

JUNE 2008



LAKE DIEFENBAKER TOURISM
DESTINATION AREA PLAN



Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan

“A tourism destination area is a geographic area in which attractions, businesses, residents and regulatory authorities work together to deliver distinctive, high quality services and experiences, capable of attracting and holding significant numbers of visitors, from both within and outside the province.”

Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan

Letter of Transmittal

July 16, 2008

Dr. Lynda Haverstock,
President and Chief Executive Officer,
Tourism Saskatchewan,
1922 Park Street,
Regina, Saskatchewan

Dear Dr. Haverstock:

We are pleased to submit the Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan. The plan identifies tourism development issues and opportunities, and recommends specific strategies and actions to deal with them.

The Tourism Planning Committee included a number of local stakeholders and representatives of tourism associations. In addition, public meetings held at Riverhurst, Elbow, Davidson, Kyle, Demaine, Outlook, and the Whitecap Dakota First Nation gave residents an opportunity to provide input in developing the plan.

We would appreciate you forwarding copies of the plan to the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture, and Sport, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. The plan includes recommendations that pertain to these Ministries.

We appreciate the assistance provided by Tourism Saskatchewan throughout the planning process, and we look forward to implementation of the plan.

Sincerely,

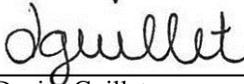
The Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Planning Committee

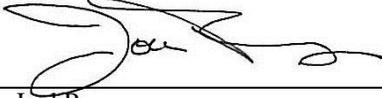
PLANNING COMMITTEE


Jim Tucker
General Manager - Mid Sask CFDC/ER


Russ McPherson
Project Manager – WaterWolf


M.E. Whittles
Vice-Chairperson – WaterWolf


Denise Guillet
Chairperson – Lake Diefenbaker Tourism


Joel Perry
Vice-Chairperson – Lake Diefenbaker Tourism


Fred Baran
Councillor – RM of Dundurn #314

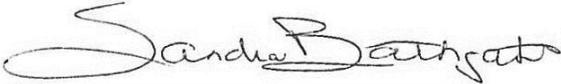

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Councillor – RM of Victory #226

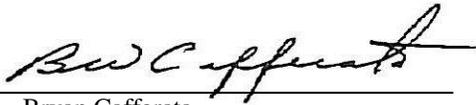

Ron Bessey
Mayor – Village of Bladworth

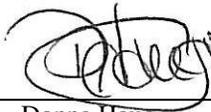

Ross Derald
Councillor – Town of Outlook


Joe Jozsa
Councillor – Resort Village of Mistusinne


Al Klassen
Mayor – Town of Central Butte


Sandra Bathgate
Town of Central Butte


Bryan Cafferata
Elbow Agencies Ltd.


Donna Haug
Town of Davidson

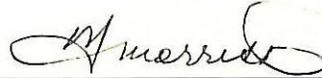

Tim Ouellette
Tourism Saskatchewan


Ian McGilp
Tourism Saskatchewan

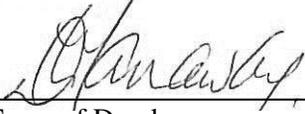
**ENDORSEMENT OF THE
LAKE DIEFENBAKER TOURISM DESTINATION AREA PLAN**



Town of Central Butte



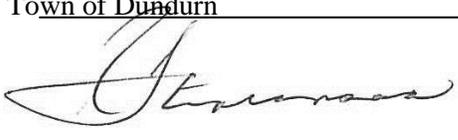
Town of Davidson



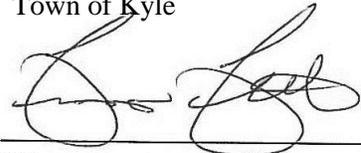
Town of Dundurn



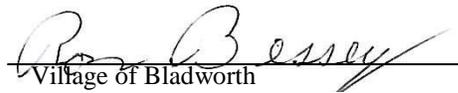
Town of Kyle



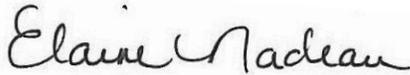
Town of Outlook



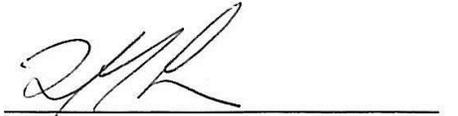
Village of Beechy



Village of Bladworth



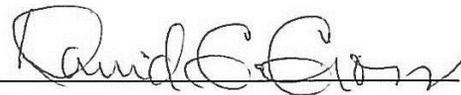
Village of Broderick



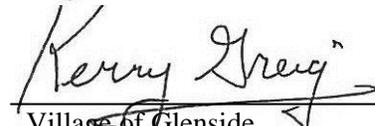
Village of Conquest



Village of Dinsmore



Village of Elbow



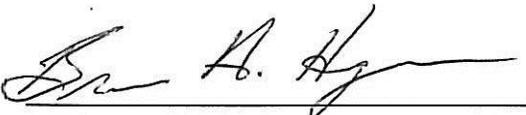
Village of Glenside



Village of Hawarden



Village of Kenaston



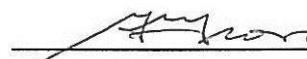
Village of Loreburn



Village of Lucky Lake



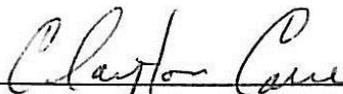
Village of Macrorie



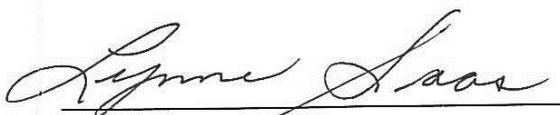
Village of Riverhurst



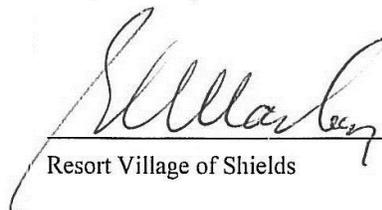
Village of Strongfield



Village of Tugaska

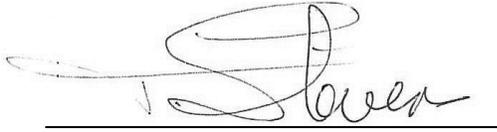


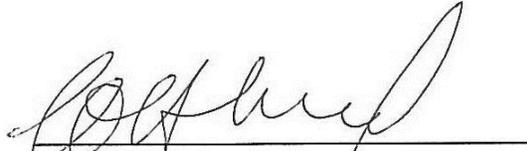
Resort Village of Mistusinne

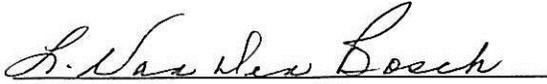


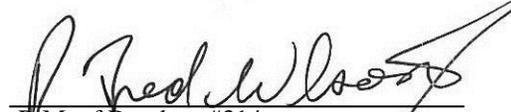
Resort Village of Shields

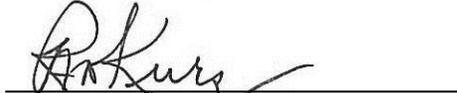
Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan

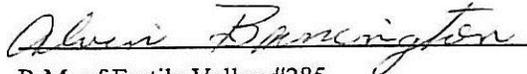

Resort Village of Thode


R.M. of Canaan #225

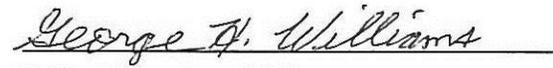

R.M. of Coteau #255


R.M. of Dundurn #314


R.M. of Enfield #194


R.M. of Fertile Valley #285


R.M. of Huron #223


R.M. of Lacadena #228


R.M. of Loreburn #254


R.M. of Maple Bush #224

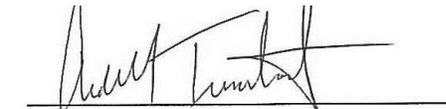

R.M. of McCraney #282

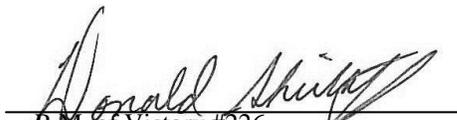

R.M. of Montrose #315


R.M. of Morse #165


R.M. of Rosedale #283

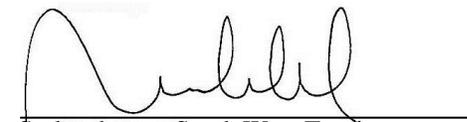

R.M. of Rudy #284


R.M. of Saskatchewan Landing #167


R.M. of Victory #226


R.M. of Willner #253


Saskatchewan West Central Tourism


Saskatchewan South West Tourism

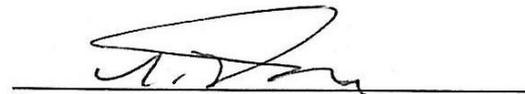

Whitecap Dakota First Nation

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<i>(The following Appendices will be available online at www.midsask.ca and by request to the Mid Sask CFDC/ER office (1-888-929-9990))</i>	
I – Tourism Markets	
II – Average Daily Traffic Volumes	
III – Tourism Product Inventory	
IV – Summaries of Public Meetings and Consultations	
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Abbreviations:

DAP – Destination Area Plan; **LUP** – Land Use Plan; **Mid Sask CFDC/ER** – Mid Sask Community Futures Development Corporation/Enterprise Region; **RDA** – Reservoir Development Area; **RPA** – Regional Park Authority; **SE** – Ministry of Saskatchewan Environment; **SHI** – Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure; **STEC** – Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council; **TPCS** – Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture, and Sport; **TS** – Tourism Saskatchewan; **VFR** – Visiting Friends and Relatives; **WDFN** – Whitecap Dakota First Nations; **WW** – WaterWolf Economic Developments Inc.



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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND

Introduction

The Lake Diefenbaker Tourism destination area covers about 17,400 square kilometres in the heart of South-Central Saskatchewan. The area is known for outstanding fishing, golfing, water-based recreation, hunting, camping, and casino gaming experiences. Four of Saskatchewan's cities are within a 70 to 200 km drive from Lake Diefenbaker itself, and represent major tourism markets. Alberta and the United States are also important markets with significant growth potential.

Major industries within this area are grain, oilseed, livestock and vegetable production, tourism and recreation, aquaculture, hydro-electric power generation, and some mineral exploration and development. The area's population of about 16,000 is widespread among 17 rural municipalities, 26 towns, villages, and resort communities, and the Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

Tourism in particular has been experiencing substantial growth. In 2004, the award-winning Dakota Dunes Golf Course opened. In 2007, a major re-construction of highway 219 from Saskatoon to Highway 15 commenced, and construction of the province's largest casino was completed at the Whitecap Dakota First Nation. Visitation to the area's provincial parks and recreation sites has been steadily increasing and demand for recreational properties is likely at an all time high. During the summer of 2007, a world record Rainbow Trout was landed at Lake Diefenbaker, catching the attention of anglers from all over North America.

In response to these and other developments, and the new demands accompanying increased tourism, it was recognized that an area-wide tourism plan should be prepared. Tourism Saskatchewan agreed to make the Lake Diefenbaker area a priority pilot project for Destination Area Planning.

Preparation of the Lake Diefenbaker Destination Area Plan has been facilitated and supported by the Mid Sask CFDC/ER and its staff. The Plan has been endorsed by rural and urban municipal councils throughout the area, Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Inc., the Whitecap Trail Corridor, and by the West Central and South West Tourism Region Associations that cover this part of the province.

The plan will be provided to all affected Government Ministries to assist them in prioritizing the implementation of the portions of the plan for which they are responsible in accordance with their legislated mandates. These include the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture, and Sport, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.



CHAPTER TWO: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

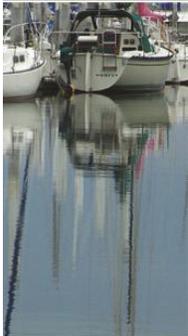
Goal of the Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan (DAP)

The Lake Diefenbaker Tourism DAP's goal is to identify tourism development issues and opportunities, and to recommend specific strategies and actions to deal with them. It is designed to integrate the needs of the tourism industry with those of other industries in the area, with a view to ensuring ecological, economic, social, and cultural benefits for present and future generations.

Objectives of the Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan

The objectives are:

- To improve the quality of tourism products that attracts visitors to the area.
- To support business retention, expansion, and development.
- To recommend specific strategies and actions to develop the area as a more competitive, investment ready, and marketable tourism destination.
- To recommend specific strategies and actions to overcome barriers to development and population growth.
- To provide a plan implementation strategy.



CHAPTER THREE: TOURISM STRATEGIES

This chapter contains strategies to address the various issues identified during the planning process.

Each strategy explains the issue, provides a brief background, and recommends appropriate action steps to follow.

The organizations, departments, and agencies responsible for initiating each action are identified. In most cases, other stakeholders will be involved in the process as well, as solutions are found and issues resolved.

Actions have been given a priority ranking of 1, 2, or 3. All actions are important, but this ranking will be used to decide which actions should be done first, or to help make choices among actions when financial and human resources are limited. Priority 1 items are essential to implement the plan and, in some cases, must be done first in order to enable other actions. Priority 2 items are important, but are not critical to immediate plan implementation. Priority 3 items are desirable, but need not be done immediately, or may need other actions done first.

Tourism Infrastructure

Tourism infrastructure includes the physical assets such as roads, bridges and ferries, airports and landing strips, parking areas, wastewater and garbage disposal facilities, water and power services, boat launches and harbours, which enable visitors to access an area and stay there. It also includes up-to-date land use plans that provide for the zoning of recreational areas and the planning of subdivisions of land available for cottage, residential, and business development. It can also include the managed aesthetic qualities of the natural environment, including air and water quality.

Infrastructure Issue 1: Highway Conditions

Why this is an issue:

Highway conditions directly influence travel decisions made by everyone, including visitors. In recent years, residents and visitors have experienced highway conditions all around the lake that were unpleasant at best and sometimes dangerous. For example, Highway 219 deteriorated to such an extent that a complete reconstruction from Saskatoon to Highway 15 was required in 2007.

Background:

Average Daily Traffic Volumes for highways in the proposed area are provided in detail in the Appendices accompanying this plan.

The portion of Highway 219 completed to date has reportedly become the most travelled two-lane highway in the province, due to the Dakota Dunes Casino and Golf Course. This highway is also the direct route into the Lake Diefenbaker destination area from the north.

The commitment to rebuild Highway 219, however, needs to be extended from Highway 15 all the way to Danielson Provincial Park (16 miles south) in order to fully access the Saskatoon area and north-central Albertan markets. This will also facilitate the development and/or expansion of seasonal and permanent residential developments at locations such as the Garth Subdivision, Elbow, Hitchcock Bay, Coteau Beach, and elsewhere. Such developments will significantly increase visits to Saskatchewan by the visiting friends and relatives (VFR) market.



Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan

Other highways that require immediate attention include Highway 45 from Delisle to the Riverhurst Ferry, # 44 from Davidson to Danielson Provincial Park, and portions of numbers 19, 373, 367 and 42 as listed below.

The completion of a primary haul road system will take heavy trucks off these highways and route them on easier to maintain major grid roads. This will extend the lifespan of the highways in this area, as well as making them safer for tourists and residents alike.

Recommendations dealing with highway infrastructure have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To improve the quality of highways used by key tourism markets, including Albertans, residents of the United States, and the recreational vehicle market.
- To ensure highways that serve established and emerging attractions and destinations meet the needs of critical tourist segments.
- To ensure highway corridors that serve important market segments are maintained at a high standard.

Recommendations:

Action: Highway Conditions	Implementing Agency	Priority
Improve/rebuild Highway 219 from Saskatoon beyond Highway 15 all the way to Danielson Provincial Park	Ministry of Saskatchewan Highways & Infrastructure (SHI)	1
Improve Highway 45 from Delisle to the Riverhurst Ferry Upgrade from thin membrane and gravel	SHI	1
Improve Highway 44 from Danielson Provincial Park to Davidson Upgrade from thin membrane	SHI	1
Upgrade highway 19 from Elbow to Bridgeford, Highway 367 to Eyebrow, and Highway 42 from Tuxford to Riverhurst	SHI	1
Improve Highway 19 from Highway 15 to Elbow, and Central Butte to Chaplin	SHI	2
Complete a Primary Haul Road System (which will take heavy truck traffic off these highways)	Municipalities	1

Infrastructure Issue 2: Other Road Conditions

Why this is an issue:

The conditions of roads on the way to and within tourist destinations can encourage or discourage visitation and length of stay, and can therefore contribute favourably or unfavourably to the reputation and profile of the destination.

Background:

Most of the roads passing through and/or within Provincial Parks and recreation sites are the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture, and Sport, or the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure. These will be dealt with in the strategies dealing with “Attractions”.

Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan

In other locations, roads are the responsibility of municipal governments and/or Regional Park Authorities. Some of these roads take people to places that access the lake or the river; others go to unique natural features, some of which are featured in promotional literature and displays (e.g. the Beechy Sand Castles and Sunken Hill); and some provide a direct route to the desired destination.

Some of these roads require gravelling, grading, and turn-around areas so vehicles are less likely to get stuck and/or cause damage to the road surface. Others require frequent dust retardant treatment, some so significant they should be paved.

Recommendations with respect to other road conditions have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To improve the quality of municipal roads used by key tourism markets including Albertans, residents of the United States, and the recreational vehicle market.
- To improve the quality of municipal roads that serve established and emerging attractions and destinations.
- To access new government programs that support municipal roads.

Recommendations:

(Some of these action steps may be repeated elsewhere in the Plan.)

Action: Other Road Conditions	Implementing Agency	Priority
Pave the 2-mile road from the Marina and the paved road connecting Palliser Regional Park and highway #42	To be determined	1
Review all lake and river access roads and trails to determine upgrading requirements	Municipalities	1
Evaluate the feasibility of paving/improving Grid # 644 from Morse to Palliser Regional Park	Municipalities	3
Review the roads accessing unique natural features (e.g. Sand Castles – policy, access, and action)	Municipalities	2
Complete the access road from Highway 11 to Highway 219 and Whitecap Dakota First Nation	R.M. of Dundurn, Department of National Defence	1
Secure funds to upgrade the roads identified in the above reviews, on a priority basis	Municipalities, WaterWolf Economic Developments Inc. (WW)	2

Infrastructure Issue 3: Municipal Planning

Why this is an issue:

Tourism businesses and real estate developments are required to follow municipal land use policies or zoning bylaws. When these are not in place, or when their provisions vary from place to place, projects are much more difficult to implement. The Lake Diefenbaker destination area contains 17 rural municipalities, 26 towns, villages, and resort communities, and the Whitecap Dakota First Nation (WDFN).



Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan

Background:

Municipalities have the authority to adopt statutory plans consisting of an Official Community Plan and a zoning bylaw controlling development. Zoning bylaws are detailed municipal land use controls, which specify land use zones or zoning districts, permitted and discretionary uses, and regulations and development standards. Subdivision of land involves the creation of legal parcels of land, and is one of the more common procedures within the development process where new titles are to be created.

The *Tourism Business Development and Financing Guide*, produced by Tourism Saskatchewan in 2006, is a practical guide to business and real estate developers (and municipalities) as they deal with the following:

- municipal planning considerations;
- sub-division and servicing considerations;
- environmental and resource considerations;
- public health, servicing, and liquor licensing;
- access; and,
- special cases (Crown Land, Reservoir Development Areas, and Provincial Parks).

Recommendations with respect to municipal planning have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To ensure an effort is made to bring uniformity to municipal zoning in the Lake Diefenbaker area so the development process from one municipality to the next will be easier to understand and implement.
- To ensure the process of planning and development, with respect to new subdivisions, is facilitated in an orderly, helpful, and timely manner by all regulatory authorities having jurisdiction in that regard, while still recognizing that the proponents of such developments have similar responsibilities for completeness and accuracy in the process.
- To ensure zoning bylaws are enacted to make certain that tourism and recreation developments and intensive livestock operations do not conflict with each other (e.g. setbacks).
- To ensure the recommendations of the Lake Diefenbaker Tourism DAP are incorporated as appropriate, within the WaterWolf Land Use Plan.

Recommendations:

Action: Municipal Planning	Implementing Agency	Priority
Ensure that tourism concerns are addressed in the Land Use Plan now underway	Tourism Sask (TS), WW	1
Enact municipal land use policies and bylaws that support tourism, recreation, and sub-division development (including crown land)	Municipalities, WW, Municipal Affairs, Ministry of Saskatchewan Environment (SE)	1
Promote the extension of the Land Use Planning area to include other municipalities along the Lake	Municipalities, WW, TS	1
Support the formation of a Municipal Planning Commission in waterfront rural municipalities	Municipalities, WW, Municipal Affairs, TS	1
Provide potential developers with the <u>Tourism Business Development and Financing Guide</u> at the beginning of the development process	Mid Sask CFDC/ER, TS	1

Infrastructure Issue 4: Municipal Servicing

Why this is an issue:

The process of building roads and providing or extending sewer, water, natural gas, and electricity to new cottage, residential and commercial resort subdivisions is expensive and time consuming.

Background:

A servicing agreement is required prior to subdivision approval.

Due to its financial implications, negotiation of the servicing agreement with the local municipality is one of the most important steps in the development process. The provision of dedicated lands, which includes municipal reserve, environmental reserve buffer strips and walkways, is also required. Development standards must be followed, and the developer will be financially responsible for maintaining all services before municipal takeover.

Recommendations with respect to municipal servicing have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To ensuring municipalities and developers are better prepared for the time and financial commitment required to advance desirable projects in an orderly manner, particularly in the Reservoir Development Area (RDA).
- To ensure prospective developers have the opportunity to obtain assistance in learning about and following the regulatory processes required in subdivision approval and municipal servicing.

Recommendations:

Action: Municipal Servicing	Implementing Agency	Priority
Encourage municipalities to use all the advisory services and resources available from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs	WW	1
Encourage municipalities to share experiences and create a Municipal Planning Commission	WW	1
Provide potential developers with the <i>Tourism Business Development & Financing Guide</i> at the beginning of the development process	WW, Mid Sask CFDC/ER, TS	1

Infrastructure Issue 5: Forestation

Why this is an issue:

Trees often improve the aesthetic quality of tourism destinations, thereby improving their travel generating capability.

Background:

This is not seen as a critical issue, but instead represents a long-term opportunity to improve the travel generating capability of the Lake Diefenbaker area.

Prior to construction of the Gardiner Dam, the entire river valley supported a wide variety of tree species. Recognizing that these would be lost when the dam was completed, the original master plan for Lake Diefenbaker called for the planting of 50 million trees, at a rate of 1 million trees per year for



Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan

50 years. This program ended after only a few years when it proved impractical, and priorities changed.

Tree planting has been somewhat successful in Provincial Parks, and in several other locations. Some of the original Cottonwoods still exist at Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park. A list of tree species which can survive in the soils around the Lake has been obtained, and will be tried at Mistusinne in 2008. Also, the Village of Elbow has plans to plant 1,000 trees in Elbow in 2008.

