



Minutes from “Moving Forward with Sustainable Tourism Development” Workshop

Bird Studies Canada, Port Rowan, Tuesday, January 12, 2010

Organizer: Bernie Solymár, LPWBRF

Facilitator: Trish Manning, Manning Consulting Ltd.

Participants: Steve & Anita Buehner, Barb Rideout, Kevin Lichach, Mark Boerkamp, Dave Pond, Mike MacArthur, Jeff & Rebecca Bouck, Sheri Bouck, Shirley Rothery, Betty Chanyi, Tom Bradstreet, Shawna Stonehouse, Jan Robertson, Paul Smith, Nancy Fallis, Clark Hoskin, Ted Willey, Jon McCracken, Joyce Flexman, Michelle Crowley, Cathy Gilvesy, Lucy Foglietta, Lyle Harper

MORNING SESSION

Welcome and Introductions

The Long Point World Biosphere Reserve has adopted the following definition of Sustainable Tourism:

“Tourism which actively fosters appreciation and stewardship of the natural, cultural and historic resources and special places by local residents, the tourism industry, governments and visitors. It is tourism which can be sustained over the long term because it results in a net benefit for the social, economic, natural and cultural environments of the area in which it takes place.”

- Parks Canada & the Tourism Industry Association of Canada

Power Point Presentations:

[Can be accessed at www.longpointbiosphere.com]

Progress Report on Sustainable Tourism Workshop held in May 2009 – Bernie Solymár

Strategic Planning for Sustainable Tourism Development - Trish Manning

Sustainable tourism Initiatives in Other Biosphere Reserves (not presented, available on website) – Bernie Solymár

Norfolk County Master Trails Plan – Kevin Lichach, Community Services, Norfolk County

Norfolk County Tourism Initiatives – Clark Hoskin, Tourism & Economic Development, Norfolk County

Great Ontario Outdoor Adventure Program & cascading Approach to Marketing – Steve Bruno, Ontario Tourism Marketing initiative

AFTERNOON SESSION

Activity #1 - VISIONING DISCUSSION

A vision statement outlines where you want to be. It concentrates on the future; it is a source of inspiration; it provides clear decision-making criteria. Developing a vision statement is an engaging process that evolves over a period of time.

A 5 year vision for the LPWBR and Norfolk County Sustainable Tourism Stakeholders Group:

“Will be the Canadian leader providing outstanding healthy active and leisure experiences for a diverse population”

“We will establish Norfolk County as a recognized premier sustainable tourism destination within the Great Lakes Basin –

As a cooperative we provide the leadership and undertake the strategies to actively foster sustainable tourism product development and stewardship collaboratively with local residents, the tourism industry, governments, and other stakeholders”

WE will do this by:

Group 1 (reporter was Tom):

- Staffing a Visitor Centre that offers information, food, and washrooms
- Developing a plan with partners
- Provide meaningful employment for the local community

- Explain in an easy format what is sustainable tourism to locals
- Create local pride in place (e.g. Forest Capital of Canada designation)
- Showcase opportunities for local youth to find employment in Norfolk

Group 2 (reporter was Mark):

- Organize inventory of existing tourism experiences
- Link the experiences through tourism partnerships
- Target marketing with a brand (e.g. South Coast)
- Active, healthy lifestyles theme
- Diversity in types of tourism
- Be market ready before launching

Group 3 (reporter was Michelle):

- Share knowledge and resources
- Establish a committee to set clear goals, a mission, regular meetings
- Enhance partnerships among business owners to work cooperatively with each other and Norfolk County
- Participating businesses/organizations abide by the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism
- Local college program – implement a volunteer environmental project
- Contest – Norfolk County version of the provincial contest featuring a package experience

Group 4 (reporter was Jan):

- Formalizing commitments between stakeholders (re. money, in-kind, authority)
- Identify existing market ready products and experiences, and develop partnerships to offer quality and buyable experiences
- Look at product offerings that offer high-end, unique experiences (i.e. guided, behind-the-scenes)
- Identify target markets
- Develop enhanced electronic communications

Activity #2 – DEVELOPING AND/OR ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OFFERINGS DISCUSSION

Thinking about your vision and guiding principles, what products and experiences can be offered now and what could be offered in the near future? What are the “low hanging fruit”?

