

# **Piney Stuartburn Regional Tourism Strategy**

Final Report Prepared by  
Critical Eye Consulting Group Limited

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## Executive Summary

Manitoba is a vibrant and popular destination for tourists.

Adventure travellers venture to Manitoba and residents travel within to enjoy our nature and wilderness, Manitoba's two most prized and plentiful tourism offerings. Whether it is wild life viewing, fishing, hiking, camping, polar bears or hunting – people assemble around Manitoba to enjoy the great outdoors.

The province has a strong tourism network, led by Travel Manitoba, which provides representation on a worldwide stage. Regional tourism bodies, such as Eastman Tourism, are well organized throughout Manitoba and coordinate closer at a community level.

While many areas are well represented, the Rural Municipalities of Piney & Stuartburn have been left out, largely due to a lack of coordinated efforts to promote travel to the region.

Through surveys, public consultations and research, it became evident that the Rural Municipalities of Piney & Stuartburn have an abundance of opportunities for growth through tourism. The region is rich with nature, wildlife and outdoor recreation while also maintaining a deep cultural and religious history which many tourists would find of interest. This potential is in alignment with Manitoba's premier tourism exports and the marketing efforts of the governmental tourism bodies (Travel Manitoba, Eastman Tourism).

Nature and wildlife are easily accessible and exceedingly visible on any drive through the area. The region has a myriad of established snowmobile trails in the winter. Conservation and academic groups are already functioning in the area.

The combined RMs require the resources and effort to build on the elements that pre-exist in the region and combine these into itineraries or recommendations to be presented to potential visitors as ways of spending one, two or more days in the area.

The key to success will be the development of itineraries, featuring standalone yet combined attractions and developing distribution channels for marketing materials to promote the products. These itineraries should be constructed in a way in which the tourists can have a self-guided tour.

The organization of a "tourism industry" in the region will require some resources which are presently non-existent. Critical Eye believes this can be accomplished through an active tourism committee, a Chamber of Commerce and the grant-supported employment of summer students, preferably with roots in Piney or Stuartburn. It is also necessary that a dedicated web-portal be constructed to act as a directory and distribution stream for all that the area has to offer a visitor.

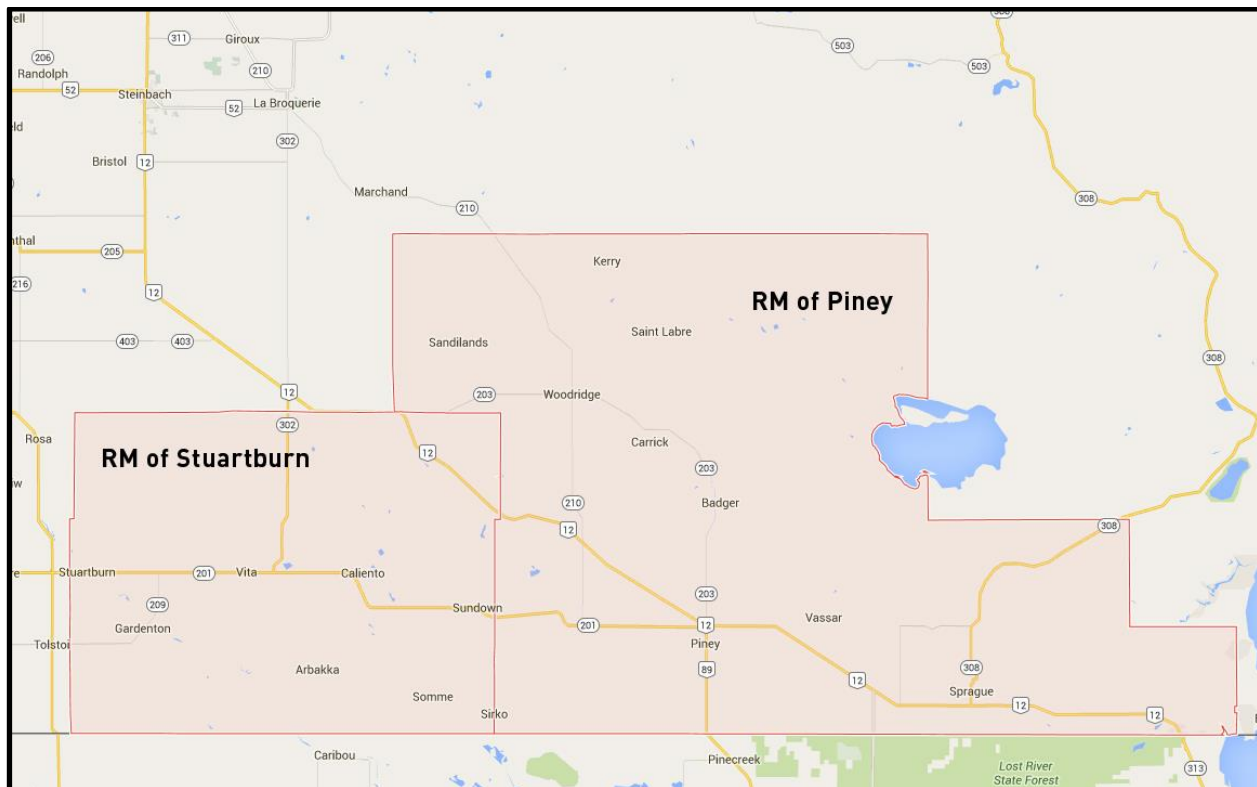
An effort to attract visitors should be made in Steinbach, Winnipeg, Winkler/Morden and the Minnesota/North Dakota areas along with popular established tourist destinations (i.e. St-Malo Beach, Buffalo Point, Emerson) in South-East Manitoba. These could be leveraged to attract visitors to the region by creating interesting and rewarding "day trips" from their campsite, cottage or homes.

Measuring the success of these initial efforts can be accomplished through the distribution of coupons, "deals" and establishing check-in points which the visitor would receive when printing the itinerary of the dedicated regional tourism website.

# Introduction

This Strategic Plan has been prepared by Critical Eye Consulting Group Limited.

This plan was developed in cooperation with the "Tourism Committee" comprising of administrative and elected officials from the Rural Municipalities of Piney & Stuartburn based on goals outlined in a Request for Proposal tendered by the Tourism Committee in November 2015.



## Background

The Rural Municipalities of Piney & Stuartburn are seeking methods of improving their collective regions by focusing on the development of tourism as a means of driving economic activity/growth. They have chosen to enter into a joint venture to co-promote their respective regions. The objective, as outlined in the RFP, is to work cooperatively with Eastman Tourism in the delivery and implementation of a regional Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan.

The goals, as identified in the RFP, are to:

- Identify tourists' needs
- Develop tourism strategies
- Identify what tourists want to see
- Look at what draws tourists and what makes them return

# Participants

The individuals and groups were active in the development of this Tourism Strategy:

- Rick Kemp – Critical Eye Consulting Group Ltd
- Brigitte Kemp – Critical Eye Consulting Group Ltd
- Mel Parent – Councillor – RM of Piney (Tourism Committee Lead)
- Konrad Narth – Councillor – RM of Stuartburn (Tourism Committee)
- Martin Van Osch – CAO Piney (Tourism Committee)
- Lucie Maynard – CAO Stuartburn (Tourism Committee)
- Jenny Dupas – Eastman Tourism
- Survey Respondents
- Public Consultation Attendees (Woodridge, Vita, Sprague)
- RM of Piney & Stuartburn Councils

## Defining Tourism

As it pertains to this strategy and the region we will define tourism and itinerary. These terms are used extensively throughout this document. A clear meaning must be presented.

### Tourism

Tourism is usually considered as travel for pleasure. The World Tourism Organization defines tourism as people *"traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes"*.

From an economic perspective tourism is the business of attracting, accommodating, and entertaining tourists, and the business of operating tours.

Tourism is a major source of income for many countries, municipalities and cities. Tourism affects the economy of a region, in some cases being of vital importance and the primary economic driver. As such, most governments and businesses invest heavily in promoting tourism.

### Itinerary

An itinerary is a packaged plan for a tourist. It could last a few hours, a few days or a few weeks. It all depends on how much you have to offer.

It can be a detailed, by the hour scheduling of a planned-out day with places to go and things to see.

Maybe it's a simple list of things to do in the region, which have a similar theme. This could be a self-guided historic tour of churches, or ideally (in the future) a guided version of this same tour.

An itinerary could be a map for motorcyclists to tour through the region with suggested places to eat, gas up, walk a trail, picnic, etc.

An itinerary is a packaged plan for a tourist.

# Goals

Based on the Request for Proposals and Critical Eye's response to the request, several key objectives are to be met which will serve as the main goals for this initiative. They are:

- Identify tourists' needs (general)
- Develop tourism strategies for Piney-Stuartburn
- Identify what tourists want to see
- Identify what will draw tourists into Piney-Stuartburn and what will make them want to return
- Identify the "Top 5" strengths of each RM (10 strengths total) and determine the best approach for marketing, highlighting, leveraging and/or improving these strengths.

# Surveys

Two surveys were drafted. The first (Appendix F) is to be used throughout the summer months to collect data from people travelling through and spending time in the RMs of Piney & Stuartburn.

The second survey was prepared and distributed to the residents of the regions. The survey was to be conducted online using the service "Survey Monkey".

The purpose of this exercise was to collect data from residents regarding what they feel are the strengths of the region, why they choose to reside here, what others (tourists) might like, etc.

The purpose of surveying this group was to obtain a "grassroots" opinion from those who know the region best. Approximately 244 individuals responded to the survey.

Full survey results are listed in Appendix A.

## Key Survey Findings

Part of the survey was meant to provide a resident profile by collecting data related to demographics (age, gender, marital status, etc.).

The remainder of the survey was meant to solicit information regarding the resident's activities, as it relates to potential tourism offerings. We also geared the survey toward collecting data which could be used to identify shortcomings within the region.

Of the approximately 244 respondents 25% were business owners and 92% of respondents asserted that they tour and travel within The Region.

**Chart 1.1** (right) shows the respondents activities within the region. People travel within the region to participate in outdoor recreational activities, to shop and to eat. People from this region love to live and play at home.

Knowing that the respondents get out and enjoy the region ensures that they are able to identify the activities that could be promoted, developed and packaged to promote tourism in the region.

Below are additional key findings.

The findings based on **Chart 2.1** and **Chart 2.2** show a contrast in that people with a primary residence in the region primarily live here for the peace and quiet of country life.

People who have a secondary residence are primarily here for seasonal outdoor recreation yet also show an enjoyment of the quiet nature of the region.

**CHART 1.1**  
**What types of activities do you participate in when you tour/travel within the Region? (select all that apply)**

| Answer Options               | Response Percent |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Berry Picking                | 60.2%            |
| Fall Suppers                 | 49.7%            |
| Farmers Markets              | 44.0%            |
| Fishing                      | 44.0%            |
| ATV                          | 43.5%            |
| Canada Day                   | 41.4%            |
| Garage Sales                 | 39.8%            |
| Festivals                    | 39.3%            |
| Deer Hunting                 | 38.2%            |
| Camping                      | 35.1%            |
| Hiking                       | 35.1%            |
| Arts & Crafts / Flea Markets | 31.4%            |
| Picnics                      | 30.9%            |
| Churches                     | 29.3%            |
| Historic Landmark Sites      | 28.8%            |
| Hunting, Other               | 28.8%            |
| Ice-Fishing                  | 28.3%            |
| Snowmobiling                 | 26.2%            |
| Swimming                     | 26.2%            |
| Cemeteries                   | 24.1%            |
| Poker Derbies                | 20.9%            |
| Weddings                     | 20.9%            |
| Canoeing                     | 19.9%            |
| Cycling                      | 19.9%            |
| Baseball Tournament          | 18.3%            |
| Car Shows                    | 18.3%            |

**CHART 2.1**

If you maintain a primary residence within The Region, why do you choose to make The Region your primary residence? (select all that apply)

| Answer Options                      | Response |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Small Town Life                     | 61.9%    |
| Cost of living / Affordable Housing | 58.3%    |
| Nature / Wildlife                   | 56.8%    |
| Originally from The Region          | 48.9%    |
| Family Lives Here                   | 43.9%    |

**CHART 2.2**

If you maintain a secondary residence in The Region, why did you choose to have a secondary residence in The Region? (select all that apply)

| Answer Options             | Response |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Nature/Wildlife            | 72.9%    |
| Hunting/Fishing            | 47.1%    |
| ATV                        | 41.4%    |
| Originally From The Region | 30.0%    |
| Snowmobiling               | 28.6%    |

In **Chart 3.1** respondents identified three dominating improvements (top issues) that would enhance their experience as a resident and/or attract and draw people to the area. Improvements in these areas would ultimately benefit both residents and tourists alike.

When combining all areas that address a need for **additional accommodations** (yellow) this comes in at number 1 with a total of **138**.