Recommendations with respect to forestation have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To ensure shade tree planting is an allowed activity in the RDA.
- To ensure trees can be planted now at locations such as coulees that may be suitable for future cottage, residential, or commercial resort development (such as Books Coulee, Belhumeur Bay, Enfield Bay, etc.).
- To ensure a list of tree species that can survive in the area is available for residents, communities, and Regional and Provincial Parks

Recommendations:

Action: Forestation	Implementing Agency	Priority
Include tree planting as an allowable activity in the Land Use Plan (LUP)	LUP Committee	1
Distribute a summary of "A Report on the Afforested Areas and Grasslands of the Resort Village of Mistusinne" as a guide for tree projects	WW	3
Identify suitable locations (coulees, etc.) for future development	TS, SE, WW	3
Obtain government approval for tree planting projects	Municipalities	3
Promote service club projects, Trans-Canada Trail landscaping, community beautification, etc.	Municipalities, Non-Profit Groups	3

Infrastructure Issue 6: River and Lake Access

Why this is an issue:

Lake Diefenbaker and the South Saskatchewan River Valley are major destinations for visitors to the area, but the ability to actually gain access to these resources is limited.

Background:

Lake Diefenbaker is one of the top ten sailing lakes in North America. There are three full-serviced marinas located along the lake: Elbow Harbour, Palliser Regional Park, and Saskatchewan Landing. Boat launches are available at Prairie Lake, Cabri, and Herbert Ferry Regional Parks; and at Douglas, Danielson, and Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Parks; also at Elbow Harbour and Hitchcock Bay.

Fuel can be purchased at each of the three marinas, which is basically one fuel source per 266 km of shoreline. Altogether, there are perhaps twelve locations at which to launch boats, which is an average of one launch per 67km of shoreline. (This may facilitate Fisheries Act enforcement, however.)

Given the distances involved and the pressure to expand the marinas at Saskatchewan Landing and Elbow Harbour (as recommended in this plan), area residents generally agree that the Lake could likely support several more marinas and boat launches. The undeveloped Riverhurst Ferry Provincial

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Recreation Site, for instance, has been mentioned as an opportunity to provide additional access on the west side of the lake.

Unexpected water releases from the Gardiner Dam can have a significant effect on the quality of recreational experiences, and visitors need to be aware that the Watershed Authority’s web site can warn them of these events.

Recommendations with respect to lake and river valley access have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To improve the accessibility of the lake and river valley for tourism markets.
- To promote the use of the Watershed Authority web site regarding releases of water from the Gardiner Dam.
- To identify opportunities for future marina development.
- To encourage waterfront municipalities to identify opportunities for new boat launch locations.

Recommendations:

Action: River and Lake Access	Implementing Agency	Priority
Publish a map of existing river access points, and refer people to the Eco-Canoe Tour Guide	LDT	1
Include the Watershed Authority web site in all tourism promotional material (including web sites)	LDT	2
Review original plans for the reservoir to note the locations for future marina development	TS	2
Identify boat launch locations on the lake and in the river valley in all tourism literature	LDT	1
Construct a boat launch at the Riverhurst Ferry Recreation Site (west shore)	TPCS	1
Encourage the Planning Commission and water- front municipalities to consider boat launches	WW	2

Infrastructure Issue 7: Air and Water Quality

Why this is an issue:

Air and water quality have an impact on the experiences available at tourism destinations, and therefore affect a destination area’s travel generating capability.

Background:

Air quality in the destination area is not subject to constant industrial smoke discharge, or from odours from pulp and paper mills, oil refineries, etc. It is affected in some locations, however, by fumes and manure discharged by intensive livestock operations. This has been noticed at Mistusinne and at Douglas Provincial Park.

Water quality in Lake Diefenbaker has been highly regarded for decades, but regular monitoring by government agencies was discontinued in the early 1990’s. The principal users of the water body include several communities, cottagers, tourists, a fish farm, farmers for irrigation, ranchers whose cattle sometimes access the lake, and the Saskatchewan Power Corporation (SPC).

Communities can have an impact on water quality. For instance, one cell of the Village of Elbow lagoon, which was licensed by Saskatchewan Environment, discharges into the Lake every spring and fall. The Resort Village of Mistusinne will also be utilizing that lagoon in the future. There may be an



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emerging need for a shared/regional sewage disposal facility, as resort development expands on the east shore of Lake Diefenbaker.

Tourism has an impact as well. The major harbours at Elbow and Saskatchewan Landing do not have showers and washrooms. At Elbow Harbour, up to 150 vessels can be moored. It is possible for up to 400 people to stay overnight on the boats moored there. Minor fuel spills and bilge water discharge from boats and yachts traveling the lake are bound to happen now and then. The environmental impact of increased tourism has not been monitored.

Careful monitoring of the possible environmental impact of aquaculture has been underway for several years, and no discernable impact has been noted.

Irrigation can contribute to various farm inputs gradually leeching into the lake, other reservoirs, and the river valley over time.

During the last decade, the removal of cattle from lakes, reservoirs, and the river valley has gradually received more attention, and alternate watering sites on land are being used more often.

Climate can also have an impact. Lake Diefenbaker is a prairie lake, and in the fall of 2007, an algae bloom covered the beaches from Tufts Bay northwards for several miles, well into November. Conditions that promote algae growth may require further study.

Lake Diefenbaker is a reservoir, which is used for generating hydro-electric power and for distributing water south through the Qu'Appelle Dam and north through the Gardiner Dam. Its water level fluctuates in accordance with the day-to-day management objectives of the SPC and the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority. This fluctuation has caused a great deal of erosion over the years, but the environmental impact of this erosion has not been determined.

Excellent air and water quality is considered critical by the Tourism Planning Committee, and by many of the people who attended public meetings during this process.

Recommendations with respect to air and water quality have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To promote a return to extensive monitoring of water quality.
- To ensure municipal zoning of tourism and recreation developments and intensive livestock operations do not conflict with each other.
- To ensure that effluent is adequately treated and that lagoons in the area are in good operating condition.
- To ensure water and sewer services in new subdivisions are built to adequate standards to prevent ruptures and leakages into the water table and water bodies.
- To promote a long term strategy to ensure water quality is maintained at levels acceptable to our key tourism markets.

Recommendations:

Action: Air and Water Quality	Implementing Agency	Priority
Contact Saskatchewan Environment and arrange for a resumption of water quality monitoring	WW	1
Ensure that these recommendations are adopted by the Land Use Plan currently underway	WW, TS	1
Communicate the objectives listed above to all waterfront municipalities	WW	1 & 2

Recommend that the Go Green program be consulted during the review of any development proposals	WW, TS	3
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Tourism Attractions

Tourism attractions include parks and recreation sites, museums, galleries, powwows, a variety of cultural festivals and experiences, fishing derbies, agricultural exhibitions, craft fairs, fall suppers, and events reflecting our culture. Other attractions include paleontological, mineral spa, and casino gaming experiences. Some of our golf courses are known internationally. Events in nature, such as shorebird and waterfowl migrations and the northern lights, also act as attractions. There are three large Provincial Parks on Lake Diefenbaker (Danielson, Douglas, and Saskatchewan Landing), and the smaller Blackstrap Provincial Park is located on one of the reservoirs fed by Lake Diefenbaker.

Attractions Issue 1: Re-investment in Core Attractions

Why this is an issue:

Key ‘flagship’ tourism assets, otherwise known as core attractions, require on-going repair and maintenance, and periodic renewal. When they are neglected, it is more difficult or impossible to attract and hold visitors.

Background:

Core attractions are the features, facilities, and experiences that act as primary motivators for most travel to a destination (e.g. Dakota Dunes Casino, Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park). A core attraction can also result from the grouping of features, facilities, and experiences all relating to a specific theme (e.g. Saskatchewan’s Great Lake)

It makes sense to invest in core attractions, since they are the major tourism travel generators. From the public sector perspective, when visitation increases, fuel tax and other taxation revenues also increase. From the private sector perspective, increased visitation provides an opportunity to increase sales and improve the prospects of solvent and profitable business operations. These encourage business retention and expansion, thus retaining services required by area residents all year round.

A report entitled “The Economic and Social Impact of Saskatchewan’s Provincial Parks” was prepared in 2004 the Ministry of Saskatchewan Environment. The report shows that in 2003, the economic impacts generated by Lake Diefenbaker’s Provincial Parks and Recreation Sites were \$8,609,676 in direct expenditures. Tourist expenditures accounted for \$7,209,628 of this figure. Goods and services, labour expenditures, and infrastructure expenditures accounted for the remaining \$1,400,048.

Direct employment impact was reported to be \$1,995,921, and indirect employment impact was \$670,714, for a total employment impact of \$2,666,635. These numbers generated a direct employment impact of 89.2 jobs and an indirect employment impact of 26.5 jobs, for a total employment impact of 115.7 jobs.

The annual report showing provincial parks visitation statistics also compares the most recent year’s results (2006) with the 5-year average for each park. The comparisons show that 2006 results were 9.1% above the 5-year average at Douglas Provincial Park, 19.4% above the 5-year average at Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park, and 37.9% above the 5-year average at Danielson Provincial Park. Area residents strongly believe the economic impact of these parks will increase substantially if further development in response to market demand is allowed to take place.



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A significant list of opportunities to upgrade, renew, and otherwise enhance the quality of Lake Diefenbaker's Provincial Parks was compiled during the course of this planning process. Unfortunately, information could not be provided by the Parks Services Branch of the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture, and Sport, because plans for these parks are confidential; however, the guidance of area residents and park users was generously provided through numerous consultations and six public meetings held in 2008.

The list of these opportunities includes roads located within Provincial Parks and Recreation Sites. A number of these roads require improvements. These roads are the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture, and Sport. Numbered highways that pass through these parks are the responsibility of the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure.

For ease of presentation, each of the core attractions is dealt with specifically in the following sets of recommendations.

Elbow Harbour Provincial Recreation Site

This location, adjacent to the Village of Elbow is located at the "T" intersection of the lake. Vessels can sail in three directions – southwest, southeast, and northwest, so favourable wind conditions are almost always available. The marina has 150 slips (places for a ship to dock), and about 100 of the vessels moored there can sleep four occupants. There is a challenging 18-hole grass greens golf course with breathtaking views of the lake from many of the tee-boxes, fairways, and greens; however, wave erosion along the harbour entrance and the shoreline of the lake at this recreation site has become a serious concern, particularly over the past four years.

Recommendations with respect to Elbow Harbour have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To improve the overall quality of attractions that serve key tourism markets.
- To improve the physical quality of the harbour, which serves key tourism markets, so that it is adequately protected and not allowed to deteriorate further.
- To mitigate/protect against shoreline erosion.
- To monitor lake water quality (Mid Sask CFDC/ER has initiated a project to measure water quality starting in 2008).
- To increase visitor expenditures.
- To improve visitor access.
- To ensure ongoing funding is provided for the ongoing management, operation, and renewal of the Elbow Harbour Provincial Recreation Site.



Recommendations:

Action: Elbow Harbour Provincial Recreation Site	Implementing Agency	Priority
Armour the harbour entrance – accessing the affected areas either in winter by ice road, or in shoulder season by barge or road	TPCS	1
Stabilize the shoreline north of the harbour along the golf course	TPCS	1
Stabilize and upgrade the road through the golf course to the marina (resolve the water problem)	TPCS	1
Upgrade and pave the roads and parking areas within the golf course and marina areas of the recreation site (improve visitor access)	TPCS	1
Provide other tourism amenities required to serve the needs of key tourism markets (e.g. showers and washrooms are required – up to 150 vessels are moored in the harbour, most of which are capable of sleeping 4 people)	TPCS	1
Develop a program to monitor water quality within the marina, determine environmental impacts of marina operations, and develop/implement any mitigation required	SE	1
Ensure that adequate funding is in place for the management of Elbow Harbour Recreation Site	TPCS	2
Ensure that opportunities to expand the number of mooring slips as proposed in previous plans are considered again (increase visitor access)	Lessor & Lessee	2

Danielson Provincial Park

Danielson Provincial Park is located on 2,900 hectares beside the actual Gardiner Dam power generating station, and has locations on both the east and west sides of the lake. The west side has a very popular boat launch and an attractive Visitor and Interpretive Centre. The east side contains a large camping area, and perhaps the largest boat launch on the lake. The park, which is adjacent to major electrical power, was man-made as a result of the filling of the dam, and is equipped with a two cell lagoon and a water treatment plant. These critical infrastructure resources make Danielson Provincial Park an opportune location for further development.

Recommendations with respect to Danielson Provincial Park have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To improve the overall quality of attractions that serve key tourism markets.
- To increase visitor accessibility.
- To increase visitor expenditures.
- To enable business development to take place.
- To approve the development of fixed roof permanent residential accommodation in subdivisions zoned for that purpose.
- To ensure adequate funding is in place for ongoing management, operation and regularly scheduled renewal of Danielson Provincial Park and the Coldwell Recreation Site (which does not appear on highway maps).



Recommendations:

Action: Danielson Provincial Park	Implementing Agency	Priority
Increase the capacity to attract and hold larger numbers of campers by constructing additional loops of electrified sites and providing 50 amp power, internet access, etc.	TPCS	1
Provide additional showers and washrooms as required (e.g. when additional campsites are constructed, more washrooms and showers may be required)	TPCS	1
Develop a swimming beach at the east side location for campers and visitors to swim in the lake (part of the original plans from the 1960's)	TPCS	1
Maintain and improve roads in the park	TPCS	1
Consider designating a 'just for tenting' park area (maybe using the Coldwell Recreation Site)	TPCS	2
In conjunction with Enterprise Saskatchewan, initiate Proposal Calls for a new seasonal store and/or gas bar operations at the east side location	TPCS	2
Expand seasonal camping areas and develop a more equitable cost recovery formula	TPCS	2
Zone appropriate areas of the park or adjacent Crown Land to allow for the construction of a high-end residential commuter development, as is the case at other man-made parks in the system	TPCS	1 & 2
Evaluate market demand for additional amenities, such as a marina	TPCS	3
Ensure adequate budgets are in place for the management and operation of Danielson Provincial Park	TPCS	1

Douglas Provincial Park

Douglas Provincial Park is a natural environment park located on the Gordon McKenzie (south-easterly) Arm of the Lake. It is situated in a major complex of generally stabilized sand dunes which are rich in species diversity and also features the Sand Dunes Interpretive Centre. It covers 6,000 hectares and its beaches are of outstanding quality.

Recommendations with respect to Douglas Provincial Park have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To improve the overall quality of attractions serving key tourism markets.
- To increase visitor accessibility.
- To potentially expand the Park.
- To ensure adequate funding is in place for ongoing management, operation, and periodic renewal of Douglas Provincial Park.

Recommendations:

Action: Douglas Provincial Park	Implementing Agency	Priority
Increase campground capacity, equip sites with 50-amp power capacity, and enlarge some new sites to accommodate larger camping units	TPCS	2

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Evaluate options to further expand the Park Boundary to include more of the west shore of the Gordon McKenzie Arm – a high Potential Recreation Area identified in the Qu’Appelle Valley Parkway implementation plan	SE, TPCS	(Expanded in 1992) 3
Ensure adequate budgets are in place for management and operation of Douglas Provincial Park	SE, TPCS	1

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park covers 5,534 hectares located in four quadrants divided by the South Saskatchewan River, and by Highway 4. This major north-south travel corridor provides easy access from the United States and South Alberta through Swift Current. This proximity to major tourism markets has helped to create exceptional demand for the experiences available at Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park.

Over the years, considerable development has taken place in the north-east quadrant, including major campgrounds, a 110-slip marina, a major housing development, and most recently, an 18-hole grass greens golf course. The park possesses outstanding tourism resources which are carefully protected under the park’s Management Plan. Opportunities to pursue further sustainable and well-managed development projects are substantial.



Recommendations with respect to Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To improving the overall quality of attractions which serve key tourism markets.
- To increase visitor accessibility.
- To increase visitor expenditures.
- To enable additional business development to take place.
- To enable and/or partner with private sector developers to provide infrastructure where required for development.
- To ensure ongoing funding for the management, operation, and periodically scheduled renewal are in place at Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park.

Recommendations:

Action: Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park	Implementing Agency	Priority
Implement plans to increase the number of slips in the Marina (50 new slips warranted)	TPCS	1



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	Implement campground expansion (200 site expansion with 50 amp power)	TPCS	1
	Design and construct showers and washrooms for expanded marina and campgrounds	TPCS	1
	Pave the parking areas near the marina and golf course, and continue the process of paving the roads in the campground	TPCS	1
	Expand landscaping and tree planting adjacent to golf course and marina (irrigation, etc.)	TPCS	1
	Improve water, sewer, and power infrastructure to serve and facilitate new investments (e.g. expanded volume of potable water, increased sewage capacity, provision of 3 phase power, extension of year-round water service to the golf course, will all be required to service proposed expansions)	TPCS	1
	Establish feasible guidelines for partnering with private sector developers to provide new infrastructure for major development projects	TPCS	2 & 3
	In co-operation with Enterprise Saskatchewan, develop proposal calls to solicit new private sector investment initiatives for the development of economically viable commercial services (e.g. fixed roof accommodation capable of serving 2 motor coaches, including meeting, dining, and potentially condominiums and/or time share accommodation, a privately operated seasonal campground of potentially 100 sites, and other complimentary commercial ventures)	TPCS	2 & 3
	Consider expansion of the Park upstream to include natural areas and heritage resources (Historic Trails, etc.) to replace previously disturbed areas in which tourism development activities will continue to take place.	TPCS	2 & 3
	Complete the Red River Cart display with an interpretive plaque	TPCS	1
	Enable the development of another cottage lot subdivision by the private sector (potentially 200 sites could be planned for now in areas previously disturbed)	TPCS	2 & 3
	Ensure that ongoing funding to implement these recommendations over a 3 year period is in place	TPCS	1

Whitecap Dakota First Nation

Whitecap Dakota First Nation (WDFN) is the only First Nation located in the Lake Diefenbaker destination area. The First Nation has strong linkages and working relationships with communities and attractions throughout the area.

Tourism development at WDFN is guided by a Land Use Plan and a Master Plan for the development of the Dakota Dunes Destination Resort. A wide range of services and experiences that appeal to Saskatchewan's key tourism markets are provided. Tourism resources at WDFN include the following:

- Dakota Dunes Golf Course (Canada's Best New Course in 2005 and site of the Canadian Tour's Saskatchewan Open for 2008/2009/2010);
- Dakota Dunes Casino and Entertainment Centre;
- 175-room hotel to be connected to the Casino, (soon to be constructed);

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- a highly trained workforce with excellent hospitality industry skills;
- excellent quality sports grounds and Powwow areas;
- RV park and campgrounds currently under development;
- annual major events including Dakota Dunes Powwow and Whitecap Sports Days;
- several miles of shoreline on the east bank of the South Saskatchewan River, suitable for sustainable development and nature based tourism;
- co-operative marketing and promotional strategies, including memberships and participation with Lake Diefenbaker Tourism, West Central Tourism Region, Tourism Saskatoon and Tourism Saskatchewan.
- location on the Chief Whitecap Trail (to be designated), the northern gateway to Lake Diefenbaker (Highway 219), which is becoming one of the best and widely used highways in the province; and,
- unique natural landforms (Dundurn Dunes formation), and Heritage Resources (Chief Whitecap heritage).



Recommendations with respect to the Dakota Dunes Destination Resort have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To maintain and build upon the positive image established in visitor markets.
- To strengthen the linkage to the tourism resources and marketing partners in the Lake Diefenbaker destination area and in Saskatoon.
- To support improved access to the tourism resources at WDFN.
- To increase visitor expenditures and packaging opportunities.
- To manage growth within a labour market shortage.

Recommendations:

Action: Whitecap Dakota First Nation	Implementing Agency	Priority
Continue the forward progress in product development	Management Committee	Ongoing
Expand the participation in tourism marketing with Lake Diefenbaker Tourism and other partners	Management Committee	1



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Participate in the development of packaging and travel trade opportunities	Casino/Golf Course /Hotel Management	2
Support the completion of the access road from Highway 11 to Highway 219	Dundurn RM, Department of National Defence, SHI, Whitecap Executive Committee	1
Continue to support the designation of the Chief Whitecap Trail by SHI	Management Committee, TS	1
Support the reconstruction of Highway 219 from Highway 15 to Danielson Provincial Park	SHI, Whitecap Executive Committee	1
Develop strategies to address labour shortages	Casino/Hotel /Golf Course Management Teams	1

Attractions Issue 2: Re-investment in Regional Attractions

Regional attractions are the experiences, events, and amenities that draw visitors to a destination area by adding to and enhancing the overall experience of visiting the area (e.g. Palliser Regional Park and Golf Course). These attractions are usually distinguishable from core attractions by their smaller visitation numbers.

Why this is an issue

While regional attractions and services help to make a visitor's stay more enjoyable, they also require ongoing care and attention. Failure to maintain them can leave a poor impression, which can then adversely affect the entire area.

Background

Regional attractions are generally not funded by the provincial and/or federal government. To maintain solvent operations, they rely mainly upon local goodwill, service clubs, volunteers, financial and in-kind support from local governments, and visitor spending. That is why opportunities to attract and hold visitors, and capture their spending, are particularly important to rural communities and their attractions.

It is also generally the case that nice places to visit often become regarded as nice places to live, work, and invest. Construction of new seasonal and year-round accommodation (outside Provincial Parks) enlarges the municipal tax base, making more money available for maintenance and reinvestment in attractions and services.

Recommendations with respect to the following regional attractions are provided to help address opportunities and concerns that have been identified through consultation and six public meetings conducted during 2008.

SkyTrail

SkyTrail is the former Canadian Pacific Railway Bridge at Outlook. It is the longest pedestrian bridge in Canada (3,000 feet), and is part of the Trans Canada Trail. It is looked after by the Town of Outlook and a local committee. The bridge itself does not generate any direct revenue, but spending associated

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with people coming to walk across the bridge and marvel at the incredible view is noticeable in the business community. Periodic repairs and maintenance to the SkyTrail are required.



Recommendations with respect to SkyTrail have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To maintain and improve the quality of a unique travel generating attraction.
- To establish a contingency fund for future repairs and maintenance.
- To identify opportunities to increase visitor spending associated with visits to SkyTrail.

Recommendations:

Action: SkyTrail	Implementing Agency	Priority
Inspect both entrances after spring runoff, and determine what needs to be done in repairs to the bridge and when	Town of Outlook	1
Prepare a written plan to maintain the quality and reputation of this unique community-based tourism asset on an ongoing basis	Town of Outlook	1
Secure financing from all potential sources and programs (e.g. Community Initiatives Fund)	Town of Outlook	1
Conduct repairs	Town of Outlook	2
Develop a plan to raise funds and set aside a contingency fund for upgrading and maintenance	Town of Outlook	1
Ensure the Outlook community tourism plan identifies opportunities to increase visitor spending	Town of Outlook	1

Outlook and District Regional Park

This very attractive 100-acre park is located along the South Saskatchewan River Valley. It provides fully serviced camping, a swimming pool, other conveniences, and a challenging 9-hole grass greens golf course with a clubhouse, which serves meals. It is adjacent to sections of the Trans Canada Trail. Some enhancements have been suggested. It was the Regional “Park of the Year” for 2005.

Recommendations with respect to the Outlook and District Regional Park have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To improve the overall quality of attractions and services that serve key tourism markets.



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- To increase visitor spending in the community and district.
- To maintain financial solvency.
- To support the Heritage River designation initiative.

