

**Abstract Submission for 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian River Heritage Conference**

Title of Presentation:

The LOWER RIVER PASSAGE: A Vision for Sustainable Tourism  
Development along the lower St. John River (N.B.)

Category: River Tourism and Recreation

Presenter:

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## Abstract

The natural and cultural history of the St. John River is extensive, varied and distinguished. The arrival of First Nations in the region coincides with the retreat of the last glaciers over 10,000 years ago. The region remained relatively unchanged until the first settlers arrived 400 years ago. The largest watershed east of the Mississippi, the region's strength lies in regenerating a traditional river economy to one based on sustainable tourism. Due to its high degree of navigability and its magnificent pastoral views, it is a cruise boater and visiting tourist's exