

Maine Beaches Conference 12 July 2013 Concurrent Session Notes: Promoting Tourism

Carolanne Oulette

The Maine Office of Tourism is a state agency with a staff of six. Tourism is a big industry in the state, 28% of over night visitors go to the beach. Our mission is to become the premier four-season destination in New England. We look at trends statewide and in eight regions.

The beaches see a greater proportion of visitors from Massachusetts and Quebec. Lots of people come year after year. Visitors are looking to learn about the PLACE they are visiting. Target by special interest: grab people by their passions. "If you haven't been to Maine you're not complete."

Creative Campaign: The real thing. Real people. Giving real advice. Video narrated by local radio personality. Neat and clean website.

Types of tourism

Sustainable tourism

Geotourism

Ecotourism

Cultural heritage tourism*****

Nature-Based Tourism *****

Voluntourism

Responsible Tourism

Connection to community

Local products

Historic preservation

Sustainable

Combination of the two: for example, Scenic Byways and the Main Street communities map onto each other. Maine Birding Trail: Best practices for other tourism publications. It's on its fourth printing. MOT helps organizations that have lots of common ground but limited funds to work together on development of partnerships. Examples of great collaborative guides: public access guide, hunting map, trail maps (e.g., Downeast Fisheries Trail).

Q. Do you collect data and report on the "shoulder season" of tourism? Yes. Summer is still highest. Fall is second. Winter is tricky because of inconsistent snow. Spring is still the lowest.

Keith Fletcher

Maine Coast Heritage Trust: Statewide land trust with focus on coast. Supports 93 land trusts. and helps host an annual Land Conservation Conference. Land Conservation is the act of transferring land or an interest in the land (easement) to a legal entity whose purpose is protection of the land.

Map of conservation in Maine: 17.1% A lot in Northern Maine, not as much along Southern Coast.

How do land conservation and tourism work together?

1. providing access to the beaches
2. by keeping the water clean: strongest proxy for water quality is % impervious cover in watershed, direct impact on tourism (beach closings).
3. gateway to Maine's Outside: working with TNC, and other partners to publish a guide to lands that can handle an increase in visitors.

Land trusts provide services that help tourism.

How to help:

1. Support Land for Maine's Future program.
2. Become member/help urge others to become members.
3. Financial support from business.
4. Support local bond and land acquisition initiatives
 - a. This is the norm in other places in the country, needs to become the norm here
 - b. If the town supports this, it inspires \$\$ from other places.

Roxanne Eflin

Place-based development, Main Street communities, and historic places.

Green Downtowns: since Maine is so focused on environment, use this energy to increase awareness in the towns and visitors.

Approach:

- Organization: everyone involved.
- Promotion: building the buzz.
- Design: what does it look like, what does it feel like?
- Long view: planning! Get everyone to the table.

MDC tracks reinvestment: for every \$1 of local money, \$25 from state and feds.

Tourism supports 1 out of every 8 jobs.

Cultural heritage tourism is growing: stay longer, come during shoulder season.

Challenges of Cultural Tourism: Need to offer more than just Main Street, dealing with "local secrets." Example of Saco and Biddeford. One shared chamber of commerce re-branded the town, reinvented themselves, in part by putting aside the historical factory owner vs. factory worker divide.

Culinary Tourism and local foods a huge draw for southern Maine.

Reuse historic buildings. They're not making them like they used to!
Create a quality of life, building community pride.

Q: How can we get everyone together? Maine is a “big small town.” There is collaboration between different groups bringing in funding in the form of grants. We’re the example for the rest of the country. We’re getting federal grants because everyone is invested in the project.