Recommendations:

Action: Outlook and District Regional Park	Implementing Agency	Priority
Upgrade the power capacity in the campground from 30 to 50-amps when financially feasible	Regional Park Authority (RPA)	1 & 2
Evaluate the cost of stabilizing the swimming pool, if necessary	RPA	Underway
Consider establishing a common area in which people could meet and socialize	RPA	2
Seek opportunities to access provincial funding support similar to the Urban Park Authorities along the Saskatchewan River system, and support the Heritage River designation initiative	Town of Outlook, WW, TS	1

Palliser Regional Park

This park is well known for its 9-hole grass green golf course, large marina, large campgrounds, water-based recreation, availability of chartered boat tours, large area of permanent and seasonal residences, meeting and fine dining facilities, and fixed roof rental accommodations. There is a museum to visit and shopping available in nearby Riverhurst. All services are available at Central Butte including accommodation, food/beverage, and gas services. Paved access into the Park from Highway 42 is in place, but paved access in to the marina is still required.

A number of points have been raised in the district with respect to the fluctuation of the lake level (it can wipe out beaches in the high tourist season), and erosion (the shoreline appears to be gradually moving further out into the RDA, so developers need to ensure new building sites are located on land that is not being undermined). Other concerns are the shortage of seasonal staff and park operating costs. The park is running at full capacity, and new development opportunities are being discussed.

Recommendations with respect to Palliser Regional Park have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To improve the overall quality of attractions that serve key tourism markets.
- To increase visitor expenditures.
- To improve visitor accessibility.
- To enable business and real estate development.
- To find a way for SPC, the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, the Palliser Regional Park Authority, and Lake Diefenbaker Tourism to communicate with respect to the timing and extent of water level build up in the reservoir – so that more people can gain an understanding and perhaps schedule their recreational (and agricultural) activities accordingly.

Recommendations:

Action: Palliser Regional Park	Implementing Agency	Priority
Pave the 2 miles of gravel road from the marina to the paved road connecting Palliser Regional Park and Highway 42 (there are jurisdictional as well as financial issues involved)	Partners to be determined	1

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Evaluate the feasibility of paving/improving Grid 644 from Morse to Palliser Regional Park	Municipalities	3
Secure possible funds to upgrade municipal roads on a priority basis	Municipalities	2
Promote the creation of new cottage/residential areas at various locations in the Park	Park Authority	2
Work with other stakeholders to communicate concerns regarding the impacts of reservoir management on shoreline erosion, recreation, and water quality	WW and partners	2

Blackstrap Provincial Park

This man-made 656-hectare Provincial Park is located on one of the reservoirs fed by Lake Diefenbaker, east of WDFN and the Town of Dundurn. It is on the periphery of the planning area, but can be considered an entry point, along with the communities further south, along Highway 11.

Development of this park has not been a priority over the years, and the opportunities it could provide for long-term residential/condominium development, integrated with its ski-hill, have not been accommodated within the budgetary and policy constraints of the Parks Services Branch of the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Surrounding municipalities, including the Rural Municipalities of Dundurn and Rudy, the resort villages of Thode and Shields, the Whitecap Dakota First Nation, and the Town of Dundurn, have proposed that the park be removed from the Provincial Park system, and turned over to a new Regional Park Authority. Given the large tax base and popular support evident within these municipalities, this body would possess the financial and managerial capability to facilitate the implementation of major development projects there.

This action would relieve TPCS of the responsibility of maintaining and reinvesting in this park's infrastructure. In addition, the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, which has jurisdiction over the RDA surrounding Blackstrap Lake, could be relieved of its responsibility there as well.

Transfer to Regional Park status would enable surrounding municipalities to allow major accommodation development to take place. These developments would be financed by private developers guided by the land use plan currently being prepared throughout the Lake Diefenbaker area, and by local zoning bylaws and servicing agreements.

Recommendations with respect to Blackstrap Provincial Park and surrounding area have been made to address the following objectives:

- To improve the overall quality of attractions serving tourism markets.
- To enable private sector investment in park (regional) infrastructure and fixed roof accommodation to take place.
- To substantially expand the municipal tax (revenue) base.
- To enable the public sector to divert financial and human resources to higher priority locations within the Provincial Parks system.
- To streamline development processes through the use of complimentary and standardized zoning and land use planning by participating municipalities.
- To increase the rural population base.



Recommendations:

Action: Blackstrap Provincial Park	Implementing Agency	Priority
Commence discussions re: Blackstrap Provincial Park moving to a new RPA	TPCS and Affected Municipalities	1
Negotiate RDA management requirements with the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority	Affected Municipalities	1
Establish the proposed Regional Park, and prepare a Master Plan to identify development areas	RPA	2
Identify and communicate municipal planning and servicing considerations to potential developers	Municipalities and RPA	2

Prairie Lake Regional Park

Prairie Lake Regional Park is located on the north shore of Lake Diefenbaker, 12 miles south of Beechy. Unique natural features located on private land further west include the Beechy Sand Castles and the Sunken Hill. Residents have commented on access road conditions to all of these locations, and on the lack of a fuel source for boats on Sundays. The desirability of expanding the park was also mentioned.

Recommendations with respect to Prairie Lake Regional Park briefly address the following objectives:

- To improve visitor accessibility.
- To encourage additional business services.
- To consider an expansion of the park area.

Recommendations:

Action: Prairie Lake Regional Park	Implementing Agency	Priority
Work with landowners, the Regional Park Board and Rural Municipalities, to improve access	WW and partners	1
Promote Beechy as a source of fuels, groceries, supplies, etc. to park visitors	Town of Beechy, LDT	1
Encourage businesses in Beechy to offer service on Sundays	Town of Beechy	2
Review opportunities to expand the park, based upon demand for additional seasonal sites	RPA	2

Other Parks:

Input from the following Regional Parks was not provided to the tourism committee:

Herbert Ferry Regional Park is located on the south shore of Lake Diefenbaker, 16 miles north of Herbert. There are unique paleontological features nearby.

Cabri Regional Park is located on the south shore of Lake Diefenbaker, 13 miles northeast of Cabri. It was named “2006 Park of the Year” by the Regional Parks Association.

Craik and District Regional Park is located just east of Craik, one of the area’s ‘eastern gateway’ communities on Highway 11.

Recommendations with respect to these three Regional Parks are not provided here; however, in the implementation of this plan, contact with their respective Boards should take place so that their tourism concerns and opportunities can be identified and considered.

Attractions Issue 3: Development of Cultural and Heritage Resources

Why this is an issue:

Cultural and heritage resources appeal to a wide range of tourism markets. Their quality, uniqueness, and vitality can be developed to attract visitors. It makes sense, therefore, to enhance their quality and recognize their uniqueness and vitality.

Background:

The planning area contains a wide range of cultural and heritage resources that reflect both the past and the future. Many are in remote locations, such as stately old churches and cemeteries, while others are part of the renewal and enrichment of communities like Tugaska and Elbow.

Enhancing the quality of these resources requires the commitment and creativity of specific individuals, volunteers, service clubs, congregations, and municipalities. It also requires planning and costs money.

For instance, family members are often encouraged when they come home to visit the graves of families and friends. It is important they find the cemeteries well cared for (e.g. Round Prairie).

Architecture such as the Saskatchewan Valley Church, the Spring Creek Church, the Craik Town Hall, and many of the former bank buildings, provide fine examples of past achievements.

Community statues such as those along Highway 11 and elsewhere, War Memorials, and museums throughout the entire area, interpret the past. Icons such as the grain elevators at Elbow and Kenaston portray the settlement period and the grain economy.

The uniqueness and vitality of artisans and musicians moving into communities add new cultural resources. Displays and applications of new technologies in other communities are developing a new culture of sustainable development.

Events such as rodeos and stampedes, sports days, powwows, dinner theatres, drama productions, fall suppers and music festivals all reflect local culture and attract visitors. Other organized events such as golf tournaments, bonspiels, and fish derbies may not have a cultural focus but they do attract visitors who may return to experience heritage and cultural activities.



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Other heritage resources are natural, such as the Luck Lake Heritage Marsh and, on a larger scale, the South Saskatchewan River itself. Discussions are underway with a view to designating the river as one of Canada’s Heritage Rivers. A presentation made by WaterWolf Economic Developments Inc. at the 2008 Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities Conference in that regard was favourably received. In addition to recognizing the role that the South Saskatchewan River has played in the development of the west, its designation will provide significant marketing opportunities.

Recommendations with respect to development of cultural and heritage resources have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To improve the overall quality of cultural and heritage attractions that appeal to tourism markets.
- To plan for the ongoing maintenance of cultural and heritage resources.
- To plan for the packaging of cultural events and heritage resources.
- To include events planning in community tourism planning processes.
- To increase visitor expenditures.

Recommendations:

Action: Development of Cultural and Heritage Resources	Implementing Agency	Priority
Recommend community tourism planning using examples available from Tourism Saskatchewan	TS	1
Consider requiring that Municipal Heritage Property designations be contingent on ongoing financial support being put in place first	Municipalities	2
Encourage cultural and heritage interests to become involved with Lake Diefenbaker Tourism	LDT	1
Review the roles and themes of area museums and recommend ways to attract more visitors	Area Museums, LDT, TS, WW	1
Promote the concept of packaging cultural and heritage attractions (e.g. area-wide passport)	LDT	1 – 2
Play a lead role in supporting a Heritage River designating for the South Saskatchewan River	WW, Meewasin Valley Authority	2 - 3

Tourism Hospitality

Tourism hospitality involves how tourists are welcomed and looked after during their stay. It determines whether visitors have a pleasant and enjoyable experience, and therefore is critical to the success of tourism attractions and businesses. Visitors to tourism operations have high expectations of the quality of personal service they receive. Courtesy, service, and genuine thoughtfulness are noticed and appreciated by visitors.

Hospitality Issue 1: Training and Education

Why this is an issue:

Many businesses and attraction operators are unaware of and/or do not know how to access available training and education opportunities for themselves and their employees.

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Background:

The Canadian Tourism Hospitality Research Council provides Certification for over 40 tourism occupations. These include such occupations as:

- Campground Operator
- Event Co-ordinator
- Heritage Interpreter
- Local Tour Guide
- Front Desk Agent
- Supervisor
- Freshwater Angling Guide
- Hunting Guide
- Casino Dealer
- Tourism/Visitor Information Counsellor

Larger employers such as casinos and Provincial Parks do access training programs, but generally speaking, operators of many smaller businesses and attractions are either unable to find the time to do so, or are unaware of what training is available.

Recommendations with respect to Training and Education have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To improve awareness of the existence of tourism occupations and Certification programs.
- To improve employers and employees knowledge in areas such as tourism awareness, attitude, professionalism, communication, operational procedures, sales, event co-ordination, guest relations, interpersonal skills, human resource management, regulations, etc.
- To improve access to tourism training and education opportunities.
- To improve the quality of service provided to visitors (and residents).

Recommendations:

Action: Training and Education	Implementing Agency	Priority
Include “hospitality” as a section in all Community Tourism Plans	TS	1
Promote the Canadian Academy of Travel and Tourism in high schools	TS	1
Contact Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council (STEC) for training tools, and courses available.	LDT	(ongoing)
Utilize the award winning Service BEST customer service program to improve customer service levels.	LDT	1
Utilize the Trade Development Strategy Initiative, Trade Ready program and Market Ready program for employer development	LDT	2
Incorporate the Tourism Community Champions program to build community ambassadorship and capacity	LDT, Communities	1
Utilize the on-line programming – to develop skills and certified staff offered	Employers and employees	(ongoing)
Utilize the Serve it Right program to manage risk and liability when serving alcohol	Employers	(ongoing)



Approach Cypress Hills Regional College for Business Administration programming and other related post-secondary programming.	STEC	(ongoing)
Approach colleges and institutes in Saskatoon related to post-secondary programming	STEC	(ongoing)

Hospitality Issue 2: Service Evaluation and Recognition

Why this is an issue:

How visitors to the area feel about the quality of service provided here has not been evaluated, and a process to evaluate and recognize good customer service by employees and businesses owners in the area is not in place.

Background:

Good quality service is one of the most important considerations when visitors decide to make repeat visits to an area, and opportunities to find out how visitors feel should be considered. The First Impressions Community Exchange program is one means of helping communities learn about existing strengths and shortcomings, including customer service, as seen through the eyes of a first time visitor.

