

# Synopsis of the Moosehead Lake Region Tourism Marketing Strategy

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By Donna Fichtner 3-20-2005

## I. Introduction

### a. Moosehead Lake: The Maine You Remember!

The Moosehead Lake Region has a long history of tourism, from Native American travelers seeking flint from Kineo to the wealthy Eastern families seeking the lake's cool restorative powers in the summers of the early 1900's, to the sportsmen and families of today who come to the area to enjoy its many natural resources and beauty. As the visitors and their interests change, so must the region's tourism strategy keep pace.

Moosehead is one of the most unusual, unspoiled and well-managed wooded areas in the Northeast. It is the goal of the people of the Moosehead Lake Region to keep it that way while developing and sustaining a healthy wood products industry.

Moosehead offers a travel experience in an environment that was once common in New England, but which has all but disappeared. This region offers visitors the opportunity to step back into a less harried, more firmly grounded way of life, one that allows them the chance to either relax or face adventurous challenges.

The residents of the Moosehead Lake region want to broaden and balance their tourism economy without experiencing uncontrolled growth that has destroyed the quality of life in other areas. Residents very clearly see the uncontrolled growth will eventually destroy the very resources that allowed tourism to flourish here for the last 100 years.

Marketing Strategy stresses the importance for the individual businesses to develop and follow through on targeted marketing strategies.

Four reports:

1. The Maine You Remember: Major findings of the research.
2. Research & Analysis Report: Data collected during the research.
3. Marketing Data Manual: Information & analysis of specific activity markets relevant to the region.
4. Orientation & Interpretive Center: A report on the pros and cons and potential direction for an orientation & interpretive facility.

## II. Key Findings (pp 3-5)

### a. Image

- Primary current image – an undifferentiated place for hunting & fishing experiences; Secondary – whitewater rafting image (outfitters); Greenville's image – where one can relax with nature.
- The Moosehead region lacks a clear image true to the best qualities of its character.
- Though not true wilderness, the region does offer vast amounts of open, undeveloped land and space.
- The lack of cultural amenities is a competitive disadvantage compared with competing regions.

## **b. Resources**

- Although there are many remote campsites, the majority of cabins and motels are near Greenville or Rockwood. People are closely congregated and easily served with amenities and experiences.
- The region is undersupplied with larger motels and inns. These (21+ rooms) are critical for serving the tour bus market.
- The majority of visitors in summer stay in campgrounds. The region's primary lodging mode (camps) is the lowest spending form of accommodation compared with hotels, motels and resorts.
- The region compares well with others in terms of occupancy rates.

## **c. Visitor Profile**

- Annual visitation level is about 189,000 per year, not counting private home rentals and day trippers.
- Much of the region's visitor base is derived from Maine residents. Nearly half of the campers and 40% of cabin rentals are Mainers. Conspicuous lack of Canadian visitors.
- The number of visitors is 3% of total visitors to Maine each year. There is large untapped potential.
- The region is attracting lower spending visitors compared with other regions in Maine.

## **d. Marketing Evaluation**

- The Most effective form of recent marketing is public relations, articles in newspapers and magazines.
- The region's distance from metropolitan areas and attractions is a factor.
- The current marketing strategy is not conducive to target marketing; nor does it lay the groundwork for branching into new markets or respond to market changes. Advertising budget needs review. Promotion needs to be reviewed for ROI.

## **e. Tourism Economy Overview & Competitive Analysis**

- Of chamber members, 85% derive some direct or indirect return from visitors or businesses serving visitors.
- Tourism support businesses survive on a smaller visitor base than in the Western Lakes & Mountain region.
- Even if all visitor accommodations are full in winter, the total would be 62% of the summer months. Unless the number of rooms rises, even a full winter will not bring back 100% of the summer jobs in retail and other support sectors.
- A reopened Kineo, new motel in Greenville and rehabilitated Squaw would all increase local expenditures.
- Downtown Greenville does not orient the visitor well due to lack of signage and orientation activities.

## **f. Activity analysis**

- The region's past primary market – hunters & fishermen – is a shrinking market. The region is not currently well suited to serve the growing

markets of “nature experientials”, bus tours and older travelers because of lack of larger facilities and amenities.

III. **Regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats** (will copy pp. 7-11 for the meeting)

IV. **Defining the Region’s Image (pp 13-18)**

a. **Parameters for image & strategy**

- The MLR should continue to be a place that:
  - Is representative of traditional working woods in balance with environmental conservation & local people committed to their homes offering relaxed hospitality to visitors
  - Offers access to nature
  - Attracts the family
  - Grows modestly and slowly; is uncrowded.
  - Preserves and cultivates its rich history.
  - Balances tourism with active, industrial forestry.
- The MLR should not become:
  - A factory outlet town or highly commercialized.
  - A mass market tourism destination based on one development.
  - Over developed or crowded.
  - Damaged environmentally due to tourism development.
- The marketing strategy should be:
  - Pragmatic.
  - Results oriented
  - Realistic, in that, business decision makers ultimately make the difference.
  - Feasible within the financial resource projections.
  - Set long term growth objectives.
  - Exciting with new ideas.
- The marketing strategy should not:
  - Exacerbate economic problems by addressing the summer season that is already doing well, thus encouraging labor shortages and higher shoulder season unemployment levels.

