



**Whidbey & Camano Islands Tourism Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
September 7, 2023, 2023
Island County Offices, Camano Island and via zoom**

Board members in person

Jackie Henderson, Chair, Town of Coupeville
Inge Morascini, Vice Chair, Langley Chamber
Mayor Scott Chaplin, Treasurer, City of Langley
Lynda Eccles, Secretary, Coupeville Chamber
Jessica McCready, Camano Island Chamber
Chet Ross, Freeland Chamber
Allanah Johannsen, Camano Island Lodging
Magi Aguilar, Oak Harbor Chamber
Commission Melanie Bacon, Island County

Board members virtually:

Max Lindsay-Thorson, South Whidbey Lodging
Ally Willis, Central Whidbey Lodging
Holly Grason, Coupeville Lodging
Katie Grindon, Clinton Chamber
Sharon Sappington, EDC of Island County
Angela Muniz, Freeland Chamber

Creative Team in person:

Sherrye Wyatt, Embrace PR & Marketing Manager
Scott Rosenkranz, Embrace Graphic Design & Branding
Laura Hilton, Embrace Special Projects & Film Liaison

Creative Team virtually:

Jack Penland, Embrace Digital Marketing/Website, Data & Content Creation
Vicki Graham, Embrace Regenerative Places Program

Guests in person:

Deena Garza, Audit Manager, Office of the State Auditor
Susanne Hancock, Audit Supervisor/Lead, Office of the State Auditor
Mona Campbell, Kristoferson Farm
James Amadon, Circlewood
Susan Cohan Thompson, Artist
Robin and Richard Hanks, Historian/Author, Coyote Hill Press
Emily Wandres, Contractor
Marie Shimada, Ebey's Landing



Whidbey *and* Camano
ISLANDS
Washington State - USA

Call to Order: Chair Jackie Henderson called the meeting to order at 11.05 a.m. and established that we had a quorum.

Introduce Guests : Jackie introduced the two representatives from the Washington State Auditor's Office Pat McCarthy, State Auditor and Deena Garza, Audit Manager, who presented the final Audit Report to the Board. Copies were also handed out to those Board Members who were present at the meeting.

Public Comment: Following the presentation from the Auditors, Jackie asked if there was any Public Comment and there was none.

Adoption of Agenda:

- o Agenda for September 7th meeting was approved with no additions or changes.

Approval August 2023 Meeting Minutes

- o Meeting minutes were approved by Scott Chaplin and seconded by Inge Morascini with change that the meeting was held via zoom and not in Clinton as the minutes stated

Approval August Invoices

- O Motion to approve the August Invoices was made and seconded and motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

- o Scott Chaplin presented the Treasurers Report prepared by Diane Binder

Auditors Report

- o Jackie Henderson reported that the Auditor's report will be ready for the September meeting on Camano Island and the State Auditor will be there either in person or via zoom. Diane Binder followed with the Washington State 2% Lodging tax report for August.

Creative Team

Sherry Wyatt

- Report (included in Board Packet).
- Creative Team updates included in Board Packet

Next Meeting - October 5th at Greenbank Farm, Barn A.

There being no further discussion, the meeting closed at 12.30 pm.

