

Abstract Submission for 5th Canadian River Heritage Conference

Title of Presentation:
Using Tourism to Promote Heritage Values:
The Rivers West Example

Category: River Tourism and Recreation

Presenter:

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Abstract

Tourism provides an interesting means to promote the values of the Canadian Heritage River System and to educate the public and travellers. Increasingly, tourists are seeking travel which is authentic, educational and experiential. Tourism product based on the values of the CHRS generally and specifically for a river, creates opportunities which are unusual and attractive to some tourists.

Under its mandate to promote the Red River Valley as a tourism destination, Rivers West has developed several types of tourism products, particularly self-directed touring itineraries and commercial travel packages. While the Red has not yet received Canadian Heritage River designation, the tourism packages reflect heritage values. The self-directed touring itineraries include driving, cycling, walking and paddling options, all organized under four key themes: Fur Trading Routes on the Red; Settler Routes on the Red; Natural and First Nations Routes on the Red; and Arts & Cultural Routes on the Red. Undated “coffee table book” brochures inspire travellers and direct them to detailed route itineraries, which are kept up to date on the Rivers West website: www.routesonthered.com. The tourism packages reflect the same four themes.

Plans exist to update the itineraries should the Red River be designated, to highlight the designation. In addition, a new set of itineraries is planned which would be based exclusively the specific values under the CHRS heritage framework. New commercial packages linked to the potential CHRS status are also planned.

This presentation will provide background on the tourism potential generally of this type of market and product, and will profile Rivers West as a specific example of using tourism to promote heritage values.

Biographical sketch:

Ruth Marr has over 20 years of consulting experience and has worked with Rivers West for over four years. Her firm developed the Rivers West self-directed itineraries and commercial packages, ran product development workshops as well as providing strategic advice. Her consulting practice has included tourism related work for a variety of clients, as well environmental and public consultation projects. Ruth is familiar with CHRS, having prepared the Monitoring Report on the Seal River 1992-2006 on behalf of Manitoba Conservation and CHRS. In addition, for fifteen years, Ruth owned and operated an adventure travel company.