

**2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan
Resources and Environment (RE) Committee Meeting
Mount Pleasant, 10am – 4pm, January 29 2014**

Agenda

1. Welcome – Sarah Nicholls, Betty Workman and Maia Turek
2. Introductions – All
3. Review of August 14 2013 Meeting Notes
4. Update from September 20, November 8 and January 24 Travel Commission Meetings – Travel Commissioners Betty Workman and Christian W. Øverland
5. Review of Plan Process and RE Goal/Objectives – Sarah Nicholls
6. Objective Two: Identify key issues facing and threats to the integrity of Michigan’s tourism resources and raise awareness of and support for these issues – Results of Industry Survey – All
7. Next Steps and Next Meeting – Sarah Nicholls
 - a. Meeting before Governor’s Conference (March 9-11, Grand Traverse Resort)
 - b. Report at Governor’s Conference (afternoon of March 11)

**2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan
Resources and Environment (RE) Committee Meeting
Mount Pleasant, 10am – 4pm, January 29 2014**

Meeting Notes

In attendance: Betty Workman (Co-Chair), Bill Anderson, Marci Cisneros, Ann Conklin, Dennis Eade, Frank Ettawageshik, Brad Garmon, Christian Øverland, Christine Rector, Larry Wagenaar, Sarah Nicholls, Louise Smith.

Absent: Harry Burkholder, Maia Stephens Turek (Co-Chair).

Welcome – Provided by Sarah Nicholls and Betty Workman.

Introductions – Made by all.

Review of August 14 2013 Meeting Notes – Notes reviewed and approved, no changes or additions made.

Update from September 20, November 8 and January 24 Travel Commission Meetings – Betty Workman and Christian W. Øverland.

Travel Commissioners Betty Workman and Christian W. Øverland updated the group on the TC meetings held since August 14 2013. Four new TC members as of September 2013 – Camille Jourden-Mark (Vice President and General Manager, Michigan's Adventure), Stephen Kircher (President, Boyne Eastern Operations, Boyne Resorts), Bill Parlberg (President/ COO, Zehnder's of Frankenmuth) and new RE committee member Christian W. Øverland (Executive Vice President, The Henry Ford). The TC also has a new Chair (Roger Curtis, MIS) and Vice Chair (Mike Busley, Grand Traverse Pie Company).

Most significant development = ongoing discussions re. governance and funding of MTSP. The MTSP gives the TC a purpose, and the TC is keen to take real leadership of this effort and to continue to align the industry. A TC subcommittee has been formed to discuss leadership and oversight, Chair Curtis presented this subcommittee's proposals re. a governance process and the structure of a funding mechanism to the TC for a vote on January 24. The repository of funds is a 501(c)(6) – the MI Tourism Plan Fund. The Fund will have a five-member board, including three Travel Commissioners (the Chair – currently Roger Curtis, the Funding Co-Chair – Jerry Toney, and one other) and two industry members (the Funding Co-Chair – Steve Yencich, and one other). The TC Chair will appoint the two 'others.' A Travel MI/MEDC representative will serve as an ex-officio member. The MTSP Funding committee will be responsible for raising funds; the MI Tourism Plan Fund Board will deal with disbursement of said funds. The TC expects any item requiring funding – as well as any potentially controversial or divisive issue – to be

brought to it for a vote prior to its implementation; SN and the TCers on each committee should decide where the line is between what does and does not need TC review/approval. The governance structure and details of the Fund will be discussed further at the March 9 TC meeting and presented at the meeting of all eight committees on March 11 (both at Governor's Conference on Tourism at Grand Traverse Resort).

Review of Plan Process and RE Goal/Objectives – Provided by Sarah Nicholls. Noted that the term 'resources' is meant to be broad and inclusive, to include not just Michigan's natural resources but also its many cultural, heritage, historic, agricultural, architectural, etc. resources. The ultimate ambition of the goal is to encourage access and use of these resources via more/better promotion while at the same time maintaining the quality and integrity of the resources.