**Recreation** (pink) comes in as the second priority with a total of 129 respondents offering that improvements in that category would have an impact on 'traffic' in Piney-Stuartburn as well.

In third place is **internet & cellular reception** (green). Access to these services has evolved into a necessity for residents, businesses and tourists and must be improved upon.

**CHART 3.1**

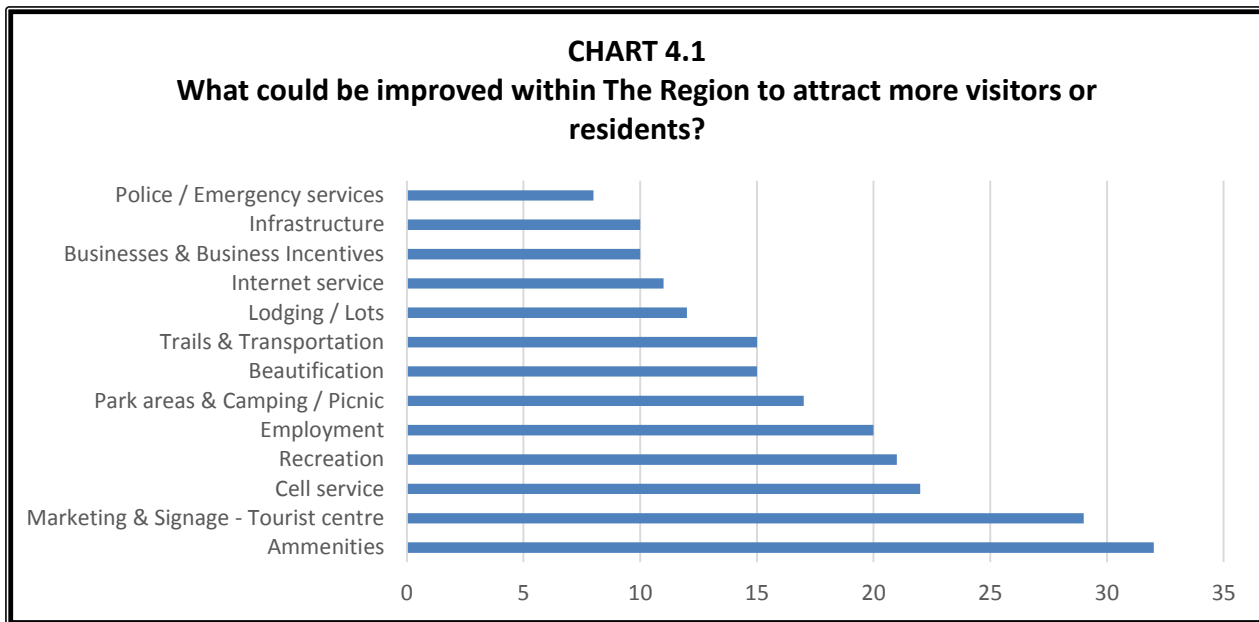
Listed below are various services & accommodations available in The Region. Please check all that you have participated in and your level of satisfaction with each.

| Answer Options              | used service | More needed | Satisfactory | N/A |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-----|
| Internet/Cellular Reception | 107          | 121         | 16           | 9   |
| Restaurant                  | 154          | 82          | 63           | 5   |
| Hardware/Sporting Goods     | 42           | 55          | 20           | 26  |
| Gas Stations                | 159          | 54          | 83           | 6   |
| Shopping                    | 61           | 54          | 31           | 13  |
| Groceries                   | 149          | 52          | 76           | 6   |
| Campground                  | 57           | 41          | 32           | 24  |
| Hotels/Motels               | 49           | 33          | 25           | 29  |
| Festivals                   | 93           | 26          | 56           | 8   |
| Bed & Breakfast             | 1            | 24          | 3            | 42  |
| RV Park                     | 16           | 24          | 15           | 29  |
| Hiking                      | 72           | 22          | 38           | 23  |
| Swimming                    | 52           | 22          | 27           | 17  |
| Beer/Spirits                | 110          | 18          | 77           | 8   |
| Resorts                     | 29           | 16          | 24           | 31  |
| Cycling                     | 44           | 15          | 21           | 27  |
| Other Amenities             | 18           | 15          | 6            | 22  |
| Golf                        | 29           | 12          | 22           | 29  |
| ATV/Dirtbiking              | 72           | 11          | 44           | 15  |
| Fishing/Ice-Fishing         | 79           | 8           | 51           | 21  |
| Snowmobiling                | 53           | 7           | 38           | 24  |
| Hunting                     | 67           | 6           | 48           | 19  |

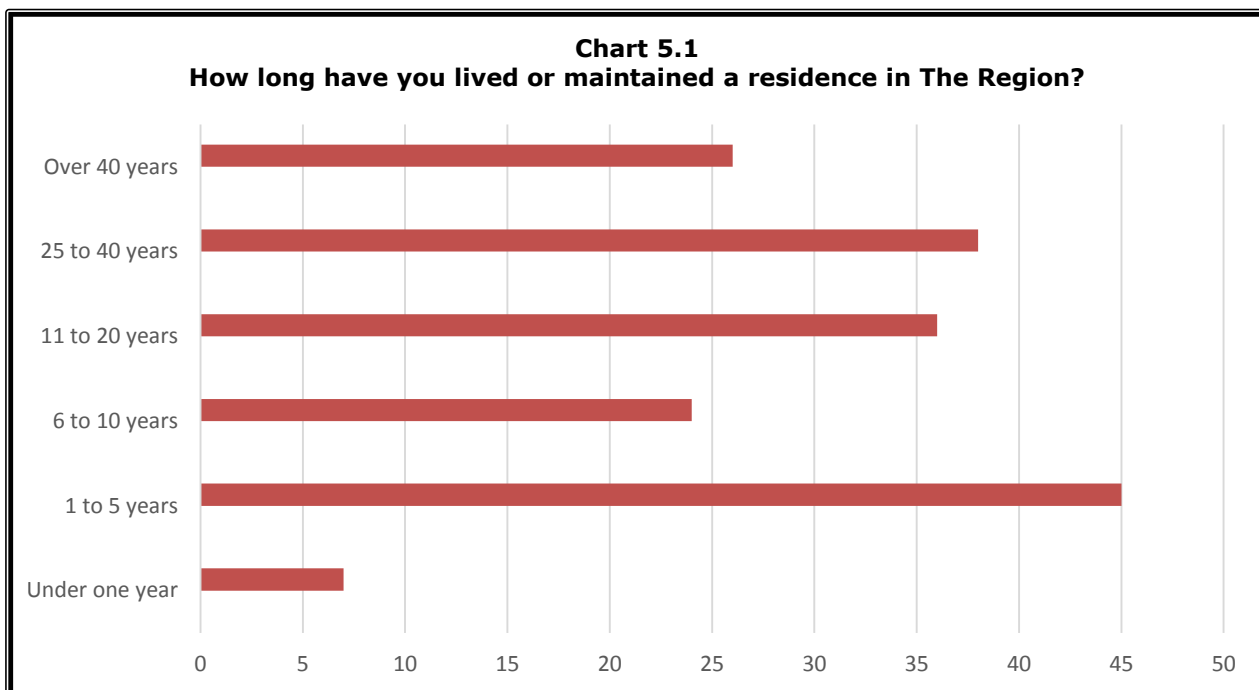
**Chart 4.1** further identifies areas needing improvement pointing to **more amenities** and **marketing** efforts as top priorities. This is closely followed by a need for additional accommodations along with cell service and recreation.

This is indicative of a common theme throughout the surveys and the public consultations.





**Chart 5.1** – An encouraging number of respondents are new to the area (5 years or less). Also worthy to note is that the majority of respondents are long time and some lifetime residents.



# Public Consultations

A total of four consultations were held. Three consultations (Woodridge, Vita, Sprague) were open to the general public with notices sent out by the RM offices. A fourth consultation took place via teleconference involving the Tourism Committee and Critical Eye.

The method of these consultations was to conduct a **SWOT analysis**, identifying and discussing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as they pertain to the development and sustainability of tourism in the region.

Full results of these SWOT sessions are listed in Appendix B.

## Key Findings – Strengths

- Nature (general)
- Recreation (general) & trail-related recreation (hiking, ATV, skiing, snowmobiling)
- Heritage (culture, church, museum, history)
- Wildlife (hunting, fishing, watching animals, birding)
- Culinary (berry picking, restaurants, etc.)

## Key Findings - Weaknesses

- Lack of accommodations
- Lack of Signage/rest stops
- Difficulty in community participation (volunteers, sponsors, local government, distance)
- Infrastructure
- Cell service

## Key Findings - Opportunities

The list for opportunities was by far the longest. Residents at public consultations are well aware of the regions strengths and are tuned into what others might enjoy.

Common themes included possible solutions for the accommodation issue (billeting, B&B). Many saw putting more attention and investment on trails and campgrounds as an opportunity. Others expressed interest in expanding on the use of the river systems for fishing, tubing, canoeing and riverside trails, including developing loading docks or ramps with parking.

The “opportunities” voiced by the attendees aligns with the strengths mentioned earlier. This can be viewed as positive in that it identifies a clear path in defining what tourism in the region will consist of and mean during the initial stages of development.

## Key Findings - Threats

- Lack of accommodations
- Natural disaster/storms
- Lack of law enforcement
- Regulations, red tape
- Government inaction

# Survey and Public Consultations (SWOT) Findings

Through the survey and public consultations a common theme emerged in all areas of examination.

For a tourism industry to be fostered within the region it will be accomplished by expanding on strengths, researching and finding solutions to the lack of accommodations and the further development and promotion of what presently exists. These were clearly identified as the top priorities.

The key areas or themes to focus on during the **development of market-ready tourism products** are:

- Nature (general)
- Recreation (general) & trail-related recreation (hiking, ATV, skiing, snowmobiling, driving, cycling)
- Heritage (culture, church, museum, history)
- Wildlife (hunting, fishing, watching animals, birding)

The key areas of **industry development** to be focused on are:

- Signage
- Development of more accommodations (B&B, Billeting, Campgrounds)
- Marketing
- Community organizing (volunteers, Chamber of Commerce, churches)
- Organized effort to develop and promote (committee, coordinator)
- Lobby cell and internet providers for better service.

The following issues, falling outside the parameters of this study, are related to **governance**.

- Policing, by-laws, enforcement
- Infrastructure
- Business incentives
- Cleanliness, beautification, garbage along highways

# Recommendations & Implementation

Based on the results of the consultations, surveys, SWOT analysis and tourism industry research and trends, Critical Eye has prepared a list of **nine (9) recommendations** to be carried out over the course of the next year (April 2016-September 2017).

The following recommendations are based on the **timeline** found in Appendix E.

## **Recommendation #1**      **TOURISM COMMITTEE**

In order to ensure the coordination of the two RMs and the multitude of offerings within the region, Critical Eye recommends the RMs of Piney & Stuartburn create a joint Tourism Association, which is to be represented by a Tourism Committee comprised of citizens, tour operators and official representatives of the RM offices.

This committee should consist of 6-8 members with equal members from both RMs and should include a representative from each RM office. Committee membership would be a volunteer position and should be a person with a vested interest in tourism. This can include stakeholders, private citizens and business owners.

This committee will direct and oversee the created position of "Tourism Coordinator" who each summer will be responsible for the oversight and coordination of Tourism, Events and Volunteers within the region as it pertains to promoted tourism activities (see Recommendation 3).

In the first year, each representative will be responsible for the initial coordination of information about their area in regards to festival & event dates, fall suppers, attractions, and other events which may be deemed as an "attraction". This database will be used as the initial foundation for the structuring of a "tourism industry association" within the region.

Each committee member, with the administrative structure of the RM offices, will be responsible for outreach to the local business and "tourism industry" within their region to ensure all businesses and tourism-related offerings are included in the directory.

- The committee will be responsible for overseeing the creation and roll out of the branding campaign. (see Recommendation #2)
- The committee will facilitate a logo contest. (see Recommendation #2)
- The committee will oversee and assist in the development of website content (see Recommendation # 4).
- Committee should meet monthly for the initial stages (first 6 months). These meetings could take place in person or via conference call (or other online solutions i.e. Skype, GoToMeeting, etc.).
- Committee members are to be responsible for initiating regular contact with stakeholders/operators in their area.

- The Committee will attempt to ensure festivals, fall suppers, and other events be coordinated and non-conflicting except for dates such as Canada Day or long weekends. While this may not always be possible, the Committee will ensure a listing of all events are circulated through marketing channels such as website, social media, regional and Provincial Tourism bodies, etc. (see Marketing Strategy)
- In-person meetings should alternate between communities. This would ensure that everyone on the committee is familiar with members' regions and fuel discussions.
- During this time, each committee member will gather the following information from their region for these sections of the website while coordinating event dates with neighboring towns:
  - List of yearly festivals or activities (dates, map of the area, times, location, contact person)
  - Directory beginnings (see Recommendation 4)
  - Contact information for RM offices and Tourism Committee
  - Amenities (to be approached for directory sales)
  - Accommodations (to be approached for directory sales)

## **Recommendation #2**      **BRANDING**

As the Tourism Committee's first step, Critical Eye recommends branding the combined RMs as "**Stuart Pines**", or a similar name meant to represent the combined efforts of the RMs of Stuartburn & Piney. This branded "product" can be viewed as a tourism association, meant to promote and represent the industry.

During a draft review session with the existing Tourism Committee a number of names and concepts were suggested (i.e. Aisle of Orchids) on a concept based on named highways in Minnesota. Critical Eye suggests that the naming should be decided by Council, citizens in the region, and whichever route they see as most beneficial for their respective regions' engagement. We believe this should be the first step in any tourism strategy.

For the purpose of consistency the name "**Stuart Pines**" will be used throughout the remainder of this document.

Once the combined RMs have determined a name, a **logo contest** for the region should be created to run through June-August 2016.

Creating a logo via community contest will result in community engagement. A contest and roll out of the branding campaign would be carried out by the Tourism Committee to coincide with the launch of the Stuart Pines **website** (see Recommendation #5).

A call for submissions in a logo contest could also be distributed through the schools in June 2016. The winning design would be featured on the Stuart Pines website and on all promotional and marketing materials.

A winning logo announcement can be used to draw further attention to the website and could take place initially in early September 2016 with promotion taking place at fall events such as Fall Suppers.

Local businesses could be approached to provide a prize package for the winner. A local business (or one from Steinbach) could be approached to sponsor the logo contest by providing in-kind digital reproduction. A graphic designer should charge \$250-\$500 for the digital reproduction of a logo.

The contest will create awareness of the new website. It will also act as an active campaign while soliciting listings from business/operators.

### **Recommendation #3**      **EXPLORE HIRING A SUMMER STUDENT - TOURISM COORDINATOR**

The Federal and Provincial Governments have programs for hiring students and various job grant programs. (see Appendix C)

As of this writing, the majority of grant application deadlines have passed or are about to. As such, this position should be explored for the 2017 summer season. This would also allow the Tourism Committee the time to coordinate the foundation of the region's tourism offerings and determine the exact role the Coordinator would play.

#### **The Role**

After the initial collection and coordination of information for the Stuart Pines region, each RM should explore hiring a summer student to act as Tourism Coordinators.

These positions would work with the Tourism Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, Operators and Eastman Tourism, from May-August of each year, to coordinate and promote tourism in Stuart Pines, but act with more specificity in their own RM.

This would equate to a Tourism Coordinator residing in each RM office from May-August, working collaboratively at the direction and guidance of the Tourism Committee.

The Tourism Coordinators, who could also be referred to as Tourism Ambassadors, will be responsible for managing and promoting **tourism, events and volunteer engagement** under the guidance of the Tourism Committee.

These positions should explore resources available through Volunteer Manitoba to aid in the process of determining volunteer needs, recruitment and compiling a list based on skills and availability.

- Volunteer Manitoba - <http://www.volunteerwinnipeg.mb.ca/>

A draft Tourism Coordinator job description is attached at Appendix D.

## **Recommendation #4**      **THE CREATION OF A STUART PINES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

As a means of coordinating the efforts of local businesses across a vast, yet sparsely populated geographical region, Critical Eye strongly recommends the creation of a Stuart Pines Chamber of Commerce. This would be a Chamber based on members from both RMs and the goal would be to have this in place by June 2017.

A coordinated business community playing an active role in promoting their products is essential to achieving a strong foundation for any development, coordination or marketing efforts of tourism.

This Chamber will function as all Chambers of Commerce do but will work closely with the Tourism Committee to guarantee alignment between these two groups and ensure the dissemination of information. The Tourism Committee and the Chamber should have representatives on each other's committees.

The Chamber of Commerce would be responsible for maintaining a business directory for their own purposes but this could also be used by the Tourism Committee and tourism based efforts. The Chamber should play a role in maintaining relationships with business/stakeholders and ensure their efforts are aligned with tourism initiatives. They should provide networking opportunities to create more cohesion within the business and tourism communities.

The Chamber of Commerce would be responsible for the creation of a '**Welcome Wagon**' package for newcomers to the Stuart Pines region. The RM and Chamber would work together to ensure newcomers to the region are identified. The Chamber would facilitate the successful distribution of Welcome Wagon packages throughout Stuart Pines.

It was identified during a consultation session that there have been previous attempts within the region to form a Chamber. Critical Eye strongly recommends the RMs work with the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce to receive guidance, assistance and coaching in this process.

The establishment of a Stuart Pines Chamber of Commerce will require time and effort to coordinate. Critical Eye cannot stress enough that this is one of the most essential steps in the entire process.

During the initial stages of the Tourism Strategy, the RM offices and the Tourism Committee will work together in the absence of a functioning Chamber to assemble the business directory, which for the most part is already in existence.

This will also aid in the creation of a Chamber. While connecting with stakeholders the Committee will identify the business owners who are the cheerleaders and community leaders. Those identified should be recruited early to aide in the process of recruiting other Chamber members and possibly to participate in the Tourism Committee.



## **Recommendation #5**      **STUART PINES TOURISM WEBSITE**

In the present digital age it is next to impossible to do business successfully without a strong online presence. While most local small town businesses often rely on word of mouth or convenience, this does not work when marketing to those from outside the region who rely heavily on the Internet to conduct research. Attracting customers, tourists or visitors from outside your region requires a competitive presence.

Critical Eye recommends the creation of a **standalone** Stuart Pines website which will coordinate the businesses and tourist destinations in the region, while also functioning as the primary marketing tool for the tourism promotion efforts of the Tourism Committee. This website, or a portion thereof, could be used and possibly managed, in the future, by a Chamber of Commerce as many or most of those members would be listed on the website.

It is recommended that this website be developed immediately with a target unveiling the directory portion in early June 2016, with a full launch in September 2016.

The website will act as a means of coordinating all the information a tourist or visitor would find relevant across both RMs and will feature a directory of:

- all events (general)
- fall suppers
- attractions
- museums
- churches
- festivals
- destinations
- tours
- trails
- businesses
- amenities
- other

When the directory is complete, Critical Eye recommends creating multiple itineraries, or suggested packaging, based on single or multi-day excursions to Stuart Pines. This could include:

- The Trails of Stuart Pines (including maps for hiking, cycling, ATV, snowmobile, skiing)
- Where to stay (hotel, motel, camping, RV parks, resorts, etc.)
- Wildlife and nature viewing (listing of wildlife and plants common to the area, along with the best places to view, photo tours)
- Culinary (restaurants, berry picking, mushroom picking, etc.)
- Hunting & Fishing directory

The website, upon launch, should feature the following sections:

- **Intro/Home** page - a "welcome" portal with images highlighting the wilderness and recreational nature of the region
- **About** Stuart Pines – a brief description of the area including a description of the nature, recreation and history that is unique to the region
- **Contact** information for the RM offices and Tourism Committee/Coordinator
- A **directory** of all tourism and business-related information in the region based on categories such as accommodations, amenities, tours
- A **Blog**, which would feature self-produced content (by the business) about specific attractions or destinations.
- **Feature Itineraries** – how to spend your time here
- **Community Calendar** – festivals, events, fall suppers, etc.

This website should be integrated with a social media feed (Facebook and Twitter to start) and the RM offices should push this content through their own feeds as well.

The technical basis of this website would be a **WordPress** platform. WordPress is an easy to use and versatile platform known as a **Content Management System (CMS)**. This style of website makes expansions, additions and organization simple. Once the setup and training are complete, it is very easy to use for anyone with experience in software such as Microsoft Office.

Critical Eye requested quotes based on this style of website. Once the template of the website was created, the directory could be imported from an Excel document into the website to reduce the need for manually entering the business directory data.

The quotes were consistently between \$1,500-\$3,000, based on various factors during construction such as importing data, level of preparation by client, graphics preparation, etc.

## **Recommendation #6      TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

Critical Eye recommends the Stuart Pines Tourism Committee rely on the experience and leadership of Travel Manitoba and Eastman Tourism throughout the implementation and development process. Each organization has networks, resources, marketing distribution streams and industry knowledge that will aid the Tourism Committee in the challenges that lay ahead.

Critical Eye recommends that the Tourism Committee approach the Manitoba Tourism Education Centre (MTEC), or act with the assistance of Eastman Tourism, to explore training and workshop options to be offered to area stakeholders. By offering education and training within the region it will elevate the level of service, promote engagement within the community and allow the Tourism Committee to establish a leadership role.

MTEC's mission is to enhance the performance and ensure the sustainability of Manitoba's tourism and hospitality industry by delivering relevant training and human resource development.

Training should be offered to the region's businesses but should remain open to the general public in hopes that an entrepreneurial resident may seek to develop a product within the region, or perhaps become involved in promoting the region.

Sessions should be focused on expressed needs of coordinated stakeholders but should initially concentrate on the following areas:

- Marketing
- Product or Tourism Development
- Hospitality

During the survey and consultations it was noted that the lack of accommodations were considered a weakness. With the goal of creating more places for tourists to stay, Critical Eye recommends approaching the Bed & Breakfast Association of Manitoba to provide information sessions for those who may wish to start their own B&B.

- Bed & Breakfast Association of Manitoba - <http://bedandbreakfast.mb.ca>
- MTEC courses - <http://www.mtec.mb.ca/training.asp>

## **Recommendation #7**      **OPEN DISCUSSIONS WITH EXISTING DESTINATIONS**

St-Malo Beach, Emerson Campground, Buffalo Point Resort and others are popular and well-established tourism destinations in the South-East corner of Manitoba. They have a developed slate of tourism-related products, years of experience in hospitality, investment, operating, developing and promoting tourism. They also have established marketing distribution streams that could benefit the Stuart Pines region.

Tourists staying at various campgrounds, resorts, etc. represent a pool of potential customers for attractions that are within the Stuart Pines region. Whether exploring nature through the trails, picking berries or going for a day trip to a museum, these tourists are within an hour's drive of most of what Stuart Pines has to offer.

Partnerships or agreements with these destinations could provide a solution to a major weakness of the region. The lack of accommodations is a barrier to growth that will take years to remedy. By relying on visitors who are staying at various sites in Southeastern Manitoba, tourists can be invited to play in Stuart Pines. This would allow for the development of tourism products without the imminent stress of dealing with an issue (accommodation) that is largely outside of the Tourism Committee's or the Municipality's control.

As part of any potential arrangement, Critical Eye recommends establishing a visitor profile for various destinations (what are their interests) then creating half and full day itineraries to them to explore Stuart Pines.

Opening a dialogue and potential partnership with an established entity would assist in Stuart Pines development through information sharing, potential advertising (brochures, signage, etc.), and potential visitors to the region.

The full nature of any partnership, participation or working relationship will be ultimately up to the respective elected officials and business leaders of each community and business.

## **Recommendation #8      HIGHWAY SIGNAGE – WAY-FINDING**

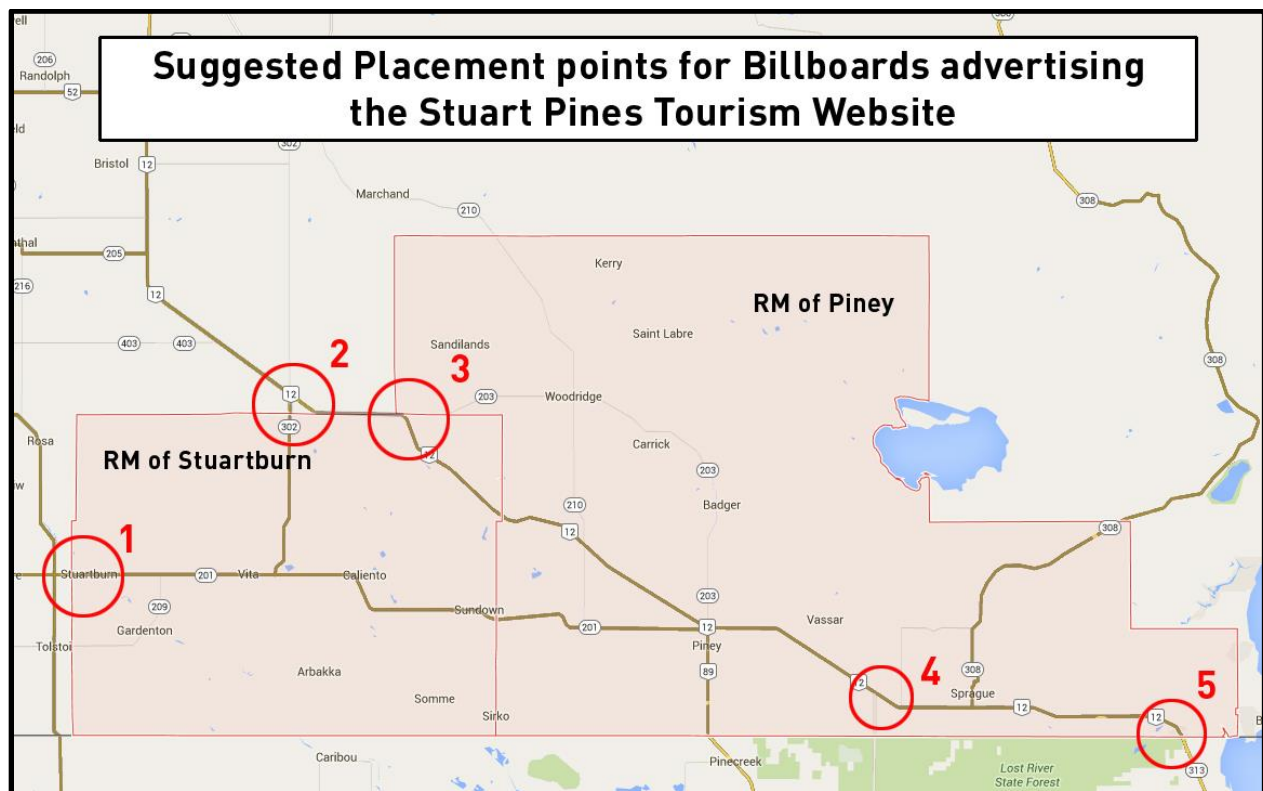
A lack of signage was a common theme of weakness as identified through both the public consultations and the survey. Navigating the roads of Stuart Pines can be confusing for visitors due to this lack of way-finding and the long stretches of road.

This lack of signage identifies a missed opportunity to provide a combination of advertising for local businesses while also providing a convenience to a visitor, notifying them of where they may find a coffee, meal, gas or a place of interest (museum, hotel, nature trail, etc.).

Two major highways run through or close to the region. Provincial Highway 59 and Provincial Highway 12, both which run north-south through Southern Manitoba and are heavily travelled major routes to and from the United States.

Another major provincial road, Highway 201, runs across the region, west to east, connecting Highway 59 (close to Stuartburn) to Piney where it then joins Provincial Highway 12.

Critical Eye recommends, as a long term goal, the placement of billboards advertising the website and regional tourism within Stuart Pines at key entry points to the region. Billboards 1, 2 & 3 are considered priority placements.



**Billboard 1** – Ideal Placement would be at the intersection of Highway 59 and Highway 201. Alternate placement would be at the entry point to the RM of Stuartburn on Highway 201. This should be considered a priority placement. Alternatively or additionally a sign could be placed along Highway 59 at the border entry point to capture the attention of cars entering from the United States.

**Billboard 2** – Ideal Placement would be at the intersection of Highway 12 and Highway 302. This should be considered a priority placement. Alternate placement would be at the RM lines on Highway 12 and Highway 302.

**Billboard 3** – Ideal Placement would be along Highway 12 at the Sandilands intersection of Highway 404 and 203. This placement will be targeting travellers entering the region from the north. This should be considered a priority placement.

**Billboard 4** - Ideal Placement would be along Highway 12 at South Junction. This placement will be targeting Americans entering the region as well as assist in creating general awareness.

**Billboard 5** - Ideal Placement would be along Highway 12 at the entry point to the RM of Piney from the United States.



The consultations and survey clearly identified the lack of signage indicating distances to towns, amenities, etc. This style of sign is common throughout the province and the Western world.

Efforts should be immediately made to begin the process of way-finding within the region, specifically on Highway 12 and Highway 201. These signs would be placed at the side of the highway, indicating distance to and amenities available in an approaching town or village.

## **Recommendation #9      CREATION OF COMMUNITY BUILDING EVENTS & EFFORTS**

To increase a sense of community and community engagement, involve members of the community by creating various contests and events that cost little or are events that could be sponsored by local businesses. Below are a few examples:

- Community Clean-up Day
- Adopt a stretch of highway
- Community Garage Sale Weekend
- Photo contests
- Establish community gardens
- Establish a food bank; solicit donations (grants)
- Hold small music concerts with local bands
- Host outdoor movie nights
- Hold various seasonal contests – snow sculpture, outdoor Christmas decorations, largest fish caught
- Walkathons, cycle-a-thons, marathon, etc.
- Volunteer of the Year Award, other awards.



# Marketing Strategy

The following marketing activities are suggested to establish Stuart Pines as a region where visitors can spend time. The primary method of marketing would be:

- 1) A dedicated website to provide an accessible online home for a business & destination directory, articles, blog posts, pictures and videos.
- 2) Social media feeds such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (for pictures) and YouTube (for video).
- 3) A weekly newsletter to distribute content to a mailing list, with efforts made through social media and the website to encourage people to sign up for the newsletter.
- 4) Establishing distribution networks with provincial tourism bodies and local media outlets.

The following activities should be employed to establish a foundation for a marketing distribution network:

- Coordinate marketing, education and mentoring with MTEC & Eastman Tourism to help promote education amongst the businesses and attractions in the region. This should include the businesses and attractions producing content for the Tourism Committee to distribute.
- Coordinate with Travel Manitoba (TMB), explore options with TMB for cross-border advertising of Stuart Pines. Explore partnership options with TMB/Eastman Tourism in getting Stuart Pines offerings listed on TMB website and materials.
- Coordinate a travel media familiarisation tour (FAM) – areas of focus on marketing efforts should be on Steinbach, Winnipeg, Winkler, Minnesota and North Dakota media.
- Coordinate with community churches, social groups, community centres, RM offices, etc. to distribute information to residents to make them aware of the Tourism Strategy which is being employed in their region.
- Coordinate campaigns around particularly active times of the year (summer festivals, fall suppers, winter recreation, hunting season, etc.)
- Blog/Social media distribution of itineraries and notices which can also be promoted by Eastman Tourism & TMB, newsletters, churches & community groups.
- Encourage restaurants and accommodations to use Trip Advisor, Yelp and other social media review services. Encourage restaurants to provide coupons or discounts through the Stuart Pines marketing stream.
- When employing a summer student, have them construct up to 52 weekly itineraries to be promoted through website/social media and accompanied by coupons, discounts, incentives, etc. These should be sent out every Tuesday to promote the coming weekend, while also projecting larger activities (festivals) which may be a few weeks away.
- Develop and distribute posters throughout Stuart Pines and surrounding areas advertising the website, feature options and some attractions that are available.

## Future Implementation Opportunities

Based on consultations and surveys Critical Eye feels that the strongest themes or categories to offer would be:

- nature related itineraries
- scenic related itineraries (for driving tours)
- cultural/heritage itineraries
- culinary itineraries
- listings or a calendar of Fall Suppers
- listings or a calendar of all Festivals

The goal is to develop initial itineraries, or packaged offerings, based on leveraging existing destinations (i.e. Gardenton, Tall Grass) to create suggestions of things visitors/tourists may want to do based on 1 day, weekend (2-3 days) and 1 week (5-7 days) tours.

The following are suggestions for future development:

1. Explore opportunities through the Ukrainian Canadian Congress – re: history in the region. This could lead to a “Ukrainian Cultural Festival” similar to the Icelandic Fest in Gimli or “Aboriginal Days”. Dauphin already holds a National Ukrainian Festival but Stuart Pines could expand on their existing Ukrainian festival, possibly as a partner to or in conjunction with Dauphin (same weekend).
2. Explore opportunities through Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and other Eco-related organizations (i.e. CPAWS).
3. Develop highway rest stops which can serve as a non-staffed visitor centre.
4. Draft list of endangered plants and species in the area.
5. Draft list of wildlife in the area.
6. Coordinate theme tours with museums, churches, antique dealers.
7. Develop church/hall/catering packages for weddings.
8. Coordinate a Stuart Pines all-around-town garage sale weekend (advertise locally and through Kijiji, Dawson Trail Dispatch, Steinbach Online, Facebook, etc.).
9. Create a list of storytellers/historians as possible tour guides or experience enhancements.
10. Investigate viability of a Sturgis type festival for ATV, snowmobile.
11. Host an annual car show/music festival.
12. Investigate viability of dogsled races or as a tourism offering, based on existing providers or importing. There is a group of dog sled lodges and operators based in Ely Minnesota, south-east of Fort Frances.



13. Investigate viability of creating a running marathon in the region.
14. Develop Motorcycle touring - plan out routes – with suggestions for places to stop. These places could be sponsors (i.e. “stop here for lunch”, “stop here for ice cream”) will outline gas fill-up, rest stops, etc.
15. Explore opening cottage lots/developing an area more. Explore growth strategies for cottage industry through possible crown lottery cottage lot auction. Develop an area around a lake or waterway (Whitemouth Lake?) to create a cottage/resort feel such as Grand Marais, Gimli, Winnipeg Beach, Victoria Beach, West Hawk, Falcon, etc.
16. Install garbage receptacles to beautify and promote conservation and proper disposal of trash.
17. Market nature tours to photographers and birders.

Below are details around specific suggested itineraries.

1. A nature tour itinerary
  - A nature tour would consist of providing information for nature-based destinations
  - Guide to the wildlife, flora, landscape, birders, etc. in Stuart Pines
  - These could also include organized and guided nature photography tours
2. Church Tour – through the current academic study being conducted by the University of Manitoba, explore how this can be leveraged to attract visitors. Working with this group could provide the networking to access funding, sponsors, etc. as well as possibly identifying potential tour guides and product development.
3. Culinary – berry picking, mushroom picking, restaurants, homemade food shops or bakeries
4. Historic – Ukrainian, Mennonite, First Nations, etc.
5. Trails of Stuart Pines (hiking, cycling, skiing, horseback riding, ATV and snowmobile trails) – investigate viability of BMX or mountain bike trails
6. Stuart Pines ATV/Snowmobile – suggestions for places to stop, shop, etc. List rules re: darting around town, sticking to trails, etc.
7. Motorcycle Touring Route - could include sponsors who want to be mentioned as stop points (restaurants, gas, etc.)
8. Stuart Pines Summer Festivals – compile list
9. Stuart Pines Fall Suppers – compile list
10. Self-guided itineraries with introduction videos on YouTube
11. Self-guided tours for festivals

## Conclusion

Critical Eye Consulting believes that the Rural Municipalities of Piney and Stuartburn, in their tourism efforts, have a strong foundation to build on.

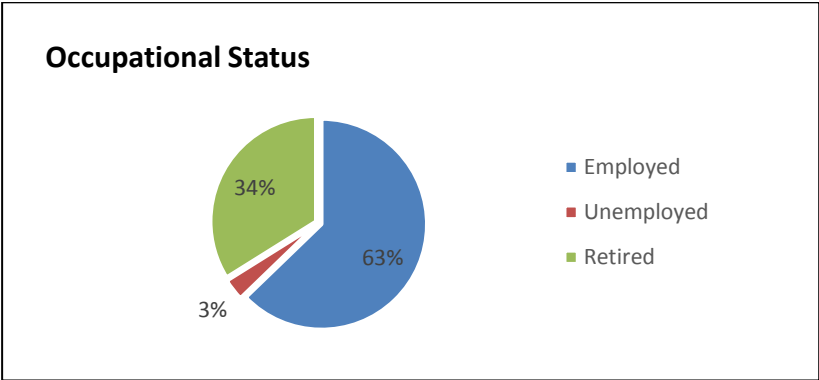
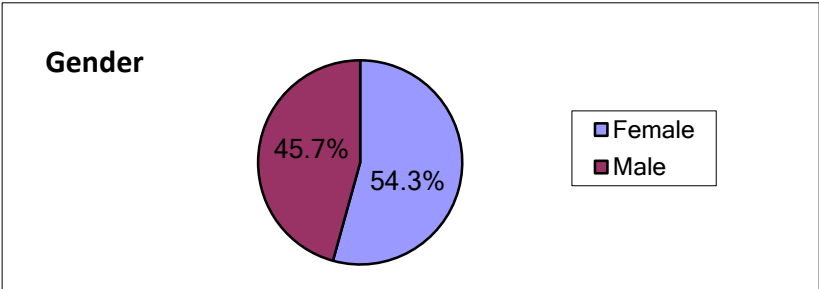
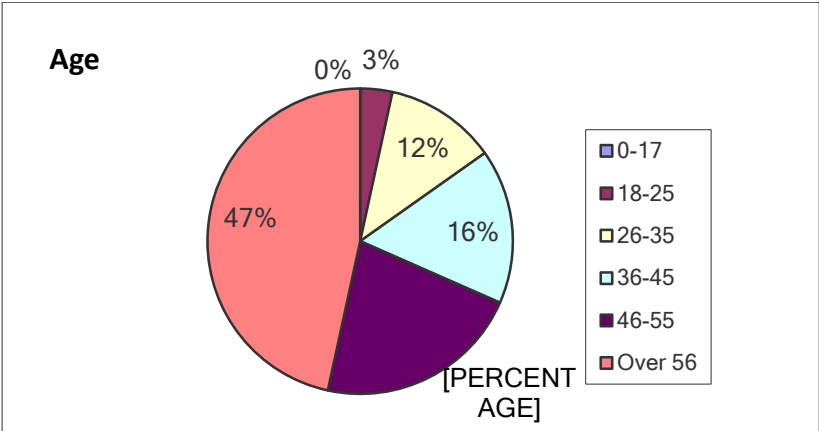
Partnerships with Travel Manitoba and Eastman Tourism will be instrumental in the success of the region.