This program involves two municipalities of similar size and situation sending small teams of volunteers to each other’s communities to assess aspects such as friendliness, aesthetic appeal, housing, infrastructure, recreational opportunities, and other elements of the community. They do so to determine how different individuals and organizations such as tourists, youth, business people, and retirees might view a community and decide whether or not to visit, live, or locate a business there. Afterwards, the volunteers meet to exchange feedback highlighting strengths and suggesting how weaknesses could be addressed. It is at this point that the quality of service, friendliness, etc., experienced by these visitors can be communicated.

The Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council holds two dinners annually to recognize individuals who have earned Professional Certification in a tourism occupation. These dinners also recognize businesses receiving Property Recognition for demonstrating best practices in supporting employee education and development. It has been suggested that a similar awards program for service excellence could be sponsored by Lake Diefenbaker Tourism to recognize employees of businesses and attractions in the area.

Recommendations with respect to service evaluation and recognition have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To find out how visitors feel about the quality of service they experience.
- To consider ways to publicly recognize outstanding employees.

Recommendations:

Action: Service Evaluation and Recognition	Implementing Agency	Priority
Investigate a variety of ways to survey visitors to determine their opinions about customer service	LDT	2
Undertake visitor satisfaction research in conjunction with major attractions	TPCS, LDT	2
Consider different ways of recognizing outstanding employees in several categories annually	LDT	2
Work with STEC to develop a recognition program	LDT	2

Tourism Businesses/Services

Tourism businesses include the casinos, hotels, motels, campgrounds, vacation farms, bed and breakfasts, guest ranches, outfitters, service stations, golf courses, tour boat, motor coach, car rental, airline and charter services, restaurants, and all other retail businesses that can take care of visitor’s needs.

Business/Service Issue 1: Labour Shortage

Why this is an issue:

Without human resources, it is impossible to operate businesses, attractions, and community infrastructure

Background:

The labour shortage is a major concern. Much of the potential work force is already fully employed or has moved away to work in industries such as petroleum and natural gas, mining, and manufacturing, or to further their education. The legal working age is 16, and schools re-open during August rather than September.

At some Regional Parks in the area, it is difficult to find staff to look after landscaping, swimming pools, swimming lessons, campgrounds, etc. Provincial Parks once hired locally so their staff were knowledgeable about the area, but these days employees are often hired in cities from outside the area. New ways of adapting to the needs of potential staff (part time, shifts, etc.) have to be found.

Recommendations with respect to the labour shortage have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To gain a broader understanding of opportunities to deal with the challenge.
- To explore ways of structuring work requirements by finding out the needs and availability of potential employees, and adapting accordingly.
- To consider posting jobs on the Lake Diefenbaker Tourism web site.

Recommendations:

Action: Labour Shortage	Implementing Agency	Priority
Select local high schools to apply for the Canadian Academy of Travel & Tourism (CATT) designation, which emphasizes the tourism sector and available careers in the tourism sector.	LDT, WW	1
Review staffing requirements and identify any opportunities for part time and flexible shifts	Employers	1
Approach Canadian Immigration. There is a ‘student working vacation abroad program’ to obtain students from other countries to experience working in another country for a specified amount of time	To be determined (TBD)	2
Approach the Ministry of Learning - Tourism, Hospitality and Education (THE) curriculum. Offered through the high schools as A30/B30.	TBD	2
Approach SIAST and local high schools – student work placement programs	TBD	2



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Approach Service Canada – summer student job programs.	TBD	2
Approach Ministry of Advanced Education, Labour, and Immigration – approaching the Mature worker, Saskatchewan Immigration Nominee Program	TBD	2
Approach Travel Cuts – Student Work Abroad Program - www.swap.ca Their goal is to help students have a successful working holiday. Organizing a work and travel experience is simplified.	TBD	2
Approach Katimavik – www.katimavik.org Katimavik’s mission is to foster the personal development of our nation’s young people through a challenging program of volunteer community work, training and group interaction.	TBD	2

Business/Service Issue 2: Regulatory Environment

Why this is an issue:

Federal, provincial, and municipal regulations have a major impact on commercial investment and on residential and cottage development. This is particularly true with respect to the detailed co-ordination required and length of time it takes to obtain development decisions.

Background:

Government policies, guidelines, and regulatory procedures affect nearly all tourism projects. Some of the departments and agencies having jurisdiction in the Lake Diefenbaker area include:

- Rural municipalities (Zoning Bylaws, Development and Building Permits)
- Urban municipalities (Zoning Bylaws, Development and Building Permits)
- Whitecap Dakota First Nation (I.R. 94)
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs (Statutory Plan, Zoning Amendment, Subdivision Approval)
- Regional Park Authorities
- The Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture, and Sport (Provincial Parks, Heritage Assessments)
- Ministry of the Environment (Crown Land, hunting, fishing, shoreline alteration, Environmental Impact Assessments)
- Saskatchewan Watershed Authority (Reservoir Development Area, water allocations, water releases from the Gardiner Dam)
- Saskatchewan Power Corporation (lake levels, easement requirements))
- Ministry of Health and the Health Districts (Inspections)
- Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority (Licensing, Permits)
- Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure
- Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission (Access)
- Saskatchewan Agriculture & Food (Crown Land)
- Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (Crown Land)
- Saskatchewan Telecommunications and Saskatchewan Energy/Trans Gas (easement requirements)
- Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- Federal Department of Transport – Marine Division
- Departments of Finance (PST and GST registrations)
- Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency (property assessment)
- Ministry of Labour (Labour Standards Act, Occupational Health and Safety, Trades Union Act)

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- Ministry of Education (the school year – when classes begin in August, well before the Labour Day long weekend, both employees and customers have to curtail their employment or vacations)

In some cases, the regulatory environment is unclear. For instance, some municipalities may not have enacted a Basic Planning Statement, and there are no policies or guidelines in place. In some locations, opportunities to build, sell, and maintain time share properties are not being pursued because people do not understand the legislation and processes involved. In others, the inability to buy crown land limits access to financing for the expansion of existing meeting and accommodation businesses, because lenders often prefer deeded land as security, rather than an assignment of a lease.

The RDA is of particular concern. Set up in the 1960s to ensure lakeshore development was not undertaken until the eventual lakeshore of the reservoir was determined and stabilized, its purpose was largely achieved several decades ago; however, this powerful barrier to development remains in place today.

Recommendations with respect to the Regulatory Environment have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To simplify the development process.
- To remove barriers where appropriate.
- To enable the development of new tourism products.
- To increase investment and visitor spending.

Recommendations:

Action: Regulatory Environment	Implementing Agency	Priority
Support the formation of a Municipal Planning Commission (as per Infrastructure Issue #3) in order to simplify development processes	Municipalities, Municipal Affairs, TS	1
Support the transfer of responsibility for managing the Reservoir Development Area from the Watershed Authority to Municipalities	WW, Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, Municipalities	1 & 2
Support Provincial and Regional Parks programs that facilitate private investments in parks	WW, LDT, TPCS	1
Support the opening up and sale of crown land for cottage, residential, and business development	WW, TS, SE	1 & 2
Support initiatives to delay the commencement of the school year until September or after the Labour Day long weekend	TS, LDT, School Boards	Ongoing
Work to review and remove unnecessary barriers to development (contact Enterprise & Innovation)	All stakeholders	1

Business/Service Issue 3: Packaging Opportunities

Why this is an issue:

Opportunities to increase visitor spending through packaging are not being adequately developed and promoted.



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Background:

Packaging increases visitor spending because it combines a number of attractions/experiences/business services into a single product; thereby spreading tourism expenditures among venues, which on their own, might not attract as many visitors.

It can be especially beneficial in the shoulder seasons, when some businesses are likely to have fewer customers than they do in mid-summer.

Examples of packaging opportunities include:

- Stay and golf - includes golf at several courses and accommodation, and could also include meals and travel.
- Stay and fish - includes accommodation and fishing with one of the area's licensed fishing outfitters and could also include meals and travel.
- Stay and play - includes casino experiences and accommodation, and could also include meals and travel.
- Stay and hunt - includes independent hunting with accommodation, and could also include preparation of game for transport and meals.

Migratory and game bird hunting packages sold to non-residents by licensed outfitters already combine guiding, access to land, accommodation, meals, preparation of game for transportation, etc.

This list is not intended to be complete.

Most independent hunters also enjoy golf and fishing. Packages could also be expanded to include these add-on experiences. Some courses in the area have offered discounts to hunters who present their hunting license when registering.



Many residents tend to 'do-it-yourself' when planning recreational experiences in Saskatchewan; however, given the cost and convenience of packages, and the opportunity to purchase an already arranged, pre-planned product at a fixed price, can be appealing.

Tourism expenditures generated in the shoulder seasons are particularly helpful to seasonal operations, and potentially more enjoyable for visitors since there is less competition for tee-times and other services.

Recommendations with respect to packaging have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To increase visitor expenditures.
- To improve business operations into the shoulder seasons.

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- To develop and promote new tourism products.

Recommendations:

Action: Packaging	Implementing Agency	Priority
Review existing packages to evaluate content and market demand; consider research available from Tourism Saskatchewan; see what is available elsewhere	LDT, TS	1
Meet with operators and encourage the development and/or expansion of more packages	LDT, TS	1
Contact a Saskatchewan-based, inbound travel operator to identify packaging opportunities	LDT, TS	1 & 2
Initiate the development of itineraries, group, and self-guided tours linking attractions and businesses	LDT, TS	1 & 2
Promote the packages at appropriate venues such as travel and leisure shows, trade shows, service clubs, conferences, and in regional promotion	LDT, TS	2
Contact Tourism Saskatchewan and become involved in its Trade Development Strategy training program	LDT, TS	2

Business/Service Issue 4: Major Tourism Project Opportunities

Why this is an issue:

The development of major and economically viable tourism projects can give an area a profile and identification in tourism markets outside Saskatchewan.

Background:

Major projects at Waskesiu/Elk Ridge, Whitecap Dakota First Nation, Moose Jaw, and elsewhere are considered ‘flagships’ in the tourism industry. Opportunities to develop more of them should be considered.

A West Central Tourism Destination Strategy was completed in 1993. It listed a number of major project opportunities that have been talked about but not implemented. Those opportunities should be reviewed in case some of them represent realistic opportunities today. The original plans for the Gardiner Dam also identified development concepts for the future, and these should be reviewed as well.

The accidental release of Rainbow Trout several years ago resulted in a huge influx of sports fishermen for several years, confirming the popularity of this species. The landing of a world record Rainbow Trout in the summer of 2007 brought Lake Diefenbaker to the attention of anglers all over North America.

Recommendations with respect to major projects have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To review the feasibility of tourism projects previously identified but not implemented.
- To develop economically viable projects that attracts key tourism markets.
- To increase visitor expenditures.
- To increase employment and wealth generation.



Recommendations:

Action: Major Tourism Project Opportunities (5 different initiatives)	Implementing Agency	Priority
Obtain and examine the extensive maps and development concepts prepared during the 1960's for potential developments on Lake Diefenbaker	TS, WW	1
Evaluate the markets for a new mineral spa, accommodation and meeting facilities, which were previously proposed for Elbow	TS	2
Review previous feasibility studies on spa projects elsewhere	TS	2
Prepare a development concept and consider developing terms of reference for a Master Plan and market opportunity study	TS, TPCS (feasibility)	2
Promote the stocking of Lake Diefenbaker with Rainbow Trout	LDT, TS, SE	1
Evaluate the markets for time-share and/or accommodation and meeting facilities at Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park	TPCS (feasibility)	2
Develop terms of reference for a Market Opportunity and Feasibility Study for basing a Sternwheeler at Saskatchewan Landing or Elbow, linked with Casino(s) and accommodation	TPCS & partners (feasibility)	1

Business/Service Issue 5: Other Tourism Development Opportunities

Why this is an issue

Investment in tourism product development improves visitor experiences and increases visitor expenditures.

