



“Storytelling for Sustainable Tourism Development”

*Rob Holmes, Founder & Chief Strategist
GLP Films*

*Tourism Northern Ireland:
Visioning Workshop — Feb 28, 2022*



Rob Holmes

Founder & Chief Strategist, GLP Films

- **Home** — Kennebunkport, Maine (USA)
- **Education** — Wildlife Management (BA); International Business & Sustainability (MBA)
- **Outdoors** — REI, AMC, Trails.com
- **Media** — Photographer; Travel, study, to work overseas (90+ countries)
- **Board Member** — Maine Huts; PATA Sustainability; Adventure Travel Conservation Fund





GLP: Who are we

We help destinations strategically reposition — **destination management, stewardship, regenerative**, etc — to become sustainability-minded leaders and innovators in new travel era.





Our Mission:

Directing mission-driven brands towards their sustainability goals in protecting nature, culture and livelihoods through the lens of storytelling and content marketing.



Campaign Services

We help destination partners meet their sustainability storytelling, content, marketing, distribution and budgetary needs via a strategic 5-Step Approach:





Why sustainability?

- **83%** of global travelers think sustainable travel is vital
- **76%** want to ensure the economic impact of the industry is spread equally in all levels of society increasing cultural understanding
- **69%** are willing to avoid popular destinations to prevent overcrowding and to disperse travel to less frequented destinations and communities



Power of storytelling

- Storytelling = most compelling form of content marketing (ex: telling stories)
- Social + digital is overwhelmed with content; storytelling stands out
- Storytelling emotionally engages your audience, so they connect, share and take action (ex: “I want to go there”)





What stories should you be telling?

- Unique to your destination + support your destination goals
- Preserving environment, culture, heritage, etc
- Connecting and experiencing nature and the outdoors
- Supporting and helping local communities (and economy)

6 Growth Sectors of Sustainable & Regenerative Tourism:

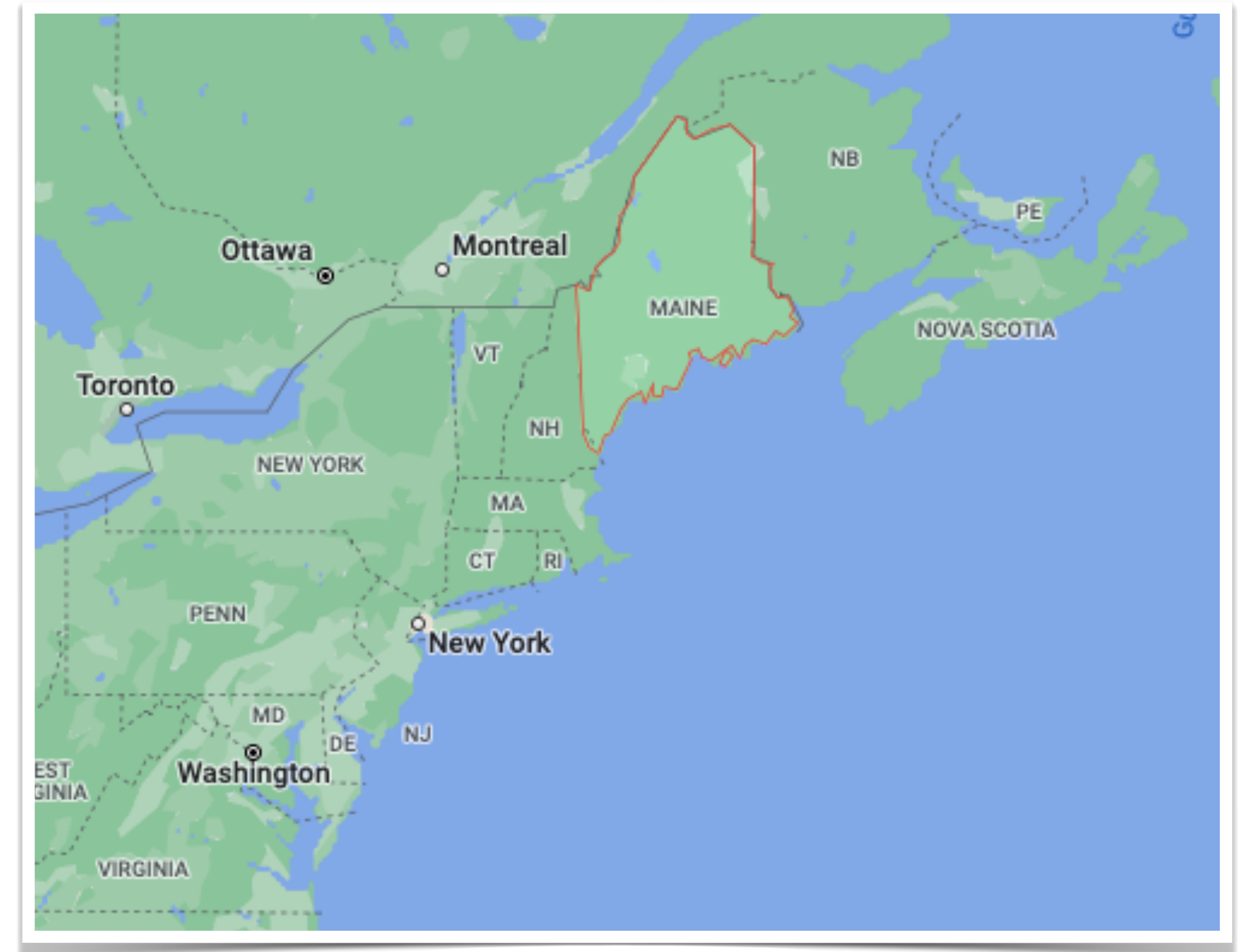
Nature & Outdoors	Community-based Tourism
Adventure	Health & Wellness
Food & Agriculture	Cultural & Indigenous



