



**Tourism North Meeting Minutes  
April 24, 2012, 3:30 pm  
Flin Flon, MB & Conference Call**

---

**Present:** Betty Landego, Thompson Unlimited  
Charlene Grant, CF North Central Development  
Bunny Burke, CF Greenstone  
Joe Buie, CF Greenstone  
Tanna Teneckye, Heritage North Museum (Thompson)  
Jennifer Davidson, Spirit Way (Thompson)  
Frank Fieber, Northroots Magazine (Flin Flon)  
Michelle Husarski, Lakeview Inn & Suites (Thompson)  
Sandy Howard, Dog sled entrepreneur (Thompson)  
Darryl Villeneuve, MB Tourism Secretariat  
Michel LaRiviere, Travel MB  
Jennifer Massan, Town of Churchill  
John Friessen, Calm Air  
Lori Slobodian, Manitoba Tourism Education Council  
Kelly Martens, Thompson Trailbreakers

**Regrets:** Mark Matiasek, Thompson Unlimited  
Angela Enright, Norman RDC  
Clem Jones, Town of The Pas  
Michael Goodyear, Churchill Northern Studies Centre  
Linda Markus & Paula Yanko, Thompson Chamber of Commerce  
Randy Sawatsky, CEDF

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order at 3:35 pm by Betty Landego.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**3. TOURISM NORTH OVERVIEW**

Betty Landego provided an overview of Tourism North and noted the following:

- Tourism North began in 1999.
- Founded by five Community Futures in northern Manitoba, Norman RDC and the Town of The Pas.
- Mandate is to position northern Manitoba as a priority tourist destination.

- When the City of Thompson founded their economic development agency, Thompson Unlimited, they were added as a member to Tourism North.
- Tourism North contracts North Central Development to coordinate Tourism North efforts.
- Tourism North receives an operating grant from the Manitoba Tourism Secretariat on an annual basis.
- Executive Committee consists of Chairperson, Past Chair Position, Secretary and Treasurer.

#### 4. **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Tourism North receives annual operating funding via a grant from the Tourism Secretariat. There has been, in recent years an opportunity for RTAs to access a small amount of special project funding. Tourism North has accessed this on two occasions. The Tourism Secretariat has also provided funding for RV Show participation and other MRTN partnerships.

Bunny Burke provided a financial report and a draft balance sheet and Statement of Revenue & Expense:

- Cash on Deposit \$2,981.48
- Revenue for 2011/2012 fiscal year included \$30,150 from the Tourism Secretariat (holdback had not cleared the bank before statements but has been forwarded), \$150 in miscellaneous revenue (backroad mapbooks) and \$1,000 in special project revenue (RV Show).
- Expenses were as follows:
 

Administration	\$18,695.00
Advertising	\$4,166.00
Annual Return	\$250.00
Meeting & Travel	\$266.00
Office	\$116.00
Prof. Fees	\$169.00
Signage	\$17,255.00
Trade Shows	\$1,141.00
- In-kind contributions included:
 

Postage	\$1,000.00
Meetings	\$1,600.00
Travel	\$9,000.00
Northern Experience	\$19,000.00
Advertising	\$4,400.00

**MOTION: Moved by Bunny Burke to approve financial report.  
Second by Betty Landego.**

**CARRIED**

#### 5. **PROJECT REPORTS**

##### **Nextstop**

Tourism North published the first northern Manitoba Tourism guide in 2009 in partnership with Frank Fieber. The guide, titled "Nextstop" was

modeled after the Alaskan Milepost and was created as a km-by-km guide to rubber tire tourism in northern Manitoba. Frank does the research and design of the guide with direction from Tourism North. Frank receives advertising revenue in exchange for his work.

