reservation in the Nation and spans over three counties including Bennett, the southern half of Jackson, and Oglala Lakota County. The per capita income for residents of the Reservation is only \$13,047 and the median household income \$34,567 with 50.2% of the tribal population below the poverty line, more than double the rate in the United States at 12.5%.³ This makes the OST one of the poorest Tribes in the Nation.

OST has a long history of planning, designing, and delivering successful capital projects. This includes using Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) funds to advance initiatives. In the past five years OST has expended an average of \$7 million annually on transportation planning, construction, and maintenance. They have experience with grant reporting and annual reporting to the FHWA TTP Port Reporting. They have consistently proven to be a good steward of

Federal funding and is well-versed in the reporting requirements associated with federal grants. OST has successfully administered TIGER, TTPSF, and other federal and state grant awards. The OSTCFP will serve as the applicant and primary contact throughout the project. The OSTDOT, PRACC, THPO, Tribal Elders, Economic and Business Development Committee, Finance Committee, and Tribal Council will monitor and provide input and direction.

Project Location: The Project is located on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in rural southwestern SD in and qualifies for Rural Designation. The Reservation encompasses over 2 million acres (3,469 square miles) in Oglala Lakota County, the southern half of Jackson County, and Bennett County in southwest South Dakota. The Project is in an Area of Persistent Poverty, Historically Disadvantaged, and Transportation Disadvantaged Community. Additionally, The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation



has been designated a Promise Zone. The CHSB stretches 300 miles from Kadoka, SD to Crazy Horse Memorial near Custer, SD with approximately 218 miles within the Reservation. The six planned locations for the centers are SD 240 at the Tribe's Living History Village near Interstate 90 (Latitude 43.830698°, Longitude -101.897588°), BIA 2 at Potato Creek Scenic Overlook (Latitude 43.525719°, Longitude -102.006685°), BIA 4 at Yellow Bear Canyon (Latitude 43.333629°, Longitude -102.040995°), BIA 27 at Wounded Knee Massacre Site Overlook (Latitude 43.164472°, Longitude -102.343266°), BIA 2 at Cury Table Overlook (Latitude 43.495816°, Longitude -102.614006°), and BIA 41 at Red Shirt Overlook (Latitude 43.557832°, Longitude -102.880101°).

II. Grant Funds, Sources and Uses of all Project Funding

The OST respectfully request \$1,856,500 of NSBP Grant funding and a twenty-one percent investment of \$493,500 using TTP funds. The 2025-2029 Tribal Transportation Improvement Program (TTIP) includes this project on the illustrative list ready to be amended and obligated should NSBP Grant funding be awarded. Cost to complete Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) documents ready for construction of the Visitor Centers is \$2,350,000. A detailed project budget can be found in the Merit Criteria section. The Tribe recognizes that the requested project cost is substantial. Should FHWA be unable to award the full amount as requested, the Tribe offers award options for two, three, four, five and six sites as detailed in the Merit Criteria.

Funding Source	Amount	Percent (%)
National Scenic Byway Grant	\$ 1,856,500	79
TTP Funding (Other Federal)	\$ 493,500	21
Total Project Cost	\$ 2,350,000	100

The Project budget is current and has been calculated based on known variables. The budget contains adequate contingency to address any potential overruns, but if actual planning costs exceed the NSBP grant funding, the OSTDOT will further dedicate TTP formula funding to cover the cost overruns. The Project is an investment in a rural area of persistent poverty, and a historically disadvantaged community that will have beneficial local, regional, and national impacts.

OSTDOT oversees the Tribal transportation system including all BIA roads, utilizing annual federal TTP funding received through the FHWA. The Tribe has a direct funding agreement with the FHWA for administration, planning, construction, and maintenance activities for all transportation facilities within the Reservation which allows for TTP funding to be utilized for scenic byway facilities.

The OSTDOT invested \$40,000 in TTP funds to prepare a detailed proposal to the SDDOT for state byway designation. The OSTCFP received two grants totaling \$124,250 from the Native American Business Institute for a feasibility study of OP and market study of CHSB. These documents can be found on the [Project website](#). OST has extremely limited funding but recognizes the need for the visitor centers. OST will provide a match amount of twenty-one percent using TTP funds.