Critical Eye suggests the use of volunteers, committees along with Federal & Provincial job grants to staff this initiative in the beginning stages.

Critical Eye believes that the combined RMs should seek the support and cooperation of established destinations in the region as well as any rural or municipal region within a 2-hour drive.

Appendix A

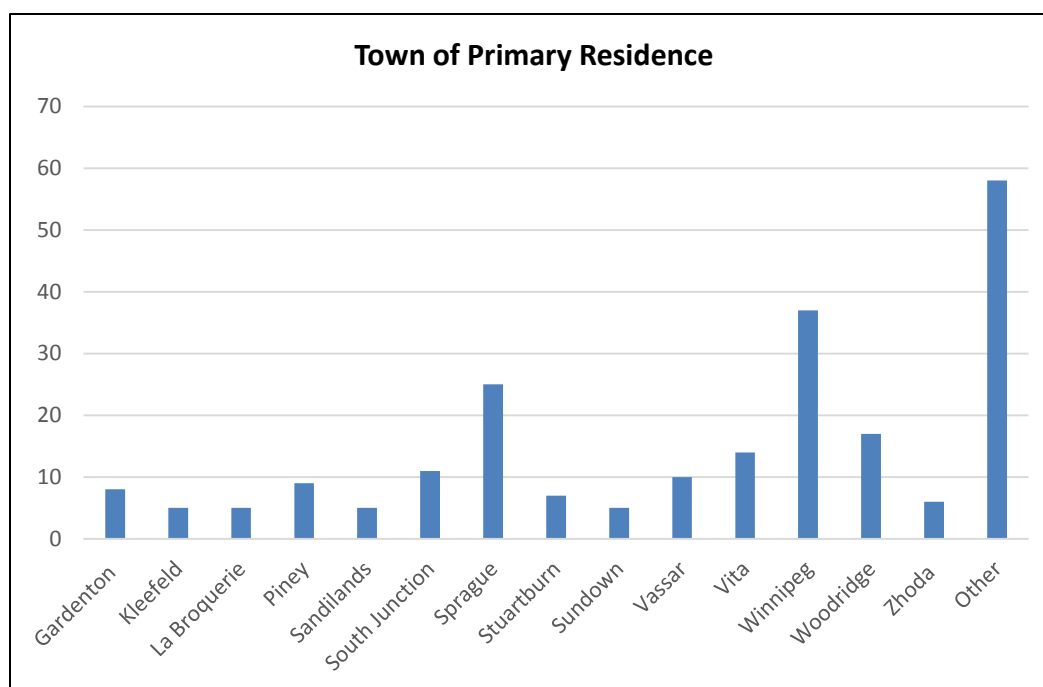
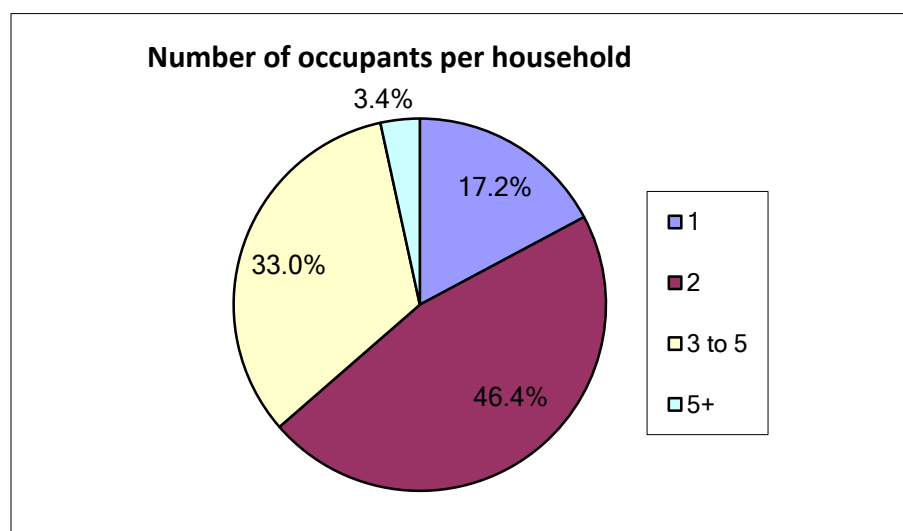
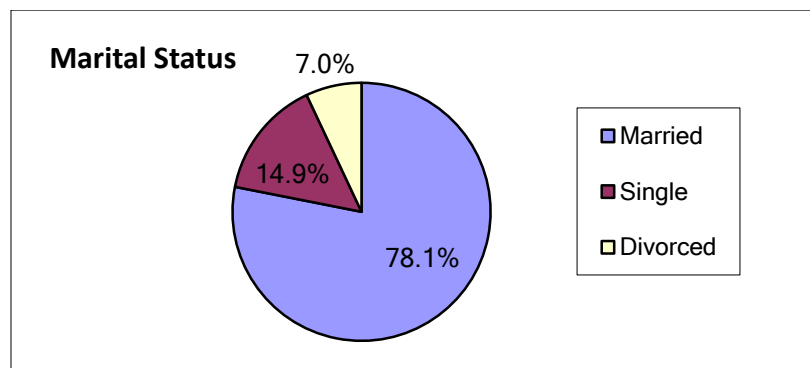
Full Survey Results

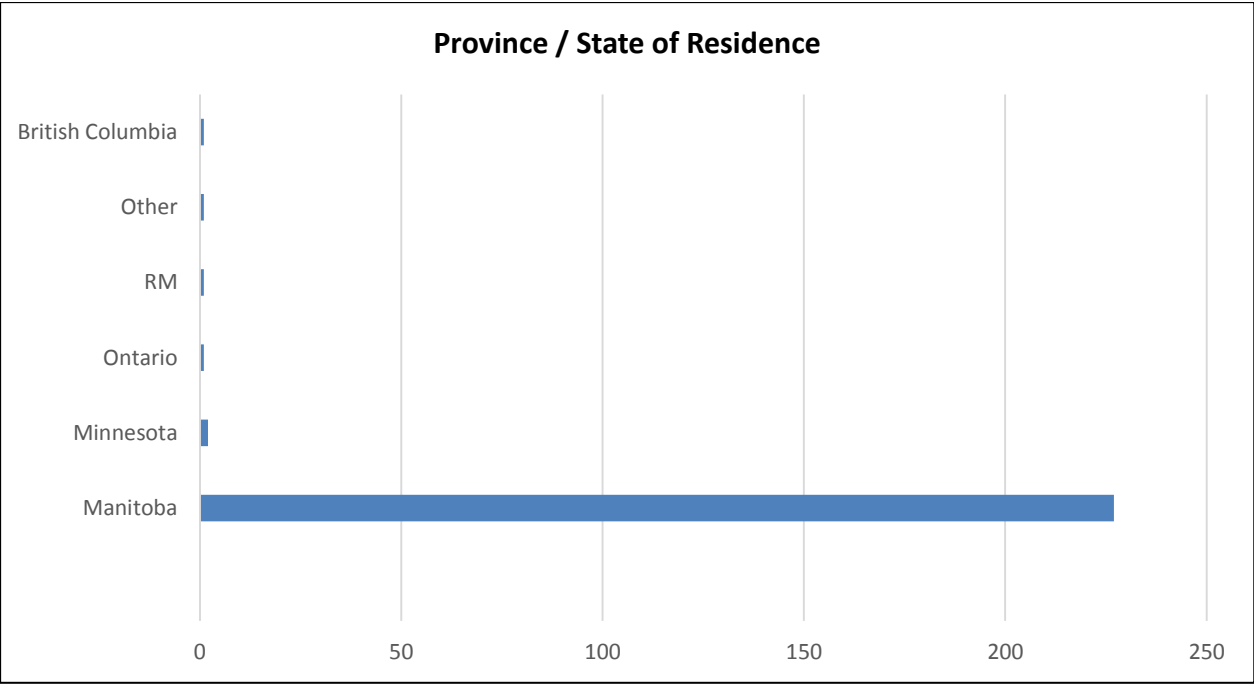


Critical Eye Consulting designed a survey & public consultation to gather resident and land owner input on their views about what a visitor may be interested in seeing.

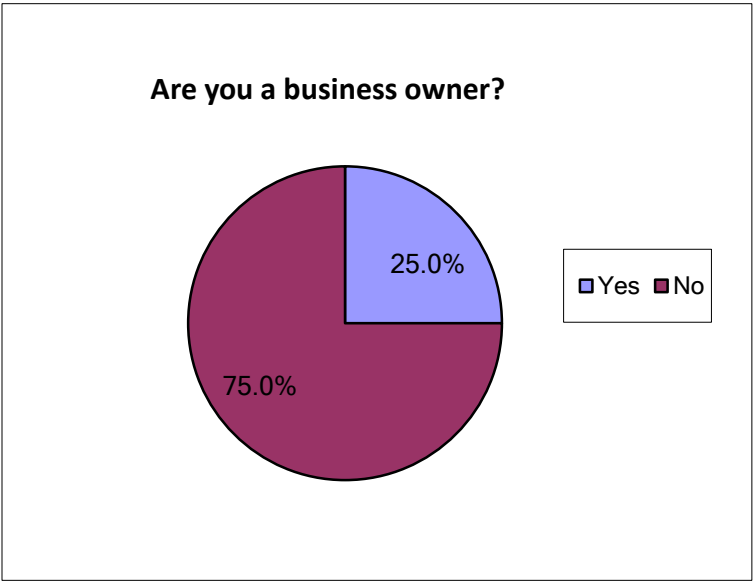
The Rural Municipalities of Piney and Stuartburn administered the survey. Public consultations were held to gather more information from constituents and to elaborate on the SWOT analysis.

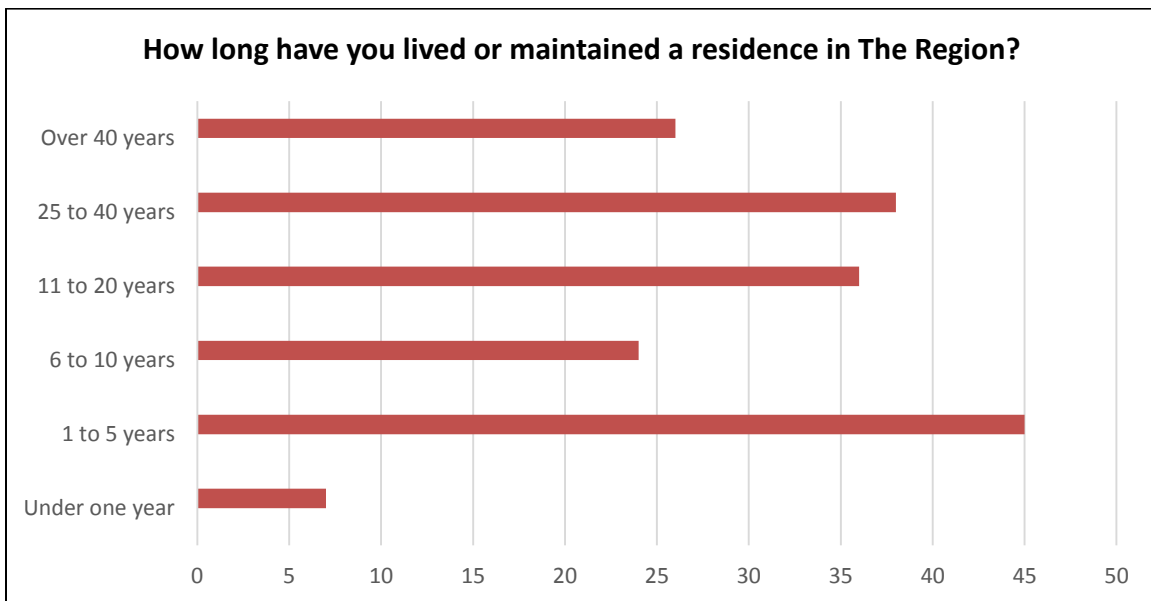
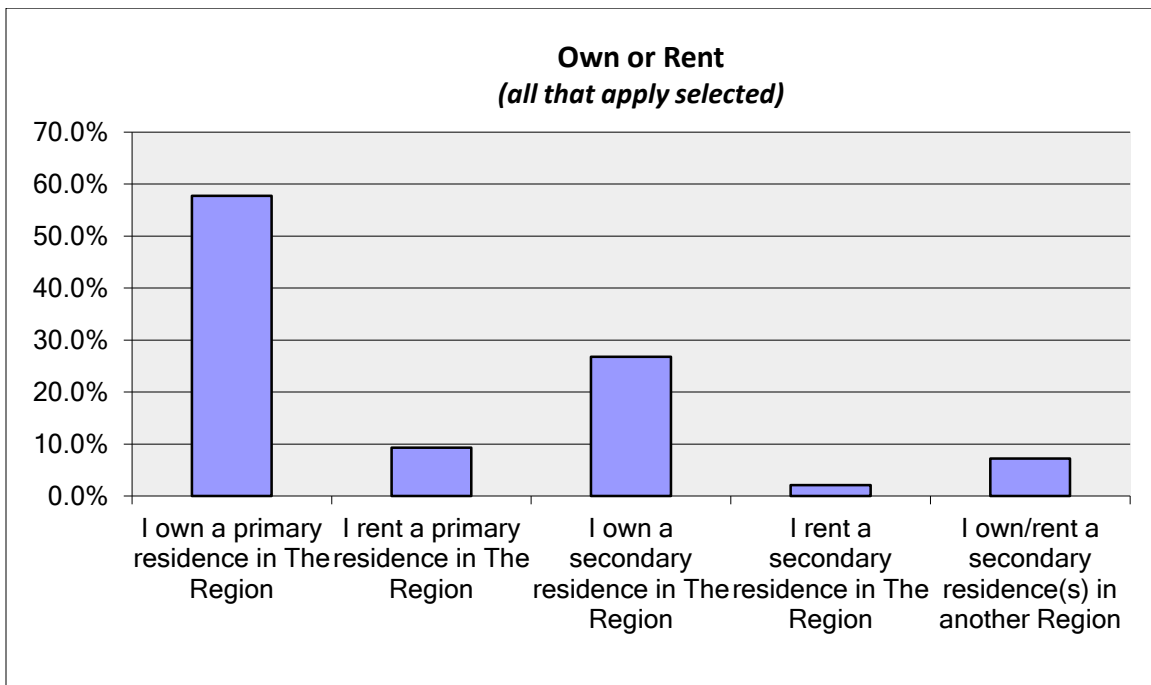
The data collected from the survey (Appendix A), the public consultations (Appendix B), and meetings between Critical Eye and the RMs allowed Critical Eye to bring forward recommendations to implement a successful tourism strategy.



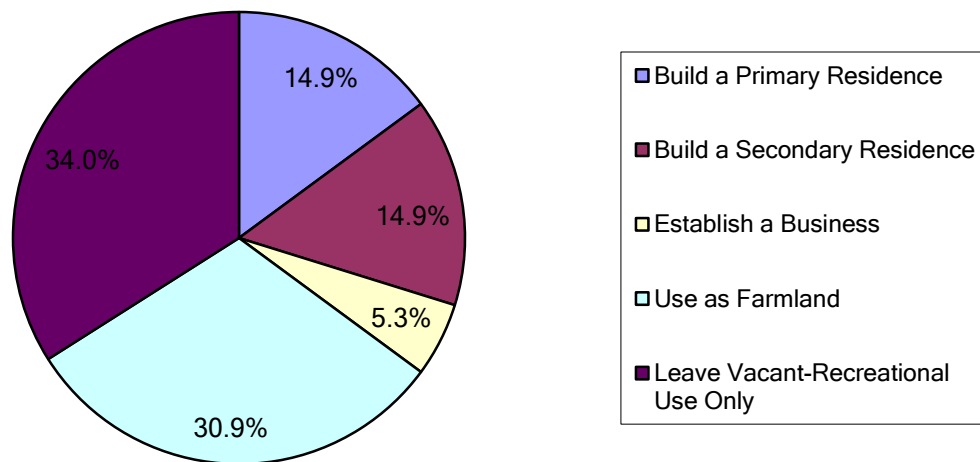


A quarter of respondents listed they were business owners.



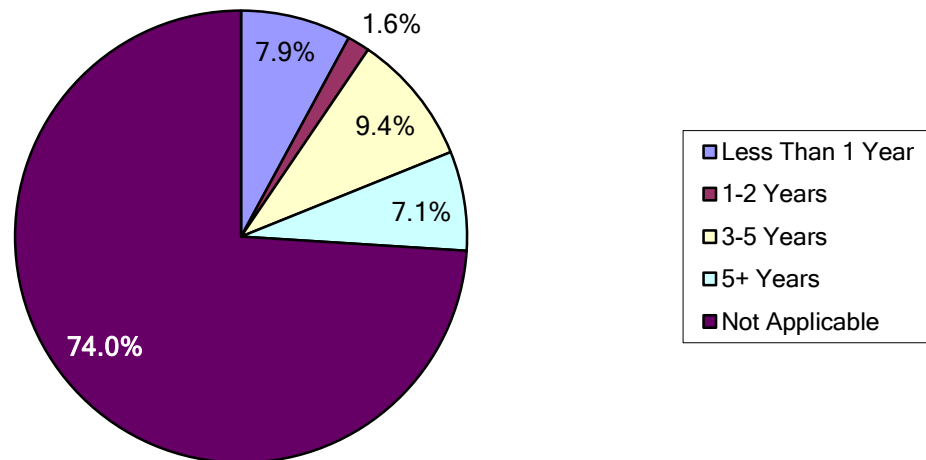


**If you own a piece of property within The Region, what are your future plans for this property?**



An impressive amount of respondents are still quite new to the area and have been living in the Region for only 1-5 years. The combined totals of the 25 to 40 years category and the over 40 years category is significantly larger. With the RMs vision to retain their new & current residents and to expand on it, this confirms the need to ensure a wide-range of activities are available for all age groups and types of traveller.

**If you plan to build on your property, when do you hope to achieve this?**



**If you maintain a primary residence within The Region, why do you choose to make The Region your primary residence? (select all that apply)**

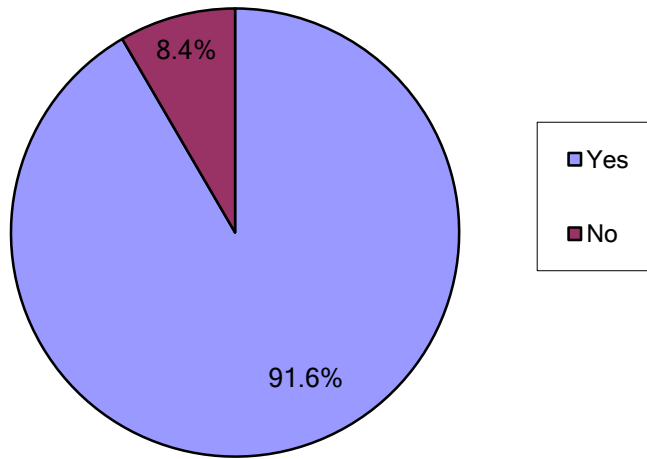
| <b>Answer Options</b>               | <b>Response Percent</b> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Small Town Life                     | 61.9%                   |
| Cost of living / Affordable Housing | 58.3%                   |
| Nature / Wildlife                   | 56.8%                   |
| Originally from The Region          | 48.9%                   |
| Family Lives Here                   | 43.9%                   |
| Employment                          | 36.0%                   |
| To Retire                           | 33.8%                   |
| Hunting/ Fishing                    | 29.5%                   |
| Close to United States Border       | 27.3%                   |
| ATV                                 | 24.5%                   |
| Snowmobiling                        | 16.5%                   |
| Other (please specify)              | 16.5%                   |
| Entrepreneurial Opportunity         | 12.2%                   |



**If you maintain a secondary residence in The Region, why did you choose to have a secondary residence in The Region? (select all that apply)**

| Answer Options                    | Response Percent |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Nature/Wildlife                   | 72.9%            |
| Hunting/Fishing                   | 47.1%            |
| ATV                               | 41.4%            |
| Originally From The Region        | 30.0%            |
| Snowmobiling                      | 28.6%            |
| Small Town Life                   | 27.1%            |
| Cost Of Living/Affordable Housing | 24.3%            |
| Other (please specify)            | 24.3%            |
| To Retire                         | 21.4%            |
| Families Live Here                | 20.0%            |
| Close To United States Border     | 11.4%            |
| Employment                        | 5.7%             |
| Entrepreneurial Opportunity       | 5.7%             |

**Do you tour/travel within The Region for recreation, vacation, time-off or leisure activities?**

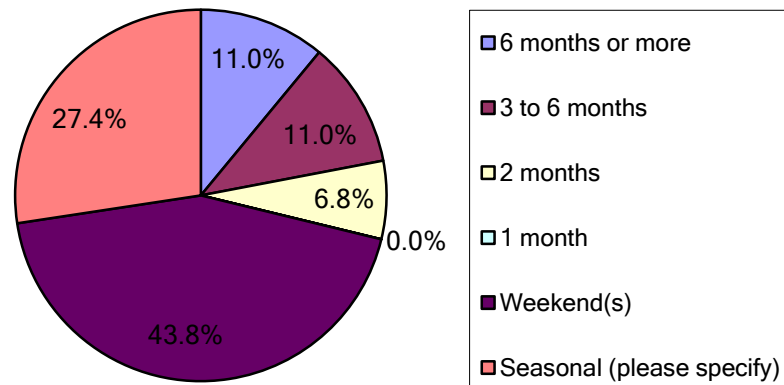


With 92% of respondents asserting they tour and travel within The Region, emphasis should be made to improve communication to residents about what is available to do in the region.

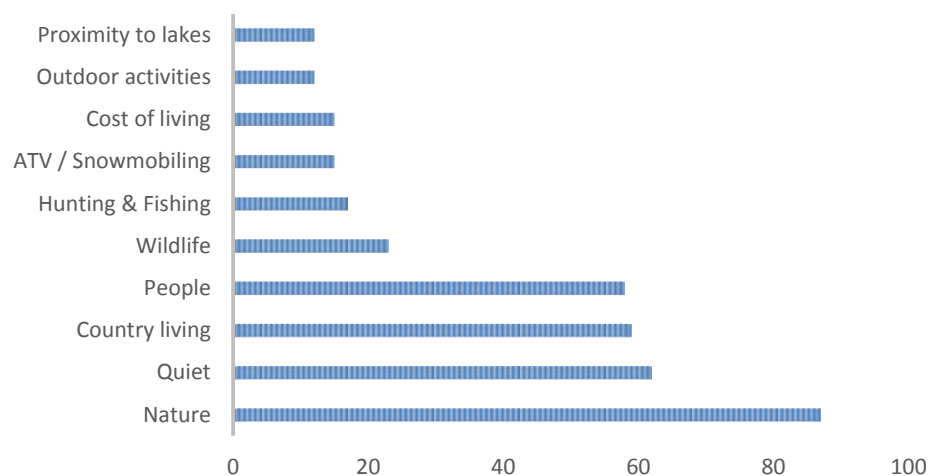
**What types of activities do you participate in when you tour/travel within the Region? (select all that apply)**

| <b>Answer Options</b>        | <b>Response Percent</b> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Berry Picking                | 60.2%                   |
| Fall Suppers                 | 49.7%                   |
| Farmers Markets              | 44.0%                   |
| Fishing                      | 44.0%                   |
| ATV                          | 43.5%                   |
| Canada Day                   | 41.4%                   |
| Garage Sales                 | 39.8%                   |
| Festivals                    | 39.3%                   |
| Deer Hunting                 | 38.2%                   |
| Camping                      | 35.1%                   |
| Hiking                       | 35.1%                   |
| Arts & Crafts / Flea Markets | 31.4%                   |
| Picnics                      | 30.9%                   |
| Churches                     | 29.3%                   |
| Historic Landmark Sites      | 28.8%                   |
| Hunting, Other               | 28.8%                   |
| Ice-Fishing                  | 28.3%                   |
| Snowmobiling                 | 26.2%                   |
| Swimming                     | 26.2%                   |
| Cemeteries                   | 24.1%                   |
| Poker Derbies                | 20.9%                   |
| Weddings                     | 20.9%                   |
| Canoeing                     | 19.9%                   |
| Cycling                      | 19.9%                   |
| Baseball Tournament          | 18.3%                   |
| Car Shows                    | 18.3%                   |
| Other (please specify)       | 16.2%                   |
| Golf                         | 14.1%                   |
| Bingo                        | 12.6%                   |
| Curling Bonspiels            | 11.0%                   |
| Skiing                       | 7.3%                    |
| Dirt Biking                  | 6.3%                    |
| Cottage Rental               | 3.1%                    |
| Not Applicable               | 1.6%                    |

**If The Region is your secondary residence, how much time do you spend here in a year?**



**Top 3 Things You Enjoy about The Region**



## Services and Accommodations

Listed below are various services & accommodations available in The Region. Please check all that you have participated in and your level of satisfaction with each.

