

Next Generation “Strengthening Our Niche” Work-Group Meeting Notes of February 2, 2009

Present

Will Andresen, Leeann Atkinson, Chris Botkin, Annette Burchell, Clyde Eilo, Melanie Fullman, Holly Jennings, Gemma Lamb, Kim Mattson, Serena Mershon-Lohkamp, Marilyn Partyka, Donna Reinerio, Gayla Salmi, Dick Swanson

Scope of Work-Group

Attract New Young Workers by Strengthening our Niche

Goals of Meeting

1. Define our niche
2. Identify ways to strengthen our niche
3. Discuss ways to measuring our success

Defining Our Niche

The group reviewed the tentative statement of our niche developed at the Rebecca Ryan Follow-up meeting and refined it to state:

“The Gogebic Range is a superior four-season outdoor mecca in which to live, work and play.”

Discuss Ways to Strengthen Our Niche

The group agreed that we should create a brand in which to promote our niche to people who do not live here. The group identified three suggested brands to be considered by the “Promotion” work-group, including:

1. “Superior Life”
2. “Go-Ing Active North” or “Go-Ing Active” or “Go-Ing North”
3. “Work Where You Play”

The group reviewed the list of assets previously created to ensure that it fits with the niche. The group agreed on the following assets:

1. Silent sports such as, bike, kayak, canoe, snowshoe, fish, walk, hike, snowboard, skiing, sailing, hunting, rock climbing, waterfall/parks, soccer, photography, ice-skating
2. Motorized sports such as snowmobile, ATV, boating, camping,
3. Eco-tourism, historical museums, hands-on children's museum, geo-caching, orienteering, scenic, Copper Peak, birding

Discussion followed regarding ideas to strengthen our niche, including:

1. Promote the niche and the importance of the niche to local decision-makers to encourage their support for physical improvements such as trails and parks
2. Enhance awareness by local service workers of assets of our niche
3. Link all of the communities in the two-county area with a regional trail system, that would allow multi-use non-motorized uses such as walking, biking, skiing and snow-shoeing
4. Support the North Country Trail project
5. One of the strengths of this work-group is that it represents most of the communities in the two-county area and so it can serve the unique role of pulling together the communities to create a trail system connecting each of the communities.

Next Steps

Better understand the outdoor recreation trends of today's young people (identify who they are, where they live, what they're interested in and how to market to them) – Melanie Fullman

Inventory existing park and trails facilities and future park and recreation plans in the two county area – Will Andresen (Iron County) and Kim Mattson (Gogebic County).

Consider who should also be included and invite them to the next meeting to begin process of promoting and preparing for the creation of a regional trail system connecting the Gogebic Range communities (elected officials, planning commissioners, park and recreation committees, trail users, etc) – all committee members.

Next Meeting

Monday, March 2, 12:00 Noon, Board Room of the Iron County Courthouse