III. Merit Criteria

a. The proposed project will achieve Safety, Equity and Accessibility, and Workforce Development, Job Quality, and Wealth Creation

Safety: The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) rate across CHSB ranges between approximately 96 to over 8,000 vehicles. Currently, many of the roadways have narrow shoulders, wide enough to pull off in an emergency but not wide enough for parking and viewing the landscape. Paired with the ADT rates at an average speed of sixty-five miles per hours or higher, these routes are dangerous for any parked vehicles or pedestrians along CHSB. This is especially evident at the existing BIA 41 Red Shirt Overlook site where there is limited space and tour buses stop for passengers to get out and take pictures within a few feet of the high-speed road. The six visitor centers will each be designed with the building and parking areas leading away from CHSB for the safety of both travelers and pedestrians.



Existing Red Shirt Overlook is Dangerous Adjacent to BIA 41

Reinvesting in the American Family: Visitor centers will be located at beautiful scenic overlook areas along the CHSB improving the travel experience of the American Family tourist with trails, parks, picnic areas, indoor and outdoor artisan sales, interpretive signage displaying the Oglala Lakota culture and history, and public restrooms.

The visitor centers will also support tourism growth within the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation as well as open opportunities for Tribal members to share their historic culture. Tribal families have historically lived well below the poverty line, a result of not having enough employment and business opportunities on the Reservation. The per capita income for residents of the Reservation is only \$13,047 and the median household income \$34,567 with 50.2% of the tribal population below the poverty line, more than double the rate in the United States at 12.5%. This makes the Oglala Sioux Tribe one of the poorest Tribes in the Nation. Tribal artisans would be able to sell their products to tourists on the Reservation. Studies conducted by Dr. Kathleen Pickering and the First Peoples Fund indicated that approximately 30% of all Native American people are practicing or potential artists. The studies estimated that 51% of Native American households rely on home-based enterprises for cash income and 79% of which consist of some form of traditional arts⁴. Despite these strengths, Lakota artisans and entrepreneurs have inequitable access to regional and tourist-based markets. Likewise, tourists have minimal access to authentic Native America made goods and services straight from the producer or provider. The visitor centers will act as business incubators for many of the Lakota artisans.

Workforce Development, Job Quality, and Wealth Creation: In 2023, the tourism industry of South Dakota reached 14.7 million visitors, and \$4.96 billion in visitor spending with 39.4⁵ percent of visitor sales coming from the Black Hills and Badlands Region, which includes the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation attracts the most tourism out of any other Reservation in South Dakota but is 1.1% of the Black Hills & Badlands (West) region of visitor spending.⁶ Over seventy-nine percent of Lakota home-based enterprises consist of some form of traditional art.⁷ The six visitor centers throughout CHSB would positively impact the regional and local economies by promoting nearby businesses through artisan sales booths, farmer's markets, food trucks, tour guides, and promotions of local businesses. NSBP funding would be invested in a rural area historically designated through past federal initiatives including a Promise Zone, Empowerment Zone, and Sustainable Communities Planning as well as an Opportunity Zone and an area of persistent poverty. In 2017, H2R Markets Research conducted the *South Dakota Tourism 2017 Welcome Center Impact Research*. Research found that welcome centers “influenced some visitors to add to their trips—specifically an average of 2 additional nights and \$250 they wouldn’t have spent otherwise. In addition, the South Dakota Welcome Centers generated a net return of \$1.97 for every dollar invested in operating the centers in 2017.”⁸

b. Community/Traveler Benefits and Protection of Intrinsic Qualities of Byway

Those traveling along CHSB would have opportunities to safely stop and use public facilities, experience the unique landscape features found on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, and gain further knowledge of the history and culture of the OST, present opportunities for local economic growth, and protect the integrity and intrinsic values of the CHSB. Completing the planning and preconstruction activities to make each visitor center shovel ready will enable the OST to move forward with construction and implement the Corridor Management Plan. Grant Funding for the development of a Corridor Management Plan is being requested in a separate application.

c. Project Schedule

Following is a list of planned milestones for the Project. A detailed project schedule with budget can be found in the Detailed Project Budget. The project is ready to begin as soon as a NSBP grant agreement is finalized. The topographic, cadastral, LIDAR, cultural resource, and aquatic resource surveys will commence after the grant agreement is finalized and as weather allows. The anticipated schedule completes the Project within three years.

