WILDEWOOD

FREE RESOURCE · NO. 01




A FIELD GUIDE FOR INTENTIONAL GATHERINGS

# The Experiential **Event Checklist**

Purpose, place, guest journey and sensory details – everything to design a gathering people remember.

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Great gatherings are designed, not decorated. Work through this checklist from top to bottom as you plan – start with purpose, then let place, journey and detail follow. Tick each box as you go, and revisit it the week before your event.

01

# Purpose & Story

Before venues or vendors, get clear on why this gathering exists.

- [ ] **Define the one feeling guests should leave with**
  Inspired, rested, connected, called to act? Name it – every later choice should serve it.
- [ ] **Write the gathering's intention in a single sentence**
  If you can't say it simply, guests won't feel it. Share it with every vendor and partner.
- [ ] **Identify who must be in the room – and why**
  A smaller, intentional guest list almost always beats a bigger one.
- [ ] **Decide what success looks like afterward**
  New relationships, a funded project, a shared commitment – write down how you'll know.

02

# Place

In the West, the landscape is part of the program. Choose it with care.

- [ ] **Choose a setting that supports the conversation (views, quiet, light)**
  Match the space to the energy you want: open meadows for big ideas, a fireside for honest ones.
- [ ] **Scout at the same time of day as the event**
  Light, wind, shade, traffic and noise change by the hour.
- [ ] **Build a weather plan B for every outdoor moment**
  Mountain weather turns fast. Line up tents, a covered fallback and warm layers.

02

# Place, continued

- [ ] **Confirm permits, land-use and Leave No Trace requirements**
  Public lands, ranches and parks each have their own rules and lead times – start early.
- [ ] **Plan access and arrival logistics**
  Parking, shuttles, road conditions, accessibility and clear wayfinding to remote sites.

03

# Guest Journey

Design the experience moment by moment, from the first invite to the last goodbye.

- [ ] **Map arrival → welcome → peak moment → farewell**
  Sketch the arc of the day like a story with a clear high point.
- [ ] **Design a meaningful first five minutes**
  A warm greeting, a drink in hand and a reason to talk to someone new.
- [ ] **Plan intentional seating and introductions**
  Curate tables and pairings so the right people meet.
- [ ] **Build in unstructured time for real connection**
  The hallway conversations are often the best part – protect time for them.

04

# Senses & Details

The details guests remember are the ones they feel.

- [ ] **Local food and drink sourced from the region**
  Montana ranchers, farmers, brewers and distillers tell the story of place on the plate.
- [ ] **Lighting for golden hour and after dark**
  Time key moments for sunset; plan string lights, lanterns or fire for the evening.
- [ ] **Sound: music, silence, and acoustics outdoors**
  Wind and open space swallow sound. Test amplification – and leave room for quiet.
- [ ] **A take-home keepsake rooted in place**
  Something small, local and useful beats branded swag every time.
- [ ] **Comfort: layers, blankets, shade and water**
  Comfortable guests stay present. Plan for cold evenings and strong sun.

05

# Follow-through

The gathering isn't over when guests drive home.

- [ ] **Capture photos and guest reflections**
  Brief your photographer on key moments; collect a few words from guests while it's fresh.
- [ ] **Send a thank-you within 48 hours**
  Include a photo or two and a reminder of what you created together.
- [ ] **Debrief with your team and partners**
  What worked, what didn't, and what you'll do differently next time.

## NOTES

"The best gatherings happen outside — where the landscape does half the work of bringing people together."

WORK WITH WILDEWOOD

## Let's gather somewhere wild.

Planning a retreat, mastermind or outdoor gathering? Wildewood designs and produces place-based experiences in Montana, across the country and internationally.

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