| Answer Options              | I have used this service | More are needed | Satisfactory | N/A |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----|
| Internet/Cellular Reception | 107                      | 121             | 16           | 9   |
| Restaurant                  | 154                      | 82              | 63           | 5   |
| Hardware/Sporting Goods     | 42                       | 55              | 20           | 26  |
| Gas Stations                | 159                      | 54              | 83           | 6   |
| Shopping                    | 61                       | 54              | 31           | 13  |
| Groceries                   | 149                      | 52              | 76           | 6   |
| Campground                  | 57                       | 41              | 32           | 24  |
| Hotels/Motels               | 49                       | 33              | 25           | 29  |
| Festivals                   | 93                       | 26              | 56           | 8   |
| Bed & Breakfast             | 1                        | 24              | 3            | 42  |
| RV Park                     | 16                       | 24              | 15           | 29  |
| Hiking                      | 72                       | 22              | 38           | 23  |
| Swimming                    | 52                       | 22              | 27           | 17  |
| Beer/Spirits                | 110                      | 18              | 77           | 8   |
| Resorts                     | 29                       | 16              | 24           | 31  |
| Cycling                     | 44                       | 15              | 21           | 27  |
| Other Amenities             | 18                       | 15              | 6            | 22  |
| Golf                        | 29                       | 12              | 22           | 29  |
| ATV/Dirtbiking              | 72                       | 11              | 44           | 15  |
| Fishing/Ice-Fishing         | 79                       | 8               | 51           | 21  |
| Snowmobiling                | 53                       | 7               | 38           | 24  |
| Hunting                     | 67                       | 6               | 48           | 19  |

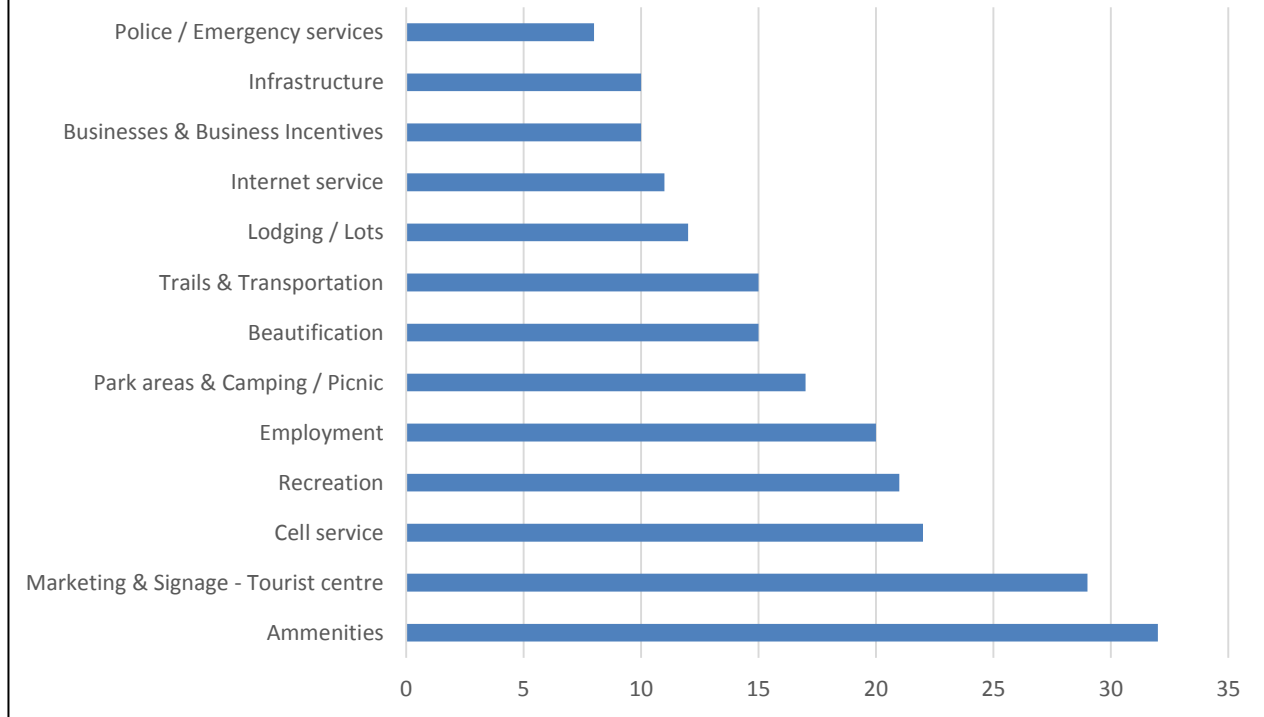
Respondents identified three dominating improvements (top issues) that would enhance their experience as a resident and/or attract and draw people to the area. Improvements in these areas would ultimately benefit both residents and tourists alike.

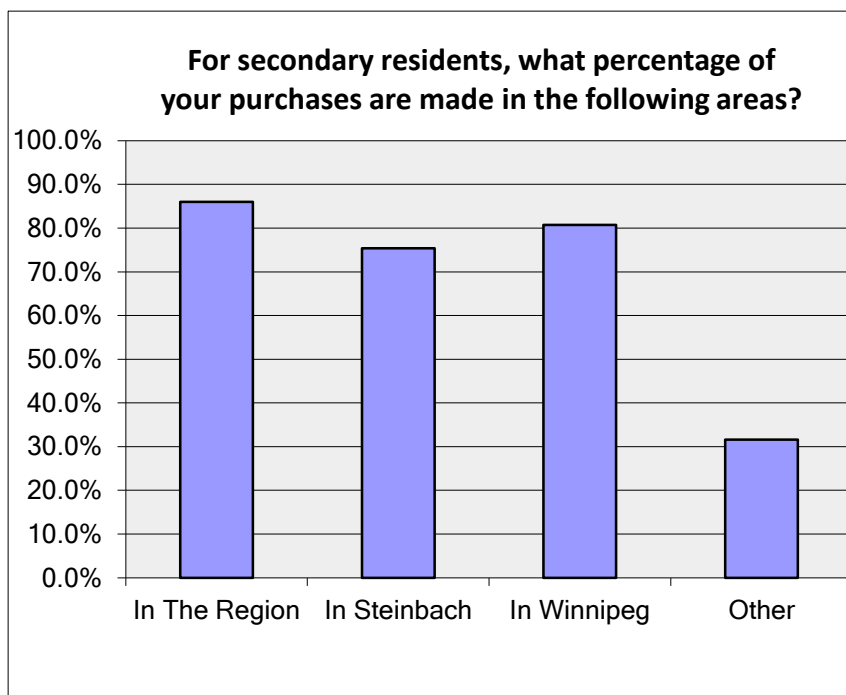
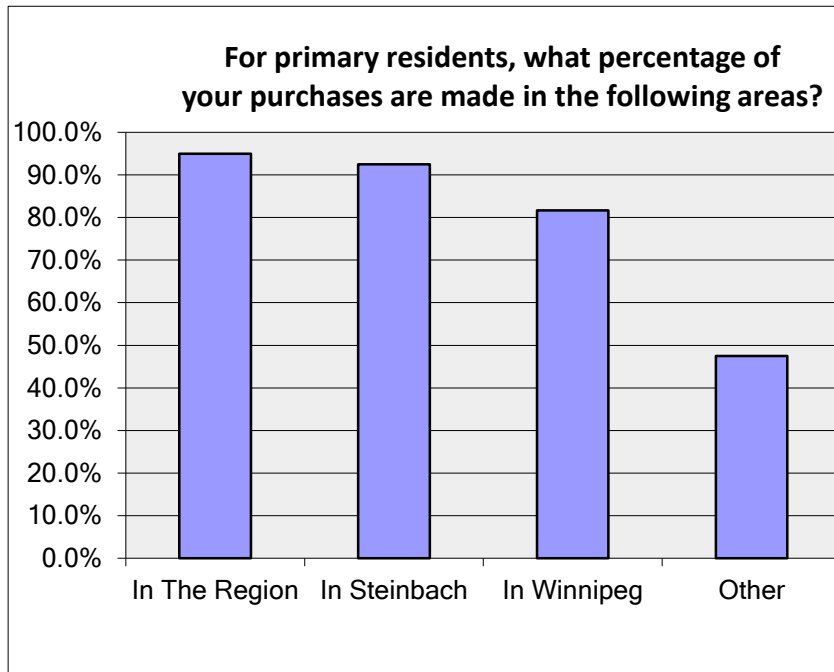
When combining all areas that address a need for **additional accommodations** (yellow) this comes in at number 1 with a total of **138**.

**Recreation** (pink) comes in as the second priority with a total of 129 respondents offering that improvements in that category would have an impact on 'traffic' in Piney-Stuartburn as well.

In third place is **internet & cellular reception** (green). Access to these services has evolved into a necessity for residents, businesses and tourists and must be improved upon.

### What could be improved within The Region to attract more visitors or residents?





## Appendix B

### SWOT Analysis

This appendix contains feedback from public consultations held on January 25, 2016 (Woodridge), January 27, 2016 (Vita) and February 3, 2016 (Sprague) and SWOT analysis discussions with Critical Eye and the RMs of Stuartburn and Piney on January 18, 2016 (teleconference). The following are compiled results.

#### **STRENGTHS**

1. Good hunting
2. Trails, horse, quad, walking, hiking, snowmobile, ATV, hiking, cycling, skiing ; including self-guide walking trails
3. Fishing
4. Blueberry & mushroom picking
5. Land
6. Affordable lodging, Cottages
7. Quietness, pristine
8. Music / festivals
9. Wildlife; deer birds (feeding deer), snapping turtles, elk
10. Photography opportunities
11. Other municipalities arrive here for coffee & touring the area because of the forestry
12. Good if not best water in the Southeast (drinking & boating)
13. Must have a plan to replant trees because they are cutting them down
14. Canoeing
15. Tubes with about 20 people at a time
16. There is a bear guide in the area
17. Tall Grass Prairie
18. Lake of the Woods
19. Cultural diversity of the area and multination / lots of Ukrainians
20. Gardenton working on a small folklorama
21. Whitemouth Lake fishing (conservational) & Whitemouth island; unique eco-system
22. People 'salt of the earth'
23. Want to be heard
24. Ecological reserve
25. Sprague river padding;
26. Volunteer base
27. Birders
28. School
29. Farming
30. Recreational / sports facilities; Ball diamonds, 4H club, CC, Rink, Pool, parks
31. Provincial forest
32. Human resources (people dedicated to the region)
33. Clean cheap campgrounds
34. Cultural heritage (Ukrainian & Norwegian)
35. History
36. Travel corridors (Hwy 12, 59 & 201)
37. Natural resources



## **WEAKNESSES**

1. No festivals in Woodridge
2. No Welcome Wagon (to newcomers; if they want to volunteer call X)
3. Cell service
4. Infrastructure 210 203-12, provincial roads
5. Control dam on river
6. No walking trails and sidewalks
7. No fishing in the Rat River
8. Dam in St-Malo affects fish population
9. Nothing to draw younger families
10. Distance
11. Americans go to Buffalo Point because lots to do there
12. Signage, awareness Existing signs to do not lay out what is available; no details, towns, distance
13. signage & zoning issues
14. Littering is an issue
15. Control ATVs, they start fires
16. Volunteer coordination / education
17. Inconsistent hours of operation of museums, restaurants
18. Bringing back the history of the area
19. People having to park on the side of the highway
20. Lack of lighting when walking or running
21. Lack of sponsors
22. Lack of volunteers
23. Lack of serviced campsites
24. Perception that local government is not involved or lacks interest in promoting the region
25. Unmaintained shoulder
26. Lacking signs for interpretive trails; Agassiz trails
27. People could be nicer to each other
28. RMs not working with Buffalo Point (is also a strength)
29. No places for people to stay
30. Too much trail traffic, needs to cohabitate with the locals
31. Roads from border not good
32. Advertising
33. No moose
34. Province is weakness to area i.e., infrastructure
35. ½ population is non-resident; no vote
36. Voice is not heard
37. No rest stops
38. Coordinate event dates with neighboring towns
39. No Visitor Info Centre at border

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Whitemouth Lake
2. Install orbits for trash collection on roads, may get people to stop and shop and visit
3. Expand fishing in Whitemouth
4. Grade winter road to allow for ice fishing
5. Historical areas signage
6. Work with historical society to put up 'Interest Site'
7. Horse draw