Market Research:

Does your organization have any market research that they would be willing to share for this initiative?

Norfolk County’s aggregate information and tracking from Visitor Services; impact of tourism reports from Ministry of Tourism; Health Unit, B & Bs; provincial parks ?; Ontario travel net stats.

Existing Sustainable Tourism Offerings:

Provide a list of up to 10 existing sustainable tourism offerings that are market-ready and that could be promoted under a LPWBR sustainable tourism product/experience “brand”, if one was produced.

- Accommodations
- Lake charters
- Eco-adventure /zip line
- Long Point bird banding
- Museums at Play resort
- Grand experiences
- Backus
- Festival by the bay
- Doors Open
- Forestry Station
- Tour de Norfolk
- Festival by the bay
- NFN Field tours
- Rotary House Tour
- Lantern Tour
- Local food restaurants
- Farm markets
- Ice fishing
- Bed and breakfasts
- Provincial parks
- Eco-adventures
- Trails
- Wineries
- Fishing/hunting
- Bird watching
- Scuba diving
- Culinary tourism
- Canoeing
- Cycling
- Theatre

Future Sustainable Tourism Offerings

Provide a list of 3 priority projects that could be implemented in the short-term (within one year) that would enhance existing or create new sustainable tourism offerings.

- Workshops for tourism suppliers on greening their operations;
- Educational materials for visitors;
- Creation of self-guided or guided biking, walking, canoeing tours;
- Creation of interpretive centre;
- Bird watching tours by pontoon boats;
- Marsh walk;
- Backus Heritage Village tours;
- GAP analysis;
- Focus on product development and market readiness;
- Web-based adventure vacation shopping;
- Tourism applications for electronic hand held devices

Marketing, Customer Service and Sales

General Discussion

We were unable to get to this last exercise due to lack of time. The activity is outlined in Appendix 2.

(Note from Bernie: I intend to hold a half day meeting sometime this winter to discuss this activity and other action items that stem from these minutes)

Recommendation for Other Involvement:

Municipal planners, local councilor to champion, MP, MPP, Brock University

Appendix 1.



Canadian Charter For Sustainable Tourism

[NAME OF BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION]

accepts and wholeheartedly subscribes to Canada's

Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism

In subscribing to the Code of Ethics, our operation and its employees will be active stewards of our destination.

We will develop and improve our destination in ways distinctive to the locale, accurate and reflective of its natural and cultural heritage. We will be sensitive to the peoples, the society and the culture of our area, while contributing in a meaningful way to the local economy.

We will work collaboratively with our community to ensure a balanced approach to sustainability.

We will create our own sustainability plan that recognizes the long term needs of our customers, community, employees and shareholders.

We will proudly display this Canadian Charter for Sustainable Tourism, and we accept that our achievement must be measurable and credible. We therefore agree to participate in a process of certification and review.

We agree to advance Canada as a global leader in Sustainable Tourism through our leadership, by building capability and sharing best practices, technologies, planning and solutions with others. As applicable, we will participate in national policy development and initiatives that facilitate Canada's leadership in Sustainable Tourism.

Appendix 2

HANDOUT #3 GENERAL DISCUSSION

3:00pm - 3:30pm General discussion

Marketing, Customer Service and Sales

Do you think there is a need for a “LPWBR brand” that identifies sustainable tourism offerings?

Do you think it would help to provide momentum with moving forward towards sustainable tourism development?

Should this be done in conjunction with the other Ontario World Biosphere Reserves?

Based on the market-ready products that were identified earlier, what is the best way to move forward with marketing. What partnered opportunities are available in the short-term?

Who should manage customer service, enquiries and sales of the products?

3:30pm – 3:45pm General discussion

Strategic Planning, Partnerships and Operations

How are we going to make it happen? Who needs to be involved?

What is the most effective way of working together? A co-operative under LPWBR?

Should a steering committee be set up to move forward with strategic planning process?