Minutes submitted by
Lynda Eccles,
Secretary, Board of Directors



REGENERATIVE PLACE

Recognized by the Transformational Travel Council

CREATIVE TEAM REPORT

OCTOBER 5, 2023

SHERRYE WYATT PUBLIC RELATIONS & WRITING

- Plans for the regenerative lodging event are moving quickly. **The event is set for October 17, 2023 at 4-6 p.m. at Seabiscuit near Langley. All Tourism Committee Members are Asked to Please Attend!** Invitation postcards and emails have been distributed to lodgings with RSVPs due October 10. Emily Wandres and Bridge Building Pillar Ambassador Marie Shimada are working with the Creative Team to oversee the event. You may register here: [Be Our Guest • RSVPify](#)
- State of Washington Tourism and the Port of Seattle are including Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands in a FAM of five Australian product managers along with a rep coming through in October. They will spend the night of October 21 at the Coupeville Inn, paid for by the Port of Seattle. The State of Washington Tourism representative from Australia will driving them up in a large SUV.
- The International Food Wine and Travel Writers Association (IFWTWA) conference is Oct 1-7 and Inge Morascini has agreed to represent Embrace. The event is aboard the Discovery Princess Discovery and begins in Vancouver, BC and ends in Los Angeles. Sherrye purchased 50 local artist John Ebner's tiles on Camano and shipped them along with trail guides, stickers, maps and Regenerative Guides to the conference ahead of time. She is also working with Erin and Inge on talking points and slides for a PowerPoint for Inge to present to participants.
- Sherrye, Laura and Inge met with visiting travel writers Christine Salins and Maurie O'Conner on Whidbey Island from Australia, in advance of their attendance of the same IFWTWA conference.
- Sherrye is speaking on a panel to explain the work Embrace is doing at the State of Washington Tourism conference on October 24-26. She presented to the Ebey's Reserve Board of Directors on September 26 and attending the Ebey's Forever conference in Coupeville on November 3.
- Sherrye did recent interview with local reporter Harry Anderson [It seemed like a boom but how big? All the indicators are lagging. | Whidbey News-Times \(whidbeynewstimes.com\)](#)

OSBORNE NORTHWEST PUBLIC RELATIONS

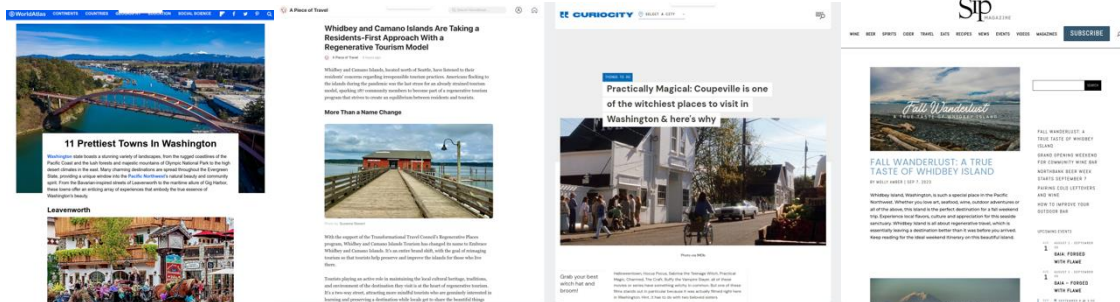
Monthly Overview

This has been a milestone month, as national headlines sharing our regenerative story are now coming to life. As a result of our proactive messaging and media outreach, [A Piece of Travel’s story on regenerative tourism, Whidbey and Camano Islands Are Taking a Residents-First Approach With Their Regenerative Tourism](#), took national placement with syndication to MSN, while Eat Local Month and Whidbey Island landed as a [“Top Place to Travel in the US.”](#) in National Geographic, featuring responsible travel tips.

Locally, we worked with Sip Magazine on a full takeover of their social media, sharing 25 slides to share the craft beverage story. This lives as a highlight on their [page here](#). We also worked with KING 5 New Day, Seattle Met, Curicity and several others to successfully share stories and placements for upcoming fall events.

Coming up, we will be touring regional and national level media, continuing to develop shoulder season stories and winter PR strategies while planning ahead for 2024.

Press Highlights include 18 pieces of coverage with an audience of 1.03 billion people. To view the coverage in full go [here](#).



Project Management

- Secured new interest in collaborative storytelling, secured new opportunities and managed existing partnerships with several partners, outlined below.
- Secured and prepared team for a Q13 Studio Live segment to promote Whidbey Island Cider Festival with Greenbank Cider on 9/25
- Secured and attended a King 5 New Day segment to promote Camano Island CiderFest
- Developed a travel itinerary and content library to promote a sippable fall getaway focused on local producers as a social media takeover and online fall travel article for Sip Magazine
- Executed targeted media outreach using the fall/winter story sheet and calendar alert which generated interest from the following:
 - Q13 Studio Live, to promote Camano Island Cider Fest which is slated to appear on September 25.
 - Margot Bigg is writing a new book for Fodor’s on alcohol tourism in the US as well as features on hotels and restaurants
 - Jessica Wick, Seattle Refined on Eat Local Month and Farm Picnic

Recent and Upcoming Media Visits and Collaborations:

- Liz McGuffin, Wander with Whimsey – September 14-17
- Jessica Wick, Seattle Refined – September 15-17
- Jean Chen Smith, freelance travel writer for Travel + Leisure, USA Today Syndicate – September 26-Sept. 30.