Nextstop is distributed at Travel Manitoba Visitor Centres, is shipped world-wide in response to requests for information from our website and is, in general, used as the tool for promoting northern Manitoba. The guide is available for download online at the Tourism North website ([www.visitnorthernmanitoba.ca](http://www.visitnorthernmanitoba.ca)).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the guide expanded on the first and included all communities northern of 53, including those not accessible by road. Each year the guide includes more and more information. The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition will be printed in May 2012.

Frank was on-hand to present a draft copy to the group and noted the following:

- The book has a fold-out back cover to accommodate a larger map.
- 136 pages at this point.
- New additions: cell phone coverage map, listing of 24-hour gas stations.
- Same communities as last year. Some feedback from Nelson House indicated they had enough people coming in and weren't ready for an increase in tourism at this point. Information on Nelson House reduced.
- Good response from Churchill, Gillam, Leaf Rapids in advertising (new).

Suggestions for this year's guide from the group:

- Snowmobiling information.
- Include information on where to find canoe routes, suggestion was Paddle Manitoba.
- Birding information. Travel MB has birding website that could be referenced – [www.birdingmanitoba.com](http://www.birdingmanitoba.com).
- Cinnamon Bun Trail information.
- If Greenstone participates in another trade show in Florida they may look at printing the guide there. Shipping costs are very high.

The wrong website for Tourism North was printed in Travel MB's Winter Vacation Guide.

Jennifer Massan interested in receiving more information on snowmobile clubs and events in the north, possible partner in the future.

**ACTION: Kelly Martens to provide Charlene Grant with all northern snowmobile club contact information. Charlene to provide to Frank Fieber for Nextstop and Jennifer Massan.**

**ACTION: Michel LaRiviere to look into correcting Tourism North's website listing in future Vacation Guides (summer already printed, fall will be corrected.)**

**ACTION: Tourism North members should have proof-reading complete by Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. Please forward changes to Charlene Grant. Charlene to compile and provide to Frank.**

**ACTION: Charlene Grant to provide Frank Fieber with Cinnamon Bun Trail information.**

### **Tourism North Website**

Tourism North operates a website ([www.visitnorthernmanitoba.ca](http://www.visitnorthernmanitoba.ca)) that has become a database for all things tourism in northern Manitoba. Business listing, feature notices and articles, attraction and recreation information, event listings, etc. are all free for upload. Contact Charlene Grant for more information.

The Nextstop guide is available for download on the site, as are RV itineraries.

Tourism North has created a QR Code for the website that is now being used on most printed material.

Google Analytics is used to track traffic to the site and gather stats. The most common pages visited within the website are camping, outfitters & tours, waterfalls and events. Over 6,000 visitors to the website last year. Most visitors to the site were from Canada (5,201) and the USA (876). Other countries with over 30 visits each were: United Kingdom, Brazil, Australia, India, Germany, Spain and France. The top cities visiting the site were Winnipeg, Thompson, Toronto, Brandon, The Pas, Flin Flon, Vancouver, Ottawa, Calgary and Edmonton.

### **Boat Launch Project**

Tourism North is looking at including all boat launches in northern Manitoba in the next edition of Nextstop. Some project funding has been secured from the Tourism Secretariat to create map graphics to use in marketing (print and web).

A second phase of this project could be inventorying the launch amenities, prioritizing needed upgrades, fund development and project coordination of the upgrades.

### **Highway Sign Project**

Tourism North has recently installed two highway billboard signs to entice traffic to the website and ultimately to northern Manitoba. Signs are located near the Canada/USA border on HWY #75 and near the entrance to Riding Mountain National Park. The signs depict water images as our most common requests are around water tourism (info on waterfalls, fishing, canoeing, adventure travel, etc.). The signs are very large and made of metal (12' X 40').

### **Trade Shows**

Tourism North participates in trade shows during the year when timing and funding permits.

Tourism North participated in the Winnipeg RV Show this year (and the previous two). It is estimated that volunteers spoke to approximately 500 attendees about planning a trip to northern Manitoba. Tourism North put together RV Itineraries for the RV Show. Handouts were given to interested RV'ers that encouraged them to visit the website where the full itineraries were. The TN website was revamped to include the itineraries in a downloadable format.

