



Cathy Ritter Founder and CEO, Better Destinations

Managing tourism dynamics during times of prosperity and crisis, Cathy Ritter has built a reputation for partnership and turning insights into action. She founded Better Destinations LLC in spring 2021 as a flexible consulting practice structured to bring together a team of experts to address various destination challenges, especially relating to sustainable and regenerative tourism.

The Denver-based consultancy has been building a specialty around advising some of the nation's most desirable vacation spots to shape tourism strategies aimed at defusing conflict over visitor pressures, while making visitor economies more resilient and addressing local priorities. Cathy has played leading roles in major planning efforts for Lake Tahoe, Vail, Glacier Country Tourism (near Glacier National Park), Missoula, and North Myrtle Beach and is kicking off a nine-month project to develop a unique sustainable tourism-economic development plan for Moab/Grand County in Utah.

Her work has won top state awards for clients in Marquette County MT and Port Aransas TX. Her client list also includes the states of Tennessee, Montana, and Nevada, where Better Destinations is guiding a two-year project to assist Travel Nevada in creating a model statewide destination development and grants program from the ground up.

Cathy is among one of a handful of people who have led tourism offices for multiple states, serving in that role for both Illinois and Colorado. As Director of the Colorado Tourism Office, she led creation of the Colorado Tourism Roadmap, now widely credited for sparking a national movement toward sustainable tourism. To educate Colorado travelers about protecting the state's natural and cultural resources, she approached the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics in 2017, creating a groundbreaking alliance that has become a model for many other destinations.

Cathy currently serves as a Trustee of the Travel Foundation, an international NGO focused on reducing impacts of tourism. She chaired the National Council of State Tourism Directors during the early years of Covid and has served on the Executive Committee of the U.S. Travel Association and as an officer of the Western States Tourism Policy Council. She is a member of the Parks, Preservation, and Public Spaces Advisory Council for America 250, the nonprofit charged with planning the celebration of the nation's 250th birthday in 2026.