Case Study: Maine



- Timeline — Filming (Fall 2019); Launch (Summer 2020)
- Multi-regional — City of Portland, MidCoast, and Lakes & Mountains
- Target audience — Local in-state travel due to Covid-19
- Themes — Outdoors, nature, stewardship, community, food, urban





Case Study: Maine



- 3 regional DMO's came together — shared resources + stories across regions, cross promoted
- Local story viewpoint was key asset during pandemic
- City of Portland = travel hub + launching point to nature and the states outdoor experiences
- Content strategy aligned with 3 destination goals — dispersal, off-season, diversity and inclusion, support local businesses, educate travelers, etc.



Case Study: Maine (USA)



Watch video:

<https://vimeo.com/383638056>

Title: “Explore Your Maine”

Story: Multi-regional content marketing campaign.

Filming: 6 days (coast, city, mountains)

Themes: Stewardship, outdoors, food, community





Outdoor-focused destination: Scotland

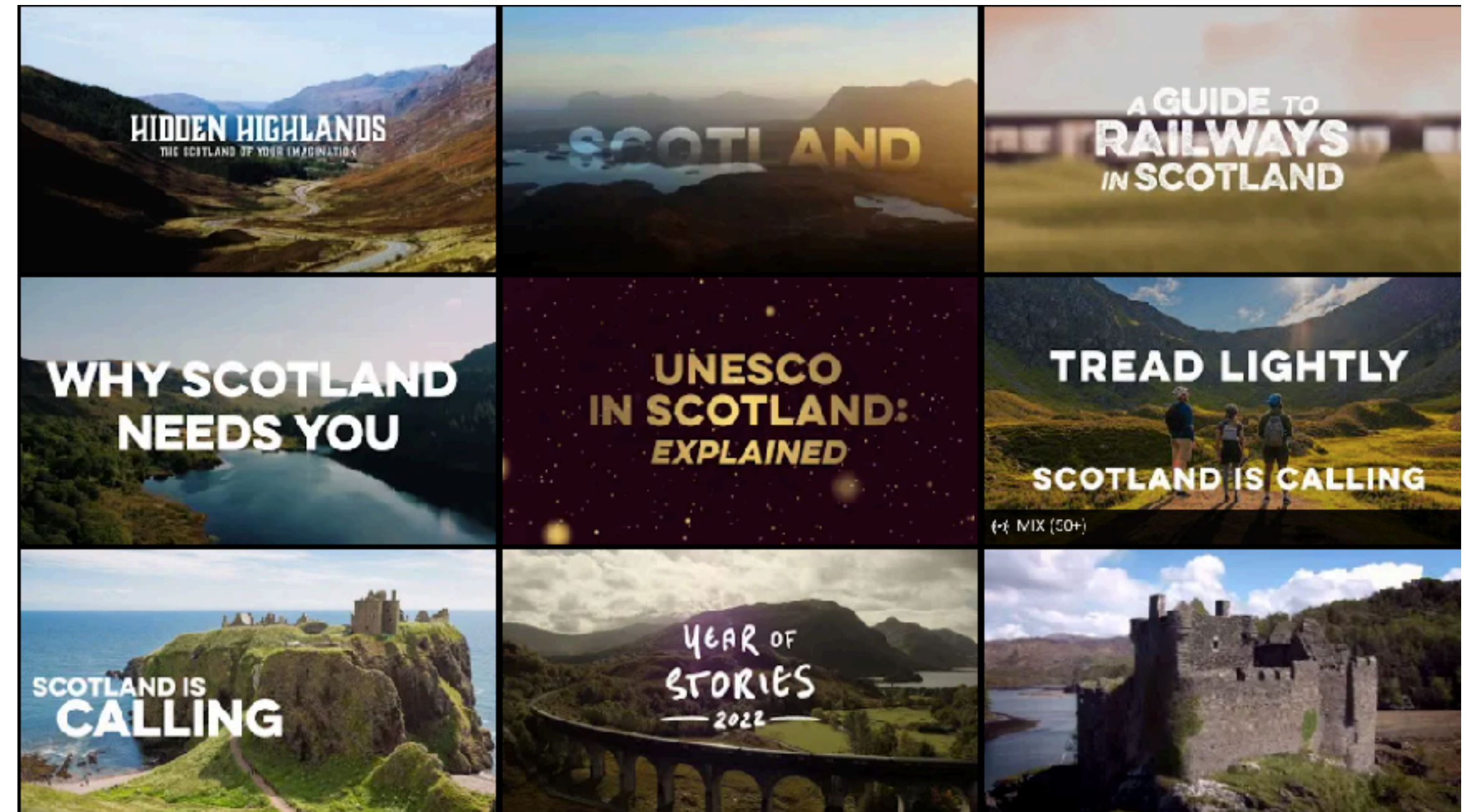


What they do well:

- A documented sustainability strategy
- Beautiful visuals, wealth of information
- Top operators — Wilderness Scotland

What they are missing:

- Stories being told directly by the community and locals





Outdoor-focused destination: Georgia



What they do well:

- Raw, varied outdoor experiences
- Uncrowded, dispersed activities

What they are missing:

- Outdoor industry not formalized
- Safety protocols not well established