Tourism North partners participate in other trades from time to time, for example Greenstone has attended the Snowbirds Show in Florida. Bunny Burke noted Greenstone participates in this show and travel expenses are part of their in-kind provided to Tourism North. This show is for people who live in Florida part of the year and return to Canada for the remainder. There have been several requests for more information as a result of participation at this show.

Tourism North plans to set up a display at the Forks Visitor Center in Winnipeg this summer as a low-cost option.

### **Northern Golf Contest**

Tourism North is in the process of planning a northern golf contest. Currently we are determining interest from the golf courses who would like to participate.

Tourism North would look at printing scorebooks that can be purchased at participating golf courses. If a golfer golfs at a course in the north they are given a stamp for their book. Completed books are entered into grand prize draws at the end of the season.

The purpose of the contest is to promote travel throughout the north by northerners and to promote our courses in southern Manitoba. The ad-hoc committee working on this project is currently researching prize options, funding partners and the participation board concept.

John Friessen from Calm Air indicated they may be in a position to partner on this project. He also suggested speaking with the Golf Store in Winnipeg as a potential sponsor.

Michel LaRiviere from Travel MB indicated Travel MB would like to stay updated on the project and may like to partner as well considering golf is a hard market to assist.

Frank Fieber indicated there could also be a partnership with Northroots Magazine.

### **Cinnamon Bun Trail**

From time to time Tourism North partners with other Regional Tourism Associations on projects. The Cinnamon Bun Trail is one such partnership. Parkland Tourism coordinated a brochure noting all the places to get homemade cinnamon buns in their region last fiscal year. This year they have invited all RTAs to participate and together we are printing a brochure that will note places to get the buns across the province.

To date, information has been gathered that includes: Gypsy's in Churchill, Fat Boys Diner and The Grub Box in The Pas and Chicken Chef in Thompson. Other suggestions were Ann Snihor's B&B in Thompson, Friendship Centre in Flin Flon, Mystery Lake Hotel, Nanny's Diner in Thompson, Thompson Curling Club.

### **Tourism Packages**

Tourism North gets requests for further information on northern Manitoba from the website throughout the year, packages are put together and mailed out. Packages include: a personal letter, Nextstop, Northern Experience Magazine, Northern Manitoba Adventure Map and Tourism North luggage tag. All items are packaged in a Tourism North envelope.

If a specific question is asked, more information may be included (ie if the current Northroots magazine has information pertinent to the question, if the question is about Vale, Vale provides some information).

Last year, about 60 packages were mailed out by Tourism North, with several others being mailed out by partners. Requests came from all over the world.

### **Advertising**

Tourism North spends approximately \$4,000 on advertising annually. In the 2011/2012 fiscal year advertising efforts were focused locally to increase awareness of Tourism North with tourism operators in northern Manitoba. Advertising complimented the direct mail campaign that was carried out.

Advertising this fiscal year, over the summer months will compliment the golf contest. An example of a tourism north ad was shown that ran in the Northern Experience magazine. It featured a picture of the Snow Lake Golf Course and contact information for the courses in Thompson, The Pas, Flin Flon and Snow Lake along with the general Tourism North messaging – tagline: *Experience a Northern Adventure!*, website, toll-free number and what to do in northern MB.

Tourism North partners often do advertising related to tourism and provide it as an in-kind contribution. An example was shown of the Community Futures North Central Development ad that featured festivals in their region.

### **Training**

Tourism North has stayed up-to-date on Travel MB training initiatives. Members participated in the recent Cutting Edge Experiential Tourism training. The idea behind Experiential Tourism is that visitors want more than just a tour, they want to experience what it is to BE a voyageur, BE part of the fur trade, BE a fisherman, etc. If anyone would like more information on Experiential Tourism please contact Betty Landego, Tanna Teneckye or Charlene Grant OR Travel MB.

Tourism North has in the past looked at offering training in our communities, however uptake was not great. If there is a demand for a certain type of training we would be happy to look into that again. Lori Slobodian from MTEC (Manitoba Tourism Education Council) indicated that there are current partnerships happening in northern MB (ie Thompson Unlimited and PVDC). Focus is new workers, existing workers and management. There is an opportunity to piggyback costs. Tourism North will look at this at the next Strategic Planning Session.

### **Other**

**Manitoba Tourism Awards:** Tourism North partners nominate examples of excellence in tourism each year. The award deadline is April 27<sup>th</sup>. About five nominations have been submitted from northern Manitoba. This is a good way to familiarize Travel MB with what the north has to offer and celebrate our successes.

**Public Meetings:** Tourism North is committed to holding four public meetings annually. Meetings are tentatively set for April, June, September and November. Anyone with a vested interest in tourism is encouraged to attend. Meeting locations will move throughout northern Manitoba, conference call will always be an option as well.

**Partnerships:** Tourism North has many partners, including the directors, Travel MB, the Manitoba Regional Tourism Network and all other Manitoban RTAs, the Thompson Tourism Committee, Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters (involved as an allied member in the past) are just some examples.

**Volunteers & Ad-hocs:** Tourism North welcomes volunteers, if you are interested in a specific project Tourism North is coordinating please advise us, we'd be pleased to have you involved.

## **6. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

**Betty Landego – Thompson Unlimited:** Betty's position is Development Coordinator at Thompson Unlimited (Thompson's economic development organization). The Thompson Tourism Committee is coordinated by Thompson Unlimited, there are eight members. The Committee was struck in February 2011 and is gaining momentum. Current projects include the Thompson train station and Station Road enhancement project (a concept was provided to the City of Thompson).

Betty is also a member of the Thompson Culture Committee, this committee is coordinating Folklorama in Thompson as part of Canada Day festivities.

Thompson Unlimited is assisting with the upcoming Wolf Conference this fall.

**Jennifer Massan:** Jennifer is on town council in Churchill, is also the Churchill rep for Community Futures North Central Development.

Churchill is planning a large celebration on Canada Day, the day will include Multiculturalism Day and National Aboriginal Day. They are

having a meeting in two weeks and will provide updates. Churchill is interested in partnering on snowmobile events with other northern clubs.

John Friessen – Calm Air: New additions to Calm Air fleet (coming soon) will be 32 seat aircraft. Schedule will be Thompson to Winnipeg to Rankin to Thompson. Another similar aircraft will be added in the near future and hopefully other markets down the road. The ATR42 will be servicing The Pas and Flin Flon (was operating the Saub 340). These aircrafts are 32 and 42 seats with aisle down the middle. Calm Air would like to offer extra capacity in the summer months to accommodate lodges and outfitters. Calm Air has advertised in past Nextstops and is supporting once again in 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

Calm Air would be interested in speaking more about the northern golf contest.

Lori Slobodian – MTEC: MTEC offers a variety of workshops focused on tourism and encourages everyone to sign up for their newsletters. Newsletters contain information on new workshops. If a need is identified for a particular type of training MTEC would like to assist. Currently there are three staff people at MTEC who do the safety training, we know there is a need for this type of training in the north. MTEC's website is [www.mtec.mb.ca](http://www.mtec.mb.ca).

Kelly Martens – Thompson Trailbreakers: The club is currently working on a new map for the area. New website launched this year ([www.thompsontrailbreakers.org](http://www.thompsontrailbreakers.org)), has some maps on it. The Trailbreakers are working towards the goal of linking up with other communities, this year Gillam linked to Thompson. Thompson club did trail halfway, Gillam did half way. In the future would like to link The Pas and Snow Lake.

February 15<sup>th</sup> the Trailbreakers are holding a Rally, this is the long weekend, hope is to attract out-of-towners.

This year expanded trails to almost double (Sasagui to Ponton and Moak Lake and Ski Hill loop).

Trailbreakers were nominated for a Manitoba Tourism Award this year in the product development category.

Sandy Howard – new dog sled business: Speaking on behalf of Clinton Morriseau and herself. They are mushers out of Thompson, they have a kennel and 27 sled dogs. There are 7 other kennel owners in Thompson. Participate in races throughout the north and have done demonstrations in schools. Are currently looking into expanding to tourism business. Offering tours that highlight Aboriginal Culture and what it is to be a musher. Long-term planning is to look at summer tours, expand into excursions that include fishing, etc. Recently participated in Vale family event. Name of the business will likely incorporate wolves to go along with wolf branding in Thompson and wolves are often seen on the trails and at the kennels.



Darryl Villeneuve – MB Tourism Secretariat: Looking to continue partnership with Tourism North. Provides annual operating funding and some project funding. Hope is that project funding will again be available (\$3,500). There are opportunities to look at Aboriginal tourism and training initiatives.

Bunny Burke – Community Futures Greenstone: In May Flin Flon is hosting a Royal Weekend. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet is coming, there will be High Tea, an invitation has been extended to Prince Charles. Flin Flon is also planning Culture Day. Greenstone will look at attending some trade shows this fiscal year. Looking at northern USA.

Charlene Grant – Community Futures North Central Development: CFNCD is looking at doing signage at Thompson train station with information on where to stay, how to get around, the Visitor Centre, etc. Has nominated Churchill Northern Studies Centre for sustainable tourism award (MB Tourism Awards). Is currently working with the CNSC on strategic planning. The CNSC offers educational tourism – week long sessions which feature birding & wild flowers, whales, bears and northern lights. Opportunity to experience Churchill alongside a scientist. Has nominated the Incorporated Community of Cross Lake for their Sand Bay Campout. This is an annual event, 1,000 campers set up on the shores of Sand Bay. Week-long event focuses on Aboriginal culture, heritage and family. Has been doing some advertising focusing on annual events and festivals throughout north central region. Tourism North website has been updated with annual events.

Frank Fieber – Northroots Magazine: Update provided on Nextstop during project reports. Many opportunities for Northroots and Tourism North partner in the future.

Tanna Teneckye – Heritage North Museum: HNM is partnering with Vale to offer surface tours. This was done in the past, however for past 4 or 5 years nothing has been offered, HNM and Vale are very excited to get this going again. Tours will be offered beginning in June, twice a week at 1:30 in the afternoon. Tours will be a couple hours in length and volunteers will be trained by Vale. HNM is a designated Travel MB Visitor Centre. Museum staff receive annual training, uniforms, signage and endless amount of material from across the province. Tanna is also on the Spirit Way board. Spirit Way is hosting a wolf conference, happening in Thompson in September 2012. Speakers and delegates are international. Tanna has been tasked with finding a mascot for Spirit Way. Name is possibly “Timber” the wolf.

Jennifer Davidson – Spirit Way: looking to increase traffic to Spirit Way walkway and promote general information about it. Looking at possible geocaches.

Michelle Husarski – Lakeview Inn & Suites: Was gathering information, glad she attended meeting, nothing to report at this time.

Joe Buie – Greenstone Community Futures: The Flin Flon Chamber of Commerce is putting together a geocache coin and event to launch it. Geocache association meeting is taking place in Flin Flon, will include geocache workshops.

Every year Flin Flon does a Flinty's birthday celebration. There will be a meal, teddy bear clinic and some new cultural events this year. Event takes place weekend of August 17 – 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

**9. NEXT MEETING**

The next public meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 6<sup>th</sup> in Snow Lake. The next meeting of Tourism North directors was set for May 8<sup>th</sup> via conference call.

**10. ADJOURN**

Meeting adjourned at 5:10pm.