

PISCATAQUIS TOURISM TASK FORCE
“LDR Implementation Recommendations”
April, 2005

A. Tourism Document: *“Tourism Marketing Strategy: Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties, The Katahdin-Moosehead Region”*, prepared by LDR International, Inc. for Eastern Maine Development Corporation, September 2000...Review and summary for PTTF by Roger Merchant, UM Cooperative Extension, April 2005.

B. LDR-Overarching Recommendations: The LDR Tourism Study frames out four basic components for a tourism marketing strategy, our Tourism ROAD Map for the region:

1. **Region** – The strategy must involve the entire region.
2. **Organization** – An organization must be created to implement the plan and market.
3. **Access** – Bringing new people to existing resources is a first priority.
4. **Development** – New products should be introduced after coordination and marketing.

(NOTE: Text below in italics indicates actions and organizations that are currently engaged with some of the recommendation-actions put forward in the LDR Study)

C. REGIONAL ORGANIZATION & MARKETING

Implemented Recommendations: The following goals and recommendations put forth in the LDR Study are being actively implemented and managed by the Maine Highlands Corporation, a tourism marketing partnership among all Chambers of Commerce in Penobscot and Piscataquis, the Bangor CVB, BIA, and UM. This new initiative also has support from ED partners, EMDC-regional, as well as county partner PCEDC.

GOAL: Establish tourism development as a region-wide effort

Recommendation #1. The Chambers of Commerce and CVB, together with EMDC and others, must produce the need for and the benefit of a region-wide tourism strategy.

Recommendation #2. The Chambers and CVB should arrange fam tours for tourism stakeholders in the several parts of the region to familiarize people with assets, accommodations, attractions and services throughout the region.

GOAL: Form a regional tourism marketing organization

Recommendation #3. The principal organizations and agencies involved in tourism must form a regional tourism marketing organization that is governed by a board, funded by the participants and with staff dedicated to region-wide promotion.

Recommendation #4. The regional tourism organization should publish a regional tourism guide that can be used for destination marketing.

Recommendation #5. The participants should develop a shared marketing plan, in which marketing activities are identified and distributed among the members.

Recommendation #6. The regional organization should apply for grants from the Maine Tourism Marketing Partnership, seek available economic development funds and assist local municipalities in their quest for park, transportation and capital funds related to tourism.

Recommendation #7. Marketing efforts should focus on reaching markets outside of Maine.

D. VISITOR INFORMATION, SERVICES & PACKAGING

(Recommendations Needing Further Attention)

GOAL: Facilitate access to and use of the region's natural and recreational resources.

Recommendation #8. The regional organization should develop, publish and make available regional user guides, maps and manuals which help visitors access natural and recreational resources by compiling and simplifying information. (*Here are current information sources for Piscataquis County*)

- *MHC Regional Outdoor Recreation-Cultural Heritage Map*
- *MATC-Guide to the Appalachian Trail in Maine*
- *NMW KI/JoMary Forest Outdoor Recreation Map*
- *AMC-CHET Outdoor Recreation-Cultural Heritage Map*
- *AMC- River Guide, Maine Mountains Guide, Quiet Waters Guide*
- *North Woods Walks by Chris Keene and Fifty Hikes in Northern Maine by Cloe Caputo*
- *DOC-Bureau of Public Lands Maps of OR within their lands?*

Recommendation #10. The region should encourage the formation of co-operative booking and reservation services for guides, outfitters, tours and wildlife safaris.

Recommendation # 11. The region should encourage the creation of more outdoor adventure packages, regularly scheduled tours and scenic trips.

- *MH Corporation is currently engaging its' members in a packaging development process, in effect beginning to address #10 and #11. Soft adventure, nature and quiet recreation are components in this new work.*
- *This intersect with preliminary recommendations form Fermata re: information centers, guiding services, as well as Recommendation #14*

Recommendation #14. The region should consider developing a regional visitor and exhibit center that could become a destination attraction.

- *This connects with NREC, incorporating a multi-agency service-education-interpretation-information center.*

E. NEW TOURISM PRODCUTS

(Recommendations Needing Further Attention)

GOAL: Develop new tourism product and attractions which build on the existing strengths of the region.

Recommendation #9. Opportunities for passive recreation and soft adventure should be improved.

- *Soft adventure-outdoor recreation... camping... wildlife watching... canoeing... kayaking... interpretive walks... touring... sightseeing... snow shoeing... Nordic skiing... dog mushing.*

Recommendation #13. The region should explore the possibility of establishing nature center-outdoor schools which teach recreational skills, bird watching, ecology of the woods and other nature related subjects and sports.

- *Greenville, Brownville, PCEDC, EMDC and Dog Mushing stakeholders have initiated a preliminary UM REP research-based assessment of winter mushing for recreation and dog mushing-musher training.*

F. ENHANCING ACCOMODATIONS

(Recommendations Needing Further Attention)

Recommendation #15. Development of new accommodations, particularly resort complexes with lakeside sites and recreation, should be promoted.

- *The Plum Creek proposal raises the visibility of this recommendation, as well as how does this inform the work of PTTF (non-advocacy)*
- *Preliminary findings from Fermata assessment and the 2 Chambers studies reinforces lodging upgrades.*

G. CULTURAL HERITAGE & ARTS

(Recommendations Needing Further Attention)

Recommendation #12. The region should promote its historic towns, arts and crafts, shopping and small museums.

- *CHEt and MH Guild data is available for assessing the viability of a cultural heritage-arts trail or corridor tied into the DOT Moosehead and Katahdin Trails and outdoor-nature opportunities*

Recommendation #16. A regional crafts center, selling local arts and crafts, accompanied by classes, could compliment a visitor center or outdoor school.

- *MH Guild ???*

H. ENHANCING COMMUNITY & DOWNTOWNS

Recommendation #17. The municipalities should explore enhancing their downtown and civic areas, creating new public parks and waterfront sites, and restoring their historic architecture.

- *Who has their eyes on this? What are the key organizations?*
- *Implied are historical societies, municipalities, chambers, downtown interests, MH Guild and CHEt.*

I. PISCATAQUIS COUNTY VIDEO

Recommendation #18. the region should sponsor a brief video of the region, surveying the heritage, reviewing the logging and paper industries, highlighting the natural resources, accenting the recreation and introducing the wildlife in the area.

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Postscript: After completing this re-organization and synthesis, I was stuck by the fact that all of these findings and recommendations indeed have bearing on tourism in Piscataquis County. However it is equally evident that this county has no shared, unifying vision of tourism and the future of rural life. I believe this will need to be addressed by PTTF.

We are developing an implementation blueprint, but for what kind of community tourism house?