b. **Concepts driving the current image**

- Image of a rustic lake region that is undifferentiated.
- Other vast resources are overlooked and people are not being attracted to them.
- Does not answer the question, “Why should I drive XX hours to get to Moosehead Lake when I could go somewhere closer?”

c. **Image recommendation**

- Build on positives: lake & rustic experience by bringing into sharper focus
- An image of nostalgia, natural beauty, easy access to wildlife, people in partnership with the woods, small town hospitality and good values.
- Competitive advantages: lack of crowds, access to the great Maine woods, a rewarding vacation/travel experience that is affordable.
- Trend to return to past values, nature, the past and reasonable prices.

- Moosehead Lake: The Maine You Remember.
- Childhood Nostalgia/Family Image
  - We're the Same and that's Different!
- Traditional Maine
- Adventure, Unique Travel Experience
  - Return to Maine's Wild Side

## V. Marketing Strategy

### a. Concepts Driving the Marketing Strategy (pp 19-21)

- Recognizes limited financial, structural & organizational capacity. Must be practical & affordable.
- Existing facilities are the limits for the near future.
- Must be implementable by a small number of professional and a large group of volunteers.
- Address the needs of the slow seasons, not peak seasons.
- Work on easily implementable actions that will address the critical issues which are:
  - Need to improve current regional promotional strategy & materials with a better image;
  - The lack of activities for children;
  - The lack of bad weather activities;
  - Improving the physical appearance of the commercial area.
  - Making basic repairs to the region's deteriorating accommodations.
- If the above issues are not addressed, the summer season may begin to erode.
- All former regional target markets have problems; therefore the region must broaden its visitor profile.
- A key ingredient to success with new markets will be high quality service.
- Develop a community education/activity center focused on culture, history and future of the forest products industry.
- Recognize the shared role of individual businesses and the Chamber of Commerce in achieving ultimate success.

#### Four Part Marketing Strategy

- **Strengthen the Slow Seasons.**
- **Strengthen the Product.**
- **Broaden the Profile.**
- **Develop an Orientation/Interpretation Facility.**

### b. General Marketing Guidelines (pp. 22-23)

- Think in terms of general vs targeted promotion.
- Market strategically by activity type.
- Market strategically by geographic area.
- Package Activities.
- Collect information on marketing activities & visitors.
- Re-evaluate the role of the Chamber.
- Explore local investment & capital to upgrade accommodations and start new profit-making ventures.

- Work to reduce the distance perception problem.
- Improve coordination between all those involved in tourism.

**c. Action strategies (pp. 25-44)**

**i. Strengthen the slow seasons**

**1. Winter (January-March) Objectives**

- Strongly promote snowmobiling.
- Build the cross country ski market.
- Support Squaw Mountain with events and packages.
- Market to Bangor, Portland & New Brunswick markets.

**2. Fall (October-November) Objectives**

- Pursue the hunting market for next decade.
- Attract non-hunter outdoor markets.
- Build the small group market.
- Continue the Seaplane Fly-in.

**3. Spring (May-June) Objectives**

- Market aggressively to the fishing market.
- Strongly market nature observation (especially moose watching) in spring.

**ii. Strengthen the Basics**

1. Improve the region's image & promotional and marketing efforts.
2. Provide activities for children.
3. Provide bad weather activities & attractions.
4. Improve physical appearance of the downtown business area and better signage.
5. Make basic repairs to deteriorating accommodations.

**d. Moosehead Lake Region Orientation & Interpretive Facility (p. 45)**

- The MLR needs a better mechanism for orienting visitors to an understanding of the region.
  - Step by step plan for developing an Orientation & Interpretive Center.
    - Provide basic Information on lodging & activities.
    - Provide more in depth information on special experiences.
    - Provide educational experiences on the past, present and future of the region.
    - Show how lumber & recreational industries can co-exist in a sustainable and environmentally sound manner.
    - Entertain the visitor and entice to stay longer.
    - Preserve local history for future generations.
    - Encourage improved relationships between lumber and recreational industries.
    - Provide a clear place and focus for the efforts to strengthen the tourism economy in a manner that will protect the region and its quality of life.

- Provide a place for bad weather activities and a space for community activities.
- Provide space that encourages increased cooperation & cost efficiency for various organizations in town that relate to tourism.

**VI. Conclusion:**

- The MLR is an exceptional, spectacular area. Clear targeted marketing strategies, consistent follow-up, and application of resident creativity will achieve the objectives of this strategy. This is do-able if leaders and business people come together, focus on a specific task and follow through step by step. With hard work, openness to changing markets and willingness to put limits on the types of development that will ruin the character of the region, the MLR is in a position to have it all: a stable tourism economy that does not destroy the quality of life.