Instagram Engagement

- Reposted influencer and local business content, and managed the community with likes, comments and interaction on the @GoWhidbeyCamano Instagram page. Maintained goal of 2-3 posts per week, with stories posting on an ongoing basis.
- Follower count grew from 2758 on July 13 to 2833, a growth rate of 1.00%.

Pending Press

- *USA Today Syndicate*, a second story by Jean Chen Smith is anticipated
- *Welcome Magazine* (German Cruising Publication), writer Susanne Mueller staying on Whidbey Island August 29-30 as part of a Port of Seattle arranged media tour.
- **Q13 Fox Studio Live**, Greenbank Cider slated to appear to promote the Whidbey Island Cider Festival.

COMPUTERPIX

Executive Summary

- The primary way people reach the website is via searches on Google.
- The September email was opened by about 40% of the recipients, well above average.
- A technical issue will require rebuilding virtually every page on the website. The structure of the site isn't changing.

Website Activity

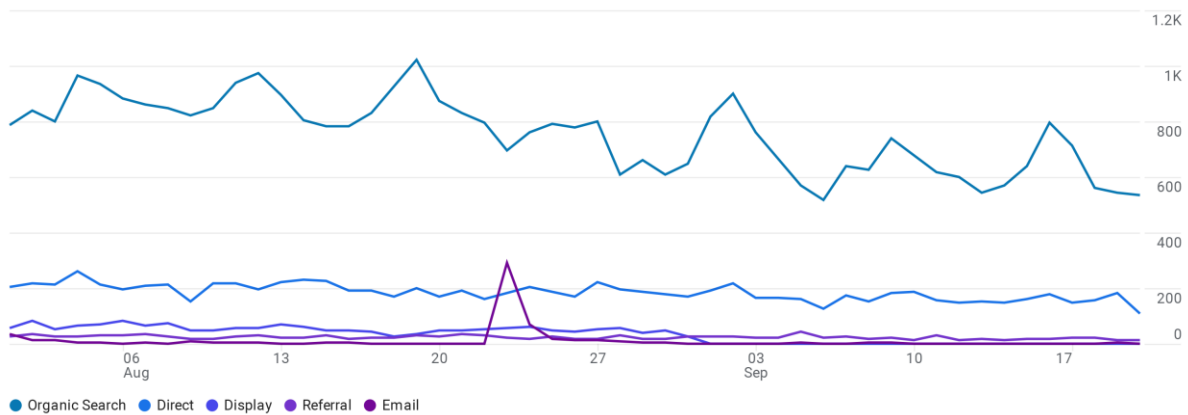
I've begun a page-by-page rewrite of the site, moving away from pages built using the page builder "Pro" to the Gutenberg page builder that comes standard with WordPress. This fairly lengthy project is necessary to allow us to update the WordPress plug-ins that run our events calendar and our activity listings. "Pro" is creating a conflict with these plug-ins, and the only way to resolve the conflict is to pivot away from "Pro." The site is not being re-designed, but some pages will look slightly different.

Google Analytics

Google has changed the way it tracks activity on a website, moving from what they called “Universal Analytics” to “Google Analytics 4” or “GA4.” GA4 has been collecting data on our site since mid-March. Universal Analytics stopped collecting data on August 11. New options come with GA 4, so for the next few months, we’ll be exploring some of those.

Here’s a day-by-day look at what channels users used to get to the website. This represents the period from August 1 to September 20. The top line and the biggest supplier of traffic is organic search. The next line is direct. That’s when either someone types our URL directly into their web browser or they have it bookmarked.

You see the peaks on either Fridays or Saturdays and a general slowing as the summer draws to a close. The spike on August 23 was traffic created by the email newsletter.



Email

The September newsletter was sent out on August 23 to 19,367 recipients. It was opened by 41.4% of the recipients compared with an average of 20.8%. The subject line was “KEEP IT REAL: A Food-Lovers Guide to Eating Local on Whidbey and Camano Islands.” We chose to send the email to one-third of the audience in the morning, noon to a second, and the remaining third of the audience received it in the early evening. There was essentially no difference in the open rate.

Time of Day	Open Rate
6:45 am	41.0%
12:15 pm	41.2%

5:45 pm	42.1%
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Advertising

While the two advertising campaigns with Datafy are over, the data from those ads continues to come in. As of 8/5/23, the preliminary data shows the following:

- The recent Port of Seattle-funded campaign in the Phoenix area with:
 - Budget \$10,000
 - 1.27 million impressions
 - 2,289 Clicks
 - \$14,981 Campaign Impact
 - \$1.50: \$1 return on advertising spend
- Outdoor Leisure Campaign (24 Trails)
 - Budget: \$5,000
 - 648 thousand impressions
 - 1,521 Clicks
 - \$307,849 Campaign Impact
 - \$55.09: \$1 return on advertising spend

Details on these campaigns are at the end of this report.