Background:

Business retention, expansion, and development are key objectives of the Lake Diefenbaker Tourism DAP.

Members of economic development and tourism committees and people who attended the public meetings held during the planning process have recommended a number of specific opportunities that should be investigated. These are in addition to the opportunities identified in previous sections of the plan:

- Increase the use of meeting facilities at Kenaston, Davidson, Outlook, Kyle, Elbow, and Craik – an opportunity to increase local spending, which helps to keep other businesses viable.
- Develop condominium style and time share accommodation.
- Research a ‘reverse snowbird’ program.
- Expand the network of Bed & Breakfast, and Farm and Ranch vacation operations.
- Develop more packages.
- Develop a golfing ‘passport’ for the area (including Davidson, Outlook, etc.).
- Attract more shoulder season visitors (also discussed under ‘packaging’).
- Increase prices - businesses sometimes are not charging enough for the goods and services they provide.

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- Specialize - many communities have similar attractions. If they were to specialize or concentrate on one specific feature or theme, they could differentiate themselves from one another, and possibly enhance their profile, reputation, and travel generating capability.
- Allow desirable private investment in parks initiatives to proceed (as mentioned previously with respect to Saskatchewan Landing and Danielson Provincial Parks).
- Encourage entrepreneurs to establish 'water taxi' businesses.
- Encourage artisans to establish their businesses in communities like Tugaske and Elbow, which are becoming known for their cultural resources.
- Review hunting regulations with respect to non-resident hunting and the Chronic Wasting Disease harvest of Mule and White Tailed Deer.
- Review the Outfitting Act to increase the number of Allocated Outfitting Licenses available for Migratory Birds and Upland Game.
- Open up crown land for residential, cottage, and resort development.

Recommendations with respect to these tourism business development opportunities have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To increase visitor expenditures.
- To promote business retention and expansion.
- To promote new business development.
- To develop the Lake Diefenbaker area as a more competitive and marketable destination.

Recommendations:

Action: Other Tourism Business Development Opportunities	Implementing Agency	Priority
Implement Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan	All Stakeholders	1
Promote the opportunities identified above	WW, Private Sector	1

Business/Service Issue 6: Go Green Opportunities

Why this is an issue:

Saskatchewan's Green Plan has implications that could be helpful in business, sub-division, and infrastructure development.

Background:

Provincial and Federal government assistance may be available in developing projects using solar power, geo-thermal heat, lake water, wind power, and in conducting forestation programs. Developers should take this financial assistance into account.

Tourism Saskatchewan plans to promote the adoption of sustainable tourism practices involving green technologies to the tourism industry. The Ministry of Environment's Go Green program's initiatives in the Lake Diefenbaker area would support the air and water quality recommendations of this tourism plan.

The recommendation with respect to the Go Green program addresses the overall objective of developing the Lake Diefenbaker area as a more competitive and marketable tourism destination.



Recommendations:

Action: Go Green Opportunities	Implementing Agency	Priority
Have copies of the Go Green program available if requested by business and communities in the area	WW, TS	2

Tourism Promotion

Tourism promotion involves activities that individuals and groups undertake to attract potential tourists. Co-operative advertising, attendance at travel shows, magazine articles, brochures, maps, commercial and promotional signs, travel guides, newspaper, radio, television, Internet websites, and tourist information centres are all examples of promotional activities.

Tourism Promotion Issue 1: Co-operative Marketing

Why this is an issue:

Co-operative marketing is an efficient way of pooling financial and human resources to effectively promote the destination area.

Background:

The Lake Diefenbaker destination area is fortunate to have a strong and successful marketing consortium in place – Lake Diefenbaker Tourism. It is also fortunate to be covered by two of the province’s regional tourism associations – the West Central and the Southwest. Both tourism regions’ prepare and implement cost-shared annual marketing plans in conjunction with their members, Lake Diefenbaker Tourism and Tourism Saskatchewan.

The area’s promotional activities are of a very high quality; however, the marketing consortium is a volunteer organization, and sometimes it does not have the human resources to fully exploit all of the promotional opportunities in which it could become involved.

Recommendations with respect to co-operative marketing address the objective of reinforcing and expanding the capacity of Lake Diefenbaker Tourism to continue its successful and highly regarded promotional activities.

Recommendations:

Action: Co-operative Marketing	Implementing Agency	Priority
Expand partnerships with other stakeholders in the Lake Diefenbaker area (Mid Sask CFDC/ER, WW, Whitecap Trail, tourism regions)	LDT, Whitecap Trail, TS	1
Arrange for Trade Show representatives to take the “Boothmanship” training provided by STEC	LDT, STEC	1
Continue to promote mutual inter-location support by all members (distribution of materials, etc.)	LDT	1
Investigate the possible use of GPS units mounted in passenger vehicles to identify points of interest and tourism services throughout the area.	LDT	1

Continue to seek co-operative promotional opportunities (e.g. Three Lakes Trail Association, Chief Whitecap Trail, etc.)	LDT	1
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Tourism Promotion Issue 2: Alberta Market

Why this is an issue:

The Alberta market is regarded as a major opportunity for attracting visitors to the Lake Diefenbaker area.

Background:

The Alberta market is also a provincial priority and opportunities for linkage with Tourism Saskatchewan programs will be worthwhile. Following are some statistics regarding visitors from Alberta:

- average age of Alberta visitors is 34;
- 42% come in summer, 18% in spring, 25% in the fall, and 15% in the winter;
- average stay is 4 nights, average group size is 2 people, but 22% do travel with children;
- average spending by Alberta visitors here is \$169.80 per day;
- highest ratio of campers to population anywhere in North America;
- higher than average interest in outdoor activities – fishing, hiking, wildlife viewing, golfing, canoeing and kayaking, water sports, and extreme sports; and,
- 17% of visitors from Alberta most often visit the north – 83% visit central and southern Saskatchewan.

Tourism Saskatchewan attends the following Travel and Consumer Shows in Alberta:

- Calgary Stampede
- Calgary Home & Garden Show
- Edmonton Home & Garden Show
- The Calgary Oil Show

Based on responses at these shows, all of them are regarded as having excellent potential for promoting Lake Diefenbaker.

Tourism Saskatchewan has a good working relationship with the “Good Sam Club” which organizes national (U.S. and Canada), regional, and local RV rallies. For instance, the Saskatchewan Chapter holds an annual event which attracts over 400 RV units. Given the size and proximity of Saskatchewan Landing and Danielson Provincial Parks, the Alberta Chapter would appear to be a good potential contact for Lake Diefenbaker Tourism.

Recommendations with respect to the Alberta market address the following objectives:

- To increase visitor expenditures.
- To focus on tourism products of interest to key Saskatchewan markets.
- To partner with Tourism Saskatchewan in making the Alberta market a priority.
- To help develop the area as a more competitive and marketable tourism destination.



Recommendations:

Action: Alberta Market	Implementing Agency	Priority
Meet with Tourism Saskatchewan Marketing Department to discuss their Alberta strategies	LDT, TS	1
Initiate the development of itineraries, group, and self-guided tours in order to have more products to take to tourism marketplaces	LDT, TS	1 & 2
Expand promotional activities and partner with Tourism Saskatchewan at travel and consumer shows	LDT, TS	1
Provide input to TPCS and the Planning Commission on feedback from these marketplaces (i.e. the demand for land for development in the RDA and in Provincial and Regional Parks)	LDT, TS	1

Tourism Promotion Issue 3: Highway Signage

Why this is an issue:

Visitors use highway signs to help them find their way into and around the area. Being able to place promotional and directional highway signs at beneficial locations is an issue generally throughout the area.

Background:

Current signage policy requires signs to be located on highways which lead directly to an attraction or a community. This needs to be changed as visitors need to see signage on the major travel corridors that connect with the highways that lead directly to an attraction or community.

The Lake Diefenbaker area is surrounded by major travel corridors (Louis Riel Trail, Trans Canada Highway, Highway 7, and Highway 4), but none of them refer to Lake Diefenbaker. Highway 4 mentions Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park because it passes through it, but Lake Diefenbaker is not signed.

Signage referring to the three Provincial Parks, the Elbow Harbour Provincial Recreation Site, the Regional Parks, the Dakota Dunes Casino and Golf Course, and the unique SkyTrail section of the Trans-Canada Trail, are required on the appropriate major corridor to alert visitors that these attractions are in the vicinity, and indicating where to turn off the major corridor to find the highways/grid roads leading to the attraction(s) involved.

Large entry signs at or near the entrances to the destination area are required. These should contain a large map showing the locations of attractions and communities, in a manner similar to those on highways accessing northern resort locations such as the Candle Lake, Dorintosh, La Ronge, etc. areas. These signs are best located on portions of the highway that travellers can pull-in, service roads, or inside rest stops for safety reasons. They are also useful in re-enforcing the message when located at communities and major attractions within the area.

In addition, it is advantageous for signage within the area to be somewhat standardized by the use of a symbol which identifies locations and attractions as being part of the destination area.

Recommendations with respect to highway signage have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To improve visitor access.



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- To develop the area as a more competitive and marketable tourism destination.
- To enhance the visitors' experience by providing information and direction at appropriate locations.
- To more effectively display the diversity of tourism products within the area.

Recommendations:

Action: Highway Signage	Implementing Agency	Priority
Support recommendations with respect to highway signage in the land use plan currently underway	WW, LDT, TS	1
Meet with the Ministry of Saskatchewan Highways and Infrastructure to discuss highway signage requirements for the area	TS	1
Inventory the locations of highway pull-ins, service roads, and rest stops around and within the area	WW, SHI	1
Identify requirements and cost the various priorities/options	SHI	1
Arrange for design of the large entry point signs and smaller themed signs for location in the area	SHI	2
Arrange for financing (including sponsorships) and for on-going maintenance of signs and locations	Municipalities	2
Implement the various signage projects in co-operation with communities and attractions	Municipalities	2

Tourism Promotion Issue 4: Chief Whitecap Trail Designation

Why this is an issue:

Supporters of the initiative to designate this highway corridor (# 219 from Saskatoon to Danielson Provincial Park) will be key financial participants in the implementation of the Lake Diefenbaker Tourism DAP.

Background:

The Chief Whitecap Trail initiative has been underway since 2002. This initiative is supported by:

- the rural municipalities of Dundurn, Rosedale, Corman Park, and Rudy;
- the urban municipalities of Outlook, and Dundurn, Whitecap Dakota First Nation;
- Mid Sask CFDC/ER;
- the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority; and,
- Tourism Saskatchewan.



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Since then, the award-winning Dakota Dunes Golf Course has opened, the SkyTrail project at Outlook has been completed, the largest casino in the province has been built on the Whitecap Dakota First Nation, and the reconstruction of Highway 219 to Highway 15, has commenced. Construction of a 175- room hotel adjacent to the casino is expected in 2009.

In addition, a new highway connection between Highway 11 (Louis Riel Trail) and Highway 219 is being discussed, and an interchange with Highway 16 (the Yellowhead Highway) was designed in preparation for the construction of the new south bridge at Saskatoon.

In view of all of the developments that have taken place over the past six years (and are continuing today), and the commitment of these stakeholders to contribute financially to managing the implementation of this tourism plan, an early decision with respect to designation of Highway 219 is particularly important.

Recommendations with respect to Chief Whitecap Trail designation have been prepared to address the following objectives:

- To develop the area as a more competitive and marketable tourism destination.
- To improve access to key tourism markets.
- To strengthen the working partnerships and alliances among local governments and key tourism attractions.

Recommendations:

Action: Chief Whitecap Trail Designation	Implementing Agency	Priority
Support Whitecap Dakota First Nation in negotiations with the Ministry of Saskatchewan Highways & Infrastructure for highway designation and for highway signage	WW, LDT, TS, SHI	1
Highlight Chief Whitecap Trail information on destination area entry point signage and directional signage on Highways 11, 16, 15, and 19	Whitecap Trail, LDT	2
Following completion of the Highway 219 designation, consider extending the Trail to the Trans Canada along Highway 42 to Moose Jaw	Whitecap Trail, LDT	2 & 3
Conduct co-operative marketing activities with Whitecap Trail consortium	LDT	1

Tourism Promotion Issue No 5: Branding

Why this is an issue:

Branding can be a useful tool for well-developed tourism destinations.

Background:

Branding is one method of establishing a recognizable and distinctive image for a product or range of products. For instance, businesses and attractions in the Mid Sask CFDC/ER area could be using a linkage or positively themed connection to a Lake Diefenbaker brand.

As the Lake Diefenbaker destination area develops, it may be determined that development of a Lake Diefenbaker theme or brand for promotional or community development reasons would be desirable.

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The recommendation with respect to branding is to be aware that when re- investment in attractions and infrastructure has taken place, the opportunity to develop a Lake Diefenbaker brand will be much improved.

Recommendations:

Action: Branding	Implementing Agency	Priority
Consider the development of a ‘Lake Diefenbaker Brand’ if and when it appears desirable.	LDT, TS, Whitecap Trail	ongoing

Population

Population is a major concern because it takes both year-round and seasonal residents to make public services viable. Residents volunteer to host events, promote the area, look after their communities, and pay the taxes that maintain services. More residents means more volunteers, more tax payers, and more services. It also means more visitors, since VFR (visiting friends and relatives) is Saskatchewan’s largest tourism market sector.

Population Issue 1: Volunteers

Why this is an issue:

Most of the events, regional parks, and other community services that attract visitors throughout the destination area rely upon volunteers to survive.

Background:

The population in some rural and urban municipalities is both declining and aging. One of the consequences is that some of the volunteers are becoming overworked and sometimes ‘burned out’. In some communities, plans to recruit, develop, and support new volunteers to participate in rural development and community service are being explored and put in place. Innovative approaches should continue to be sought.

Attendance at the public meetings in February and March of 2008 to consider the issues being dealt with in this plan showed that people were prepared to drive significant distances in cold weather to attend and participate in these evening meetings. This demonstrated that many residents feel a sense of ownership of the area’s tourism resources, and share interests not limited to their own communities.

It appears, however, the most likely way to increase/renew the volunteer base is to increase the population.

Recommendations:

Action: Volunteers	Implementing Agency	Priority
Continue to promote plans and activities for the recruitment, development, and support of volunteers	LDT	1
Be sure the need for population growth is addressed in the Land Use Plan now underway	WW, TS	1
Support initiatives of the proposed Planning District with respect to population growth	WW, TS	1



Population Issue 2: Opportunities for New Seasonal and Permanent Residents

Why this is an issue:

Rural populations have been declining. The reason why this is happening and researching ways to reverse this trend should be reviewed.

Background:

The combined rural and urban population in the destination area, based on today's is estimated to be 16,000 people. This is greater than the population of several of our cities. The proposed Planning District could have an even greater population.

An analysis of population changes in the tourism planning area from 1996 through 2006 shows that growth has taken place in municipalities in close proximity to Saskatoon. Virtually all other rural communities in the tourism planning area have declined in population with one glaring exception – resort villages.

These populations have increased over the last ten years as follows:

Lake Diefenbaker:

Mistusinne – up 211 %; Coteau Beach – up 58 % (No figures were obtained for Palliser Regional Park, Prairie Lake Regional Park, or Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park, all of which have cottage/residential areas).

Blackstrap Lake:

Shields – up 120 % (also, land for another 40 to 50 new lots may be annexed from the R.M. of Dundurn); Thode – up 73 %; the new Sky View subdivision will add 170 lots.

To illustrate this trend further, it is reasonable to also note activity at Last Mountain Lake, which is the other large rural freshwater lake in south-central Saskatchewan. Population increases there were as follows:

Alice Beach – up 100 %, Grandview Beach – up 150 %, and Wee Too Beach – up 200 %

Opportunities to increase Lake Diefenbaker's lake community populations further are currently prevented by government regulations and policies surrounding the RDA and Provincial Parks. (Blackstrap faces some similar obstacles, but solutions to these are gradually being found.)

The only way to exploit these opportunities to expand existing and develop new lake communities is to remove obstacles such as the RDA, where the restrictions they impose are no longer relevant. This is especially important to the tourism industry since VFR is Saskatchewan's largest tourism market sector, generating over 70% of visits to the province.

Recommendations with respect to opportunities for new and seasonal residents have been developed to address the following objectives:

- To develop the area as a more competitive and marketable tourism destination by making land available for development.
- To enhance visitors' experiences by creating a source of new volunteers to events, regional parks, and other community services.
- To increase visitor spending (and assist with business retention and expansion).



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- To expand the municipal tax base in order to enhance the viability of municipalities and the services they provide.

Recommendations:

Action: Opportunities for New Seasonal and Permanent Residents	Implementing Agency	Priority
Incorporate these recommendations in the Land Use Plan currently underway	WW	1
Complete the Land Use Plan currently underway, with appropriate zoning of areas for development	WW	1
Establish the proposed Planning Commission	WW, Municipalities	1
Promote the transfer of responsibility for management of the RDA from the Watershed Authority to Municipal governments and/or the Planning Commission	WW, Municipalities, TS, All stakeholders	1



CHAPTER FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Plan Implementation

This section of the Lake Diefenbaker Tourism DAP suggests how the plan will be implemented. Given the scope and potential of its implementation, full-time paid project management services will be required. Monitoring and reporting are essential to ensure objectives are being achieved, and to be able to change and update the plan effectively. Public involvement will continue to be an important part of the ongoing implementation process.

Plan Implementation Issue 1: Project Management

Why this is an issue:

Implementation of the plan will require project management and financial partnerships.

Background:

The Planning Committee considered a number of options with respect to human resources, administrative support structures, travel, communication, and financial requirements. It would appear that managing the implementation of the diverse numbers of actions recommended here would best be accomplished by an organization with a strong human resource base and demonstrated capabilities in the following areas:

- financial solvency and stability ;
- experience preparing and managing budgets in the \$250,000 - \$500,000 range;
- working knowledge of Saskatchewan Tourism Regions operations and funding;
- experience in the tourism industry – business and/or attractions management
- familiarity with highway signage programs;
- experience in preparing and implementing marketing plans;
- writing skills including preparation of newspaper and magazine articles, operational reports, press releases, and briefing notes;
- strong interpersonal and communications skills;
- understanding the concerns of rural Saskatchewan;
- experience working with First Nations;
- experience working with volunteers;
- thorough understanding of municipal governance structures;
- proficient Internet and GIS skills and experience; and,
- thorough knowledge of the Lake Diefenbaker area.

Tourism Saskatchewan has agreed to provide cost shared financial assistance for a three-year period to support the implementation of the plan.

Recommendations:

Action: Project Management	Implementing Agency	Priority
Confirm the appropriate corporate structure and administrative requirements for managing the implementation of the plan	Mid Sask CFDC/ER, LDT WDFN, TS	1
Formalize financial partnerships and establish an Advisory Committee – monitoring & evaluation	Mid Sask CFDC/ER, LDT WDFN, TS	1

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Prepare 36-month budget and work plan with timelines and reporting requirements	Mid Sask CFDC/ER, LDT WDFN, TS	1
Finalize financial agreements and proceed	TBD	1

Plan Implementation Issue 2: Monitoring and Evaluation

Why this is an issue:

Monitoring and evaluation are required to ensure that objectives are being achieved.

Background:

The Advisory Committee referred to in the chart above will enable the financial partners to periodically review progress, and thereby ensure their interests are being served. It may also include, from time to time, members or advisors from government ministries as required, such as the Ministries of Tourism, Parks, Culture, and Sport, Highways and Infrastructure, Environment, the Watershed Authority, and Municipal Affairs.

These government ministries and agencies will be encouraged to allocate human and financial resources to assist in implementing some of the recommendations of the plan. This will require inclusion of some of the work in their annual budgets, which are traditionally planned in the fall, and implemented the following spring.

Day-to-day monitoring of activity will be undertaken by the project managers.

Recommendations:

Action: Monitoring and Evaluation	Implementing Agency	Priority
Assign one person to assume responsibility to see that the plan is implemented	WW, LDT	1
Prepare a semi-annual report for the Advisory Committee itemizing progress	WW	1
Prepare an annual progress report of plan implementation, monitoring and evaluation results, and substantiated recommendations for any appropriate change to the plan	WW	1
Prepare an annual progress report on plan implementation for public review and comment	WW	1

Plan Implementation Issue 3: Public Involvement

Why this is an issue:

The public was involved in the preparation of this plan and would like to know the status of their comments and recommendations.

Background:

Six public meetings were held throughout the area during February and March 2008. These were attended by approximately 140 people, who provided a considerable amount of information and numerous recommendations. More concerns and possible solutions to various issues were provided



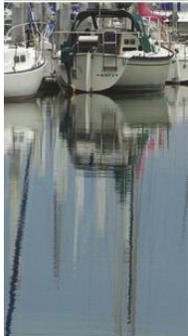
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during other presentations and direct consultation. Periodic updates on the progress of the planning process were provided through newspaper articles and organizational newsletters.

As implementation of the plan proceeds, it will be desirable to continue to provide opportunities for the public to have input to identify new issues and recommend ways of resolving them.

Recommendations:

Action: Public Involvement	Implementing Agency	Priority
Continue to report progress through newspaper articles and organizational newsletters	WW, LDT	1
Make copies of the plan available to the public, once it has been approved and endorsed	WW, LDT, TS	1
Increase awareness of the Lake Diefenbaker Tourism DAP through presentations at Land Use Plan open houses, public speaking at municipal and service club events, etc.	WW, LDT, TS	1
Hold one-on-one meetings when necessary for specific issues (e.g. fish stocking programs)	WW	1
Make copies of the annual progress report on plan implementation available to the public	WW	2



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tourism Saskatchewan wishes to acknowledge the assistance and participation of the Mid Sask CFDC/ER, Denise Guillet, Jim Tucker, Russ McPherson, Michelle Hooley, Aaron Spence and Nicole Carey, and the following individuals who assisted in the preparation of this plan:

Jan Procter, Jennifer Runkle, Lynne Kennedy – Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council, for text, presentation displays, and materials;

Bonnie Baird, Jonathan Potts, Curt Koethler, Kelly Brezinski, Ted Hornung, Donna Hoffman – Tourism Saskatchewan, for research, marketplace information, comments, and reviews of the plan;

Al Klassen, Bryan Cafferata, Denise Guillet, Donald Shirliff, Donna Haug, Fred Baran, Jim Tucker, M.L. Whittles, Joel Perry, Ron Bessey, Ross Derald, Russ McPherson, Joe Jozsa, Sandra Bathgate, Tim Ouellette, and Ian McGilp – Tourism Planning Committee.

Recognition is also given to the following individuals who assisted with organizing public meetings and consultations:

Joe and Sandy Patrick, Riverhurst
Grace McTavish, Elbow
Gary Edom, Davidson
Dale Hope and Lynne Fox, Kyle
Donald and Lorraine Shirliff, Demaine
Tony Kuchapski and Darrell Balkwill, Whitecap Dakota First Nation
Mid Sask CFDC/REDA staff, Outlook
Denise Guillet for technical support, GPS mapping, power point presentations, and recording at all locations

Appreciation is also extended to the residents of the area for providing public input into the Lake Diefenbaker Tourism DAP. Approximately 140 people from communities throughout the area attended public meetings and consultations held in Riverhurst, Elbow, Davidson, Kyle, Demaine, Outlook, and Whitecap Dakota First Nation during February, March, and April of 2008.