Planned Project Milestones*	
Visitor Center Site Locations	Completed
Visitor Center Sketches and Building Template	October 2026 – February 2027
Topographic and Cadastral Surveys and Environmental Investigations at 6 Sites	October 2026 – April 2027
Preliminary Building Architectural and Engineering Design	March 2027 – December 2027
Site Conceptual Layouts and OST Review	May 2027 – August 2027
Preliminary Site Engineering Design	September 2027 – March 2028
OST Review	April 2028
Public and Stakeholder Meetings	April 2028 – July 2028
NEPA**	July 2028
Final Building Architectural and Engineering Design	August 2028 – January 2029
Final Site Engineering Design	August 2028 – January 2029
OST Final Review	February 2029 – March 2029
Right-of-Way Acquisition for Access Roads	October 2028 – June 2029
PS&E Approval	July 2029 - September 2029

* Schedule will be adjusted according to NSBP grant agreement date.

** Other permits required will be listed in the environmental document and completed prior to construction, such as Section 401 and 404 permits and EPA Construction General Permit.

d. Detailed Project Budget:

e. Project Budget Breakdown	
Grant Award and Agreement	Anticipated by September 2026
Visitor Center Building Template	Amount
	October 2026
Kickoff Meeting with OST Partners	\$30,000
	November 2026 – January 2027

Visitor Center Sketch	\$30,000
February 2027	
Visitor Center Building Template Meeting with OST Partners	\$10,000
March 2027 – December 2027	
Preliminary Architectural Building Design	\$30,000
Preliminary Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing Building Design (Includes heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, lighting and power, and plumbing design)	\$15,000
Building Template Subtotal =	\$115,000
Visitor Center and Site Development (Each)	Amount
October 2026	
Site Tours and Planning Meeting	\$10,000
October 2026 – April 2027	
Topographic and Cadastral Surveys	\$32,000
Geotechnical Soil Survey	\$15,000
Environmental Investigations (Wetlands, Other Waters of the US, Threatened & Endangered Species, and Cultural and Paleontological Surveys)	\$15,000
May 2027 – August 2027	
Site and Access Road Conceptual Layout	\$10,000
Site Review Meeting with OST Partners	\$5,500
September 2027 – March 2028	
Preliminary Site Civil Engineering Design (Includes access road, parking area, fencing, sidewalks, sanitary sewer, water, and storm water design)	\$45,000
Preliminary Site Electrical Engineering Design (Includes solar or wind power design and site lighting design)	\$50,000
Preliminary Landscape Architecture Design (Includes native planting plans, picnic and play areas, and trails)	\$15,000
Preliminary Interpretive Signing Design and Coordination with District Representatives and Elders	\$15,000
Preliminary Determination of Utility Impacts	\$2,500
April 2028 – July 2028	
OST Initial Review	
Public and Stakeholder Meetings	\$10,000
NEPA - Categorical Exclusion Checklist for Submittal to FHWA	\$5,000
August 2028 – January 2029	
Final Architectural Building Design	\$40,000
Final Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing Building Design (Includes heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, lighting and power, and plumbing design)	\$25,000
Final Site Civil Engineering Design (Includes access road, parking area, lighting, fencing, sidewalks, sanitary sewer, water, and storm water design)	\$25,000
Final Landscape Architecture Design (Includes native planting plans, picnic and play areas, and trails)	\$15,000
Final Determination of Utility Impacts	\$2,500
February 2029 – March 2029	
OST Final Review	
October 2028 – June 2029	
Right-of-way and Temporary Easements - Plats, Appraisals and Acquisition for Access Road	\$30,000

July 2029 - September 2029	
Plans, Specifications, and Estimate (PS&E) Certification	\$5,000
Site Development Design Subtotal (Each) =	\$372,500
Site Development Design Subtotal x 6 Sites =	\$2,235,000
Total Project Cost - Planning & Preconstruction for 6 Sites =	\$2,350,000

The Tribe recognizes that the requested project cost is substantial. Should FHWA be unable to award the full amount as requested, the Tribe offers the following award options:

Award Options	
Option #1 – Two Visitor Centers at:	
Wounded Knee Massacre Site Overlook	\$487,500
Red Shirt Table Overlook	\$372,500
Two Visitor Centers Total =	\$860,000
Option #1 Grant Request = \$679,400 at 79% and TTP Match Funding Commitment = \$180,600 at 21%	
Option #2 – Option #1 Plus One Visitor Center at:	
Yellow Bear Canyon Site	\$372,500
Three Visitor Centers Total =	\$1,232,500
Option #2 Grant Request = \$973,675 at 79% and TTP Match Funding Commitment = \$258,825 at 21%	
Option #3 – Option #2 Plus One Visitor Center at:	
Cuny Table Overlook Site	\$372,500
Four Visitor Centers Total =	\$1,605,000
Option #3 Grant Request = \$1,267,950 at 79% and TTP Match Funding Commitment = \$337,050 at 21%	
Option #4 – Option #3 Plus One Visitor Center at:	
Potato Creek Overlook Site	\$372,500
Five Visitor Centers Total =	\$1,977,500
Option #4 Grant Request = \$1,562,225 at 79% and TTP Match Funding Commitment = \$415,275 at 21%	
Option #5 – Option #4 Plus One Visitor Center at:	
Living History Village Site	\$372,500
Six Visitor Centers Total =	\$2,350,000
Option #6 Grant Request = \$1,856,500 at 79% and TTP Match Funding Commitment = \$493,500 at 21%	

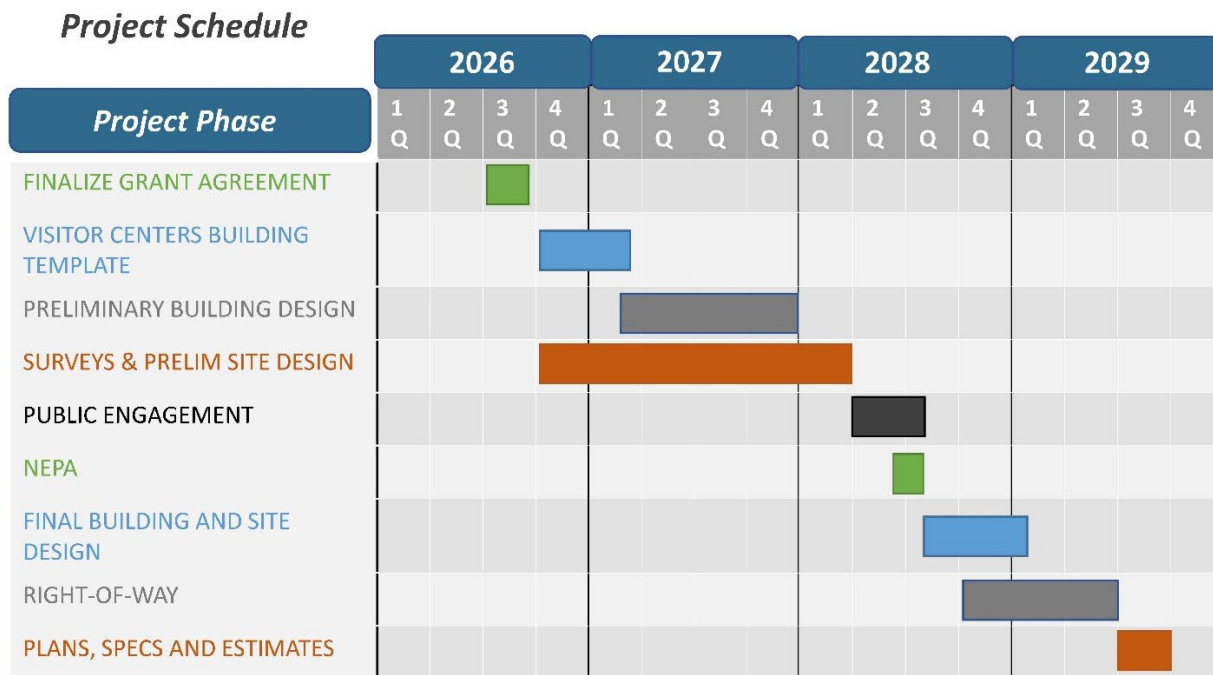
IV. Project Readiness and Environmental Risk

a. Technical Feasibility

The project is technically feasible. The Tribe owns the majority land interest at all planned Visitor Center locations. Significant work to map the CHSB and its intrinsic properties has been completed by OSTDOT and locations for the Visitor Centers have been chosen. The Project is committed to comply with all TitleVI/Civil Rights requirements. The detailed scope of work is outlined in the detailed project budget.