8. Make people aware of what we already have
9. Cycling trails like in Birds Hill
10. Birders, attracting them; get the area in the bird watching book; any birds specific to the region?
11. Create a Chamber of Commerce (could be called the Stuart Pines CC)
12. Use Piney Airport for day tripping, tours
13. More organization around using green space
14. Camping when popular spots are full – use ours!! Can we get them in the Manitoba Travel Guide campground listing? Manitoba association of Camping?
15. Swimming, water sport within a campground to attract young families with kids
16. Organized tours (tubing)
17. Foot path along the river
18. Create off-road parking for trails
19. Churches tours (Gardenton Museum, St. Michael's church) there are 20 churches in both RMs
20. Revamp Emergency department
21. Gathering of photos are being archived at the U of M for use later
22. Have one big map with points of interest listed out (like Riding Mountain area)
23. Billested homes (people have massive homes; billets more economical than Bed & Breakfast) (weakness here is that you would need accreditation to house the visitors – could potentially work with the Bed & Breakfast Association to make this possible)
24. Itinerary being put together
25. Billeting opportunities for visitors
26. Do something around the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ukrainians who actually first established themselves right here
27. Money available from the feds for historic events; that was in the 80s
28. Ukrainian Canadian congress – List of Churches
29. Make sure the RMs know who is working on what small projects and help find funding
30. Promoting tubing like Apple River
31. Private land owners coming together to allow access for cross-country skiers
32. Volunteers & Volunteer appreciation
33. Once a month track racing
34. Fogging in areas where people gather
35. Access to the rivers should be improved, cannot go fishing because there is no access; ramps to get to the rivers; mud runs
36. Need to repopulate the fish
37. Take control of the water
38. Family oriented things to do
39. Welcome wagon
40. Grants
41. Events
42. Excellent bakers in area
43. Expand campgrounds
44. US dollar
45. Students involved in welcoming newcomers
46. Themes for each community i.e., owl, wolf, bird
47. Sell consumables at local museum to draw visitors
48. Work collaboratively with Buffalo Point FN
49. Pull inventory together to market events i.e. weddings, socials
50. Horses & Buffalo Point collaboration
51. Motorcycle touring
52. Cycling

53. Dogsled races or tours
54. Internationally recognized motor cross track
55. Culinary tours i.e. berry picking

## **THREATS**

1. Lack of organized functions
2. Volunteers; when same people no new ideas arise
3. Trucks etc. dirtying it up
4. Lack of policing quaders, drinking & driving
5. Grass fires
6. MIT signage needs to be licensed
7. Resources required to deal with sign
8. Vandalism
9. Lack of police force
10. Identify leaders in the community
11. Municipalities themselves could be a threat for new business owners because of bylaws
12. Not feeling safe when hunters are around
13. Storms
14. Pests
15. Identifying places of investment
16. Cost to run business
17. Steinbach
18. Housing / accommodations
19. DUIs
20. Passports
21. Water levels on Whitemouth Lake
22. Insufficient number of campgrounds or accommodations
23. Governments who are not interested or easily swayed into action
24. Natural disasters

## Appendix C

Funding options to be explored through foundations, government and grant opportunities. These grants can be used for the development of specific projects and for funding a summer student or job position.

- **Manitoba Provincial Government** - <http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/grants/>
- **Manitoba Community Services Council** - <http://www.mbcsc.ca/>
- **Thomas Sill Foundation** - <http://thomassillfoundation.com/> (Environment, Heritage, Arts & Culture)
- **Environmental Funding Guide** - funding to environmental organizations or for environmental projects <http://mbeconetwork.org/resources/funding-guide>
- Develop a **Community Foundation** through the **Winnipeg Foundation** to solicit donations, grants, etc. that can be distributed throughout the community to help develop tourism-related enterprises. Endow Manitoba - <http://www.endowmanitoba.ca/list-mb-foundations.php>
- **Canada Summer Jobs**  
<http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/yi/yep/programs/scpp.shtml>
- **Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage**  
<http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1267800479703>
- **Young Canada Works** <http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1359469433851/1359469516523>
- **Canada 150** funding opportunities (have yet to be announced by the Federal Government)

## Appendix D

### Tourism Coordinator

**Job Type:** Communication / Information / Cultural

**Organizations:** Rural Municipality of Piney/Stuartburn

#### Job Description:

Reporting to the Tourism Committee, the Tourism Coordinator is responsible for the promotion and development of all tourism events, functions and the building and maintenance of a volunteer database within the Rural Municipality and to provide connectivity with all of the region's attractions, events and tourism initiatives.

This is an exciting opportunity for a professional with a love of compiling information, being creative and interacting with people in person and on social media. The candidate enjoys working within a team, and can manage multiple priorities while achieving targets with measurable results.

The ideal candidate for this position will provide outstanding levels of customer service and can translate the economic impacts of community events, has the proven ability to engage local businesses and community stakeholders to develop creative and imaginative attractions and marketing materials, and the ability to promote awareness of local business and attractions in the Region.

#### Responsibilities:

- Create weekly "Things to do this weekend in Piney" itineraries
- Produce 3 blog posts per week to be circulated through social media and established distribution channels
- Build and maintain a comprehensive list of events, festivals, etc. happening in the region
- Update directory listing as needed
- Liaise with tour operators and businesses
- Work under the guidance of the Tourism Committee to ensure goals are met
- Duties as assigned
- Media relations
- Produce a monthly newsletter
- Process customer inquiries in a timely manner
- Explore funding options and apply for grants as assigned
- Coordinate and oversee the production and distribution of marketing collateral
- Maintain a regional Tourism Guide and coordinate tourism campaigns and events
- Prepare and maintain annual event calendars and related publications
- Attend conferences and meetings with Travel Manitoba/Eastman Tourism and tourism operators to advance funding and partnership opportunities

#### Volunteer Coordination

- Recruitment
- Coordinate and maintain a volunteer database
- Identify needs and suggest solutions
- Lead volunteer recognition
- Assist in the coordination of volunteer groups involved with events.

**Event Coordination:**

- Coordinate community events as assigned
- Maintain effective working relationships with community and businesses stakeholders and industry representatives

**Qualifications and Education:**

- Pursuing a post-secondary education in hospitality, business, tourism or marketing, or an equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Experience in blogging and social media distribution
- A minimum of 1 to 2 years of experience in tourism, hospitality, marketing, promotions or business development.
- Experience in sourcing funding opportunities such as sponsorships, grants and corporate donations.
- Experience in volunteer management is preferred.
- Well-developed interpersonal, communications and negotiation skills are required.
- Experienced in writing and presentation skills and proficiency with computer applications including MS Office, Photoshop.
- Ability to be diplomatic and ability to use tact in communicating with the public, business and community stakeholders.
- Excellent organization and creative thinking skills and able to facilitate meetings.
- Ability to work independently on several projects concurrently and ability to solve problems.
- A strong work ethic and personal integrity, ability to work well with others and being comfortable in a diverse and respectful environment.
- Municipal/rural experience would be an asset.

Interested individuals are asked to submit a resume no later than the closing date to the undersigned.

## **Appendix E**

### **Recommended Implementation Timeline**

Please note that this recommended timeline does not take budget or available resources into account. This timeline is based on beginning immediately with a website being constructed within the first three months.

Based on our recommendations, the following implementation timeline should be considered.

#### **Spring 2016**

- Establish Tourism Committee
- Develop website for June 2016 launch
- Digitize existing business directory into an Excel spreadsheet for import into new website.
- Coordinate 3-5 itineraries to be featured at the website launch – main attractions
- Arrange media participation throughout the summer of 2016 for the featured itineraries through Eastman Tourism and Travel Manitoba
- Begin discussions with the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce

#### **Summer 2016**

- With website launch (June), announce the Logo Contest and distribute information through schools, newsletters, public notices, etc. Contest to be judged by Tourism Committee.
- Solicit businesses and tour operators to provide profiles and deals, coupons, etc. to be featured on the website blog – possible ad sales.
- Work with Eastman Tourism and Travel Manitoba to strategize around marketing distribution channels for website content/blog postings
- Tourism Committee to provide outreach within the region to educate people about the website and strategy – ensure local events are promoted through the website and that the committee is aware of events.
- Begin discussions with existing destinations outside of Stuart Pines.

#### **Fall 2016**

- Logo added to website and officially unveiled during the fall supper season
- Coordinate MTEC courses in the region for the winter months
- Reach out to snowmobile groups to incorporate maps into website – explore partnership opportunities.
- Begin coordinating packages/itineraries to be featured and promoted by the Tourism Committee.

#### **Winter 2016/17**

- Research grants for summer students.
- Research special funds available for Canada 150 for festivals and events throughout Stuart Pines – circulate information to festival organizers and encourage them to apply
- Recruitment & coordination of Chamber of Commerce members

- Continue coordinating packages/itineraries to be featured and promoted by the Tourism Committee.
- Develop itineraries for existing destinations outside of Stuart Pines to attract their visitors to spend time in Stuart Pines.
- Work with Eastman Tourism and Travel Manitoba to explore marketing opportunities.

### **Spring 2017**

- Chamber of Commerce up and running
- Begin considering development using the list entitled "Future Implementation Opportunities"



## Appendix F

SUMMER VISITOR SURVEY - to be distributed throughout the summer of 2016 at businesses to collect data on people travelling through the RMs of Piney and Stuartburn.

Survey Name (could be used as a cover letter or email message)

This survey is being conducted by the Rural Municipalities of Stuartburn & Piney (RMs) to gain a better understanding of what makes people come to the southeast region, if they return and/or why & when they return, what might make them return more often and what needs to be improved to enhance the visitor experience. It will also serve to evaluate and qualify the RMs' strengths and weaknesses as a tourism destination.

Please go through the following questionnaire and identify your response for each question. There will be public consultations where this survey information will be shared without attributing your answers to you specifically (anonymously). A final report will be produced and made available to the general public by the RMs as part of a larger tourism strategy.

If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Disclaimer:** Your response via this questionnaire will be used strictly for economic development purposes of the RMs of Stuartburn and Piney. There will not be any commercial solicitation or usage of the response in any kind, form whatsoever.

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## **Survey**

### **1. Please enter the date and time of your visit:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ am\_\_\_\_\_ pm\_\_\_\_\_

### **2. Demographical Information:**

Age:

- ☐ 0-16
- ☐ 17-25
- ☐ 26-35
- ☐ 36-45
- ☐ 46-55
- ☐ Over 56

Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

City of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Province/State of residence: \_\_\_\_\_

### **3. How many people travelled with you today:**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2-5
- ☐ 6+

### **4. With whom do you travel most often through this region?**

- ☐ Alone
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Colleagues

### **5. What is generally the length of the trip or stay?**

- ☐ Passing through
- ☐ 1-2 days
- ☐ 3-5 days
- ☐ A week
- ☐ A weekend
- ☐ A month
- ☐ Seasonal

### **6. If any, please list your favourite or frequent destination(s) in this region.**

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**7. List the Purpose of your most recent trip, to or through the region. Select all that apply.**

- ☐ Resident \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Family Vacation (where?) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Visiting friends (where?) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Visiting family (where?) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Conducting business (where?) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Driving through \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Visiting a local attraction/event (where?) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Recreation/Adventures (where?) \_\_\_\_\_

**8. If travelling through the region, what is your final destination?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. How often do you travel through or to the southeast (RMs of Piney and Stuartburn)**

- ☐ Once in a Year
- ☐ Once in 6 Months
- ☐ Once in 3 Months
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Seasonal

**10. Listed below are various services & accommodations that are available in the RMs of Stuartburn and Piney.**

i. In column A, please check all that you have participated in (A).

ii. In column B, identify your level of satisfaction with the current services & accommodations in the area.

|                         | A (check all that apply) | B (please select one) |              |     |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----|
| <b>ACCOMMODATIONS</b>   | I have used this service | More are Needed       | Satisfactory | n/a |
| Hotels/Motels           |                          |                       |              |     |
| Bed & Breakfast         |                          |                       |              |     |
| Campground              |                          |                       |              |     |
| RV Park                 |                          |                       |              |     |
| <b>SERVICES</b>         | I have used this service | More are Needed       | Satisfactory | n/a |
| Restaurant              |                          |                       |              |     |
| Gas stations            |                          |                       |              |     |
| Groceries               |                          |                       |              |     |
| Shopping                |                          |                       |              |     |
| Beer/Spirits            |                          |                       |              |     |
| Hardware/Sporting goods |                          |                       |              |     |

|   |                             |                    |              |     |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------|-----|
| Internet/Cellular reception                                     |                             |                    |              |     |
| <b>OUTDOOR<br/>RECREATIONAL &amp;<br/>LEISURE ACTIVITIES</b>    | I have used this<br>service | More are<br>Needed | Satisfactory | n/a |
| Festivals   |                             |                    |              |     |
| Fishing / Ice-Fishing   |                             |                    |              |     |
| Hunting   |                             |                    |              |     |
| Hiking  |                             |                    |              |     |
| Snowmobiling  |                             |                    |              |     |
| Cycling   |                             |                    |              |     |
| Swimming  |                             |                    |              |     |
| Golf  |                             |                    |              |     |
| ATV / Dirt biking   |                             |                    |              |     |
| Children activities (mini golf,<br>play structures, pool, etc.) |                             |                    |              |     |
| Hunting, fishing, parks, golf,<br>play structures, pools        |                             |                    |              |     |
| Other amenities   |                             |                    |              |     |

Your feedback is important to us. Thank you for taking to the time to allow us to better your visitor experience!

If you would be willing to expand on your answers or answer further questions, please indicate your preferred method of contact.

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