- No focus on sustainability, stewardship





Outdoor-focused destination: New Zealand



What they do well:

- Outdoor branding
- Long heritage with the outdoors
- Destination management mandate

What they are missing:

- Marketing campaign: Not 100% Pure
- #overtourism in the outdoors





Case Study: Sedona, Arizona

- Timeline — Filming (Fall 2021);
Launch (Spring 2022)
- Target audience — Local community,
visitors (trips already booked)
- Themes — Destination management,
stewardship, sustainability, Leave No
Trace, no outside marketing
- Community engagement — Diverse mix,
multi-stakeholder, in-person events





Case Study: Sedona, Arizona (USA)

A new sustainability message: Destination Stewardship

Title: “Soul of Sedona”

Story: Management over marketing.

Filming: 6 days (Northern Arizona)

Themes: Stewardship, outdoors, arts, community



Watch video: <https://vimeo.com/646986819>



Key Takeaways

- Shared vision on developing a long-term 'sustainable' tourism industry
- Multi-stakeholder approach — cross collaborate, interconnect experiences
- Community — let them be heard, be part of the entire process
- Communication plan — unlock your local stories, experiences, transparent
- Destination management — future of tourism, make sustainability fundamental



Thank You.

Free Resources — Webinars, reports, case studies, workshops, articles, newsletter, etc: www.glpfilms.com

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