2 Stories of Interest

I'm resuming adding a couple of interesting stories to this report. I'm limiting myself to just two in hopes you have time to give them a glance.

1. As hot as programmatic advertising is (what we're doing via Datafy), there's something else on the horizon, "Retail Media Advertising," where you buy ads on retail websites such as Amazon or Walmart.
<https://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/388403/why-retail-media-could-overtake-search.html>
2. Vox: An Airbnb collapse won't fix America's housing shortage
<https://www.vox.com/technology/2023/6/30/23779862/airbnb-collapse-housing-shortage>

Whidbey Camano Islands - 2023 Outdoor Leisure Campaign

ADR

\$221

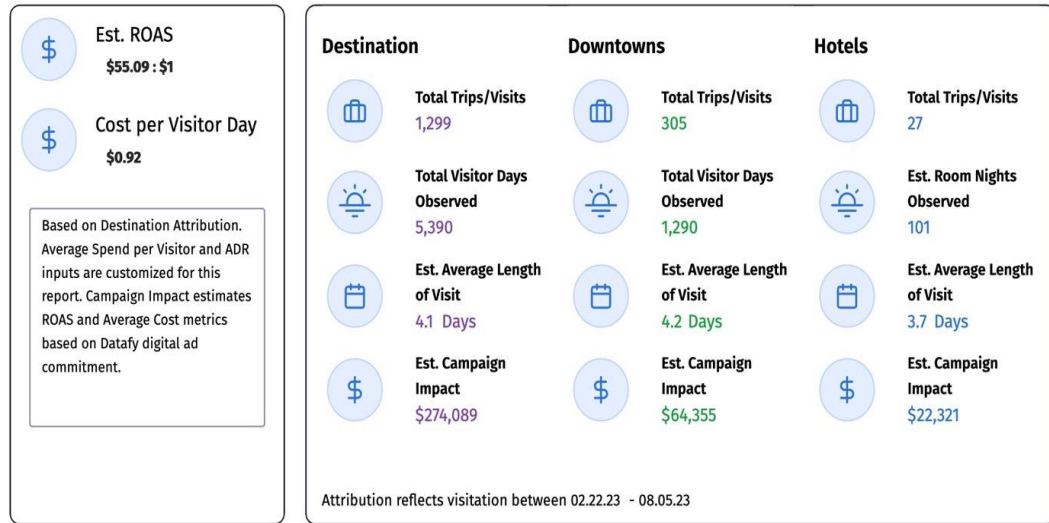
Spend per Visitor

\$211

Campaign Run Dates: 02.15.23 - 04.15.23

Report Period 02.15.23 - 09.20.23

Attribution Mileage 50 - 2778 mile radius



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Advertising visitor attribution represents a raw device count of the campaign's ad-exposed visitors observed in market and is not extrapolated.

DATAFY

Whidbey Camano Islands - 2023 Outdoor Leisure Campaign

ADR

\$221

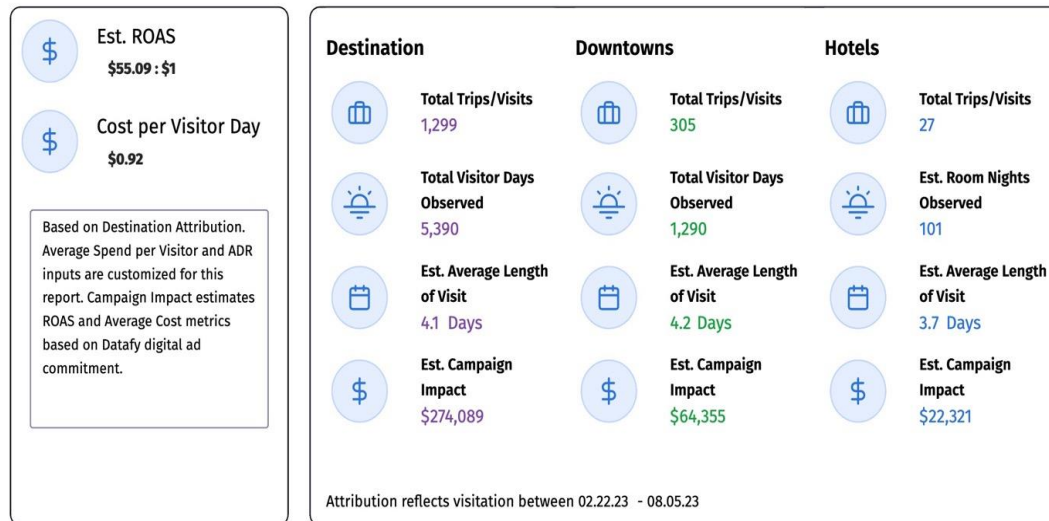
Spend per Visitor

\$211

Campaign Run Dates: 02.15.23 - 04.15.23

Report Period 02.15.23 - 09.20.23

Attribution Mileage 50 - 2778 mile radius



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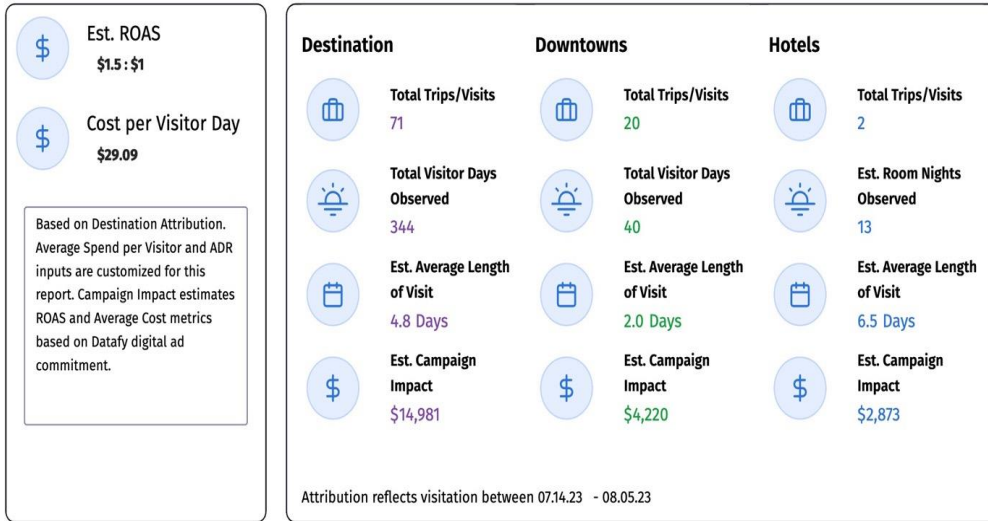
Advertising visitor attribution represents a raw device count of the campaign's ad-exposed visitors observed in market and is not extrapolated.

DATAFY

ADR
\$221

Spend per Visitor
\$211

Campaign Run Dates: 07.07.23 - 08.31.23
Report Period 07.07.23 - 09.20.23
Attribution Mileage 50 - 2778 mile radius



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Advertising visitor attribution represents a raw device count of the campaign's ad-exposed visitors observed in market and is not extrapolated.



LAURA HILTON

- Attended monthly meetings + guide & event planning meetings
- Met with international travel writer and local filmmaker
- Visited set of television production
- Attended meetings & info sessions with Washington Filmworks
- Supplied location information and made local introductions for filmmaker
- Added properties to Reel Scout database and encouraged others to do the same
- Contributed edits and suggestions for Fall story pitches from Erin & Annie
- Distributed TTC information via transformational Facebook group
- Attended historic presentations and walking tours on Camano and Whidbey
- Visited historic sites and provided photography for guide
- Copywriting and research for Culture & Heritage Guide
- Provided seasonal and event photography
- Emails/Calls
- Laura was a panelist on the Sept. 28 State of Washington Tourism Skillshop Workshop in her role as a state film liaison - Recording will be available on You Tube

Your Property Could be a Movie Location!

Washington State has expanded funding for film production, and we expect to see many productions filmed here in the coming years. Want to get in on the action? Consider listing your property on the Reel Scout Locations Database, where Washington Filmworks staff can pull together images for film clients. There is no commitment to participate in a film production by listing your property, it simply creates the possibility!

Scan to list your property here. Or visit: www.washingtonfilmworks.org/locations/list-your-property

For more information or other ways to get involved contact Laura Hilton, Film Liaison for Whidbey & Camano Islands: info@whidbeycamanoislands.com or 360-202-6456

- 25th Anniversary of the blockbuster and cult classic “Practical Magic” which was filmed in Coupeville is being promoted this month
- Another full-length feature movie which was filmed in 2021-22 on Whidbey Island called “A Momentary Diversion on the Road to the Grave” will premiere in Langly at the Clyde Theatre on Oct. 7.


ROSENKRANZ PRODUCTIONS

Here is a recap of some of what we have been doing for Embrace

- Ongoing Regenerative Project Sheet design, revisions and production
- Sticker Design
- Business Cards
- Be Our Guest Post Card, and Digital Assets
- Website/E-blast Review and Feedback
- Cultural and Heritage Guide
- Jets on Whidbey Rack Card
- Film Location Flyer
- EWCI Committee meetings
- EWCI Creative Team meetings

VICKI GRAHAM

- Will represent Embrace at the Hawaii State Tourism Conference October 2-4.
- Attended Virtual Meetings with Embrace Whidbey & Camano Islands (EWCI) and the Creative Team.
- Working with Creative Team with project sheets , management of databases and work on recruitment strategies and review and organize notes.
- Familiarization with Spreadsheets and Regenerative Co-Design Project Tracking, Create and Implement Plan for Updating.

	Vendor	Date	Invoice#	Amount	2023 Bills Invoices on Sept 25, 2023
	Captain Whidbey Inn	9-13-23	100	\$717.21	Lodging and Dining for Marketing to Travel Writers Susanne Mueller and Leslie Kellie
5007381	ComputerPIX LLC	9-16-23	2317	\$7,781.57	Analytics, Content Creation, Newsletter, Research, Website Maintenance, Video, Calendar, Social Media
5007381	ComputerPIX LLC	9-16-23	2318	\$992.27	Platforms, Subscriptions for Digital Marketing and Management of Content
	Country Cottage of Langley	9-21-23	111	\$1,780.52	Lodging for Marketing IFWTWA writers Christine Salins & Maurie O'Conner Australia – Special Project
	Dianne Binder	9-21-23	ICT 0923	\$300.00	Bookkeeping Services
	Elizabeth McGuffin	9-20-23	920231	\$278.00	Marketing - Travel Writer Visit "With Wonder & Whimsy"
	Emily Wandres	9-19-23	8000517	\$1,000.00	Special Regenerative Lodging Event – Special Project
	Jessica Wick	9-18-23	1	\$266.24	Travel Writer - Dining
5007383	Laura Hilton	9-15-23	2309	\$6,200.00	Research, Film Requests, Writing, Heritage Guide, Regenerative Places, Photography
5007383	Laura Hilton	9-15-23	0923	\$411.46	Expenses & Mileage
	Osborne Northwest PR	9-20-23	2564	\$4,500.00	Monthly Contract for Media Relations
	Osborne Northwest PR	9-20-23	2565	\$1,500.00	Monthly Contract for Instagram
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	9-18-23	3237	\$2,600.00	Monthly Contract for Design Services
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	9-18-23	3238	\$4,875.00	Heritage and Culture Guide Document Outline/Content Research – 2 nd of 4 invoices
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	9-18-23	3239	\$118.88	Mileage
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	9-18-23	3249	\$1,662.26	Jet Rack Cards, Logo Stickers and Generic Business Cards
5005663	Sherrye Wyatt Public Relations & Writing	9-15-23	91523	\$9,000.00	Monthly Contract for Consulting Services
5005663	Sherrye Wyatt Public Relations & Writing	9-22-23	92223	\$2,271.75	Expenses & Mileage includes \$1,083.86 Special Project IFWTWA and October Regenerative Lodging Event
	State Auditor's Office	8-18-23	11564414	\$1,793.40	Final Invoice for Accountability Audit – Citizen Referrals
	TravMedia USA LLC	9-26-23	IMM-USA001145	\$3,250.00	International Media Marketplace Registration NYC – Special Project
	Vicki Graham	9-20-23	0004	\$1,400.00	Monthly Work on Embrace - Regenerative Support
	Whidbey Weekly	7-11-23	16680	\$809.47	Printing Embrace Plan Documents
	Whidbey Weekly	9-18-23	17041	\$65.40	Printing Flyers re: Regenerative Film Project
	TOTAL			\$53,573.43	