b. Project Schedule

OST has long identified the need for the Project. It is anticipated that should planning grant funding be awarded, planning activities can begin immediately following grant agreement finalization and completed within 36 months. Following the completion of final design plans and specifications, construction is projected to take place in several phases due to the cost and size of the project.



c. Required Approvals

i. Environmental Permits and Reviews

The project will complete environmental resource surveys, and will avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to environmental resources. The project will require concurrence with the OST THPO. It is anticipated a Categorical Exclusion checklist will be required at each site and will be submitted to the FHWA TTP Environmental Coordinator for review and approval. Right-of-way of the access roads and parking lots will be granted by the Oglala Sioux Tribe who is the majority interest landowner and documents will be submitted to BIA Lands, Titles, and Records Office for recording. The access roads and parking lots will be added to the National Tribal Transportation Facilities Inventory. State environmental approvals are not required.

ii. State and Local Approvals

The CHSB is identified in the OST Long Range Transportation Plan and Tribal approval of the project is in the form of the TTIP. A market study has been completed for tourism development along the CHSB. Tribal agencies, such as OSTDOT, OSTCFP, Tribal Transit, Tribal Tourism, THPO, Tribal Biologist, and Natural Resources will be consulted during the project. A proposal

for state designation of the CHSB was submitted to SDDOT in May 2020, however approval of state designation is not needed for the project. Coordination with the SDDOT will be conducted for the Visitor Center at the Tribe's Living History Village located along SD 240 for approach access. No state legislative approvals are needed for the Project.

The OSTDOT will provide engineering plan review documents and final PS&E to FHWA. The access roads to each site that connect to BIA roads will be evaluated for safety sight distance and reviewed and approved by OSTDOT, who has jurisdiction over BIA roads.

iii. Federal Transportation Requirements Affecting State and Local Planning

The Oglala Sioux Tribe is a direct-funded FHWA agreement Tribe and adheres to all FHWA TTP requirements including required updates to the 5-year TTIP. The 2025-2029 TTIP includes this Project on the illustrative list which can be amended when funding is awarded.

iv. Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

The Project is considered low-risk. The Project is currently being managed by OSTDOT staff who will lead planning and preconstruction and liaison with the consultant engineer.

V. Statutorily Required Project Selections and FHWA Priority Selection Considerations

The Project addresses the following Statutorily Required Project Selections and FHWA Priority Selection Considerations:

Obligation Deadline: Because the project is for planning and preconstruction activities, the OST would be able to obligate a grant agreement by either September 1, 2026 (for FY2023 funds) or September 1, 2027 (for FY204 funds), whichever works best for the NSBP.

Development of an Indian Tribe Scenic Byway: The Project is associated with an Indian Tribe Scenic Byway

Advances Two or More of the NSBP Goals: As referenced in the Merit section, the proposed project will achieve Safety, Reinvesting in the American Family, and Workforce Development, Job Quality, and Wealth Creation.

Cost Share: OSTDOT will provide a match amount above the required twenty percent using TTP funds.

References

¹ <https://sdnativetourismalliance.org/>, <https://sdnativetourismalliance.org/native-american-tourism-development-management-plan-south-dakota-2020-2025/>

² Oglala Sioux Tribe Enrollment Office

³ <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/25000US2810-pine-ridge-reservation/>

⁴ <https://www.firstpeoplesfund.org/market-study>

⁵ <https://sdvisit.com/sites/default/files/2024-01/23EcoImp-Tourism-Economics.pdf>, <https://sdvisit.com/research-reports>

⁶ [https://sdvisit.com/sites/default/files/2024-03/23EcoImp Tourism Economics Counties rev.pdf](https://sdvisit.com/sites/default/files/2024-03/23EcoImp_Tourism_Economics_Counties_rev.pdf) pg. 6 Oglala Lakota, half of Jackson, and Bennett counties.

⁷ First Peoples Fund. Establishing a Creative Economy: Arts as an Economic Engine in Native Communities, 2013, <https://www.firstpeoplesfund.org/research/establishing-a-creative-economy>

⁸ H2R Market Research. (2017). South Dakota Tourism. 2017 Welcome Center Impact Research. Springfield, MO. pgs.13-14. Can be found at: <https://inputcentral.com/ostnsbp>