- *Objective One: Support and expand efforts to inventory resources critical to Michigan tourism and communicate results to relevant entities.* Many inventories of various types of resources are underway around the state, at various scales and by various entities. The intent of this objective is to identify and attempt to unite those inventories in some consistent and central manner.
- *Objective Two: Identify key issues facing and threats to the integrity of Michigan's tourism resources and raise awareness of and support for these issues.* This is a two-step process: (i) identify the issues/threats and (ii) raise awareness/support. This objective will be best addressed in concert with the Public Policy and Government Support (PPGS) committee.
- *Objective Three: Raise the profile of Michigan's tourism industry as a national leader in resource quality and stewardship.* Michigan is already a leader in many areas, yet in many cases these achievements are unknown/not well promoted. Question is how/where/to whom to disseminate these achievements in a consistent and effective manner. Stewardship in this case is intended to apply to all kinds of resources, not just natural.

Objective Two – Identify key issues facing and threats to the integrity of Michigan's tourism resources and raise awareness of and support for these issues –

Results of issues/threats survey presented. *More recent set of results (50 more responses) attached. Most significant change in ranking of responses since January 29 meeting = rise of item related to historic preservation tax credits.*

Respondents were directed to "Please indicate what you consider to be the three-five most critical issues facing/threats to the integrity of Michigan's tourism resources." Responses could be drawn from thirteen pre-identified items (from the summer 2012 stakeholder meetings and added to by the RE committee during its August meeting); or, additional items could be entered by the respondent. Respondents = 556; responses = 2486 (i.e., most

respondents identified four or five issues/threats); most responses (about 90%) were selected from the list of thirteen issues/threats provided.

General discussion: Strength of Pure Michigan brand and success of campaign has set expectations high. Need to deliver on (meet or exceed) those expectations. All of the issues/threats identified call our ability to deliver into question. Need to make connection between resource issues/threats, tourism, and community/economic development. Need to make those connections for government officials, the tourism industry, residents and visitors. Discussion of role/value of art in helping people make connections.

Much emphasis within results on water-related issues (invasive species, water quality/quantity/diversion). Need to educate and advocate for water quality as it relates to the tourism economy. Desirability of a study of the economic impact of water-based tourism and of the value of clean water – what would be the economic impact of losing that image of pure? Desire of committee to give equal emphasis to culture/history and associated issues. These issues converge at the waterfront, where the quality of the water intertwine with quality of life, e.g., Detroit, Traverse City.

Much discussion of development of an RE statement on this topic:

Protecting/preserving/sustaining/restoring/enhancing and promoting our natural and cultural resources – especially as related to water quality – are vital to delivering on the Pure Michigan promise. Several critical threats compromise our ability to deliver on that promise.

- *Halting the spread of invasive species is critical to delivering on the Pure Michigan promise.*
- *Restoring and increasing financial support for natural and cultural resource protection and maintenance is critical to delivering on the Pure Michigan promise.*
- *Improving the quality of our lakes, rivers and streams is critical to delivering on the Pure Michigan promise.*
- *Maintaining optimal levels and flows of our lakes, rivers and streams is critical to delivering on the Pure Michigan promise.*

Potential partners: Office of the Great Lakes, MI Dept. of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Trust Fund, MI Dept. of Environmental Quality, Michigan Sea Grant, Nature Conservancy, Army Corps of Engineers, sport fishing groups, Trout Unlimited, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, Stewardship Network, Michigan Invasive Species Coalition, boating associations, water partnerships, lake associations, kayak/canoeing groups, fishing groups, tribes, The Walleye Federation, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, Michigan Museum Association, Michigan Municipal League, Michigan Townships Association, Michigan Association of Counties, Michigan Recreation and Park Association, Michigan Waterways Commission, communities, CVBs.

Discussion of item “Need for better adoption of technology at tourism sites” – does tie together natural and historic/cultural. But might better fit under Product Development’s third objective (“Enhance the visitor’s in-state travel experience”).

Next Meeting – After Governor’s Conference but before summer (April/May?). Doodle forthcoming. Consider inviting Jon Allan (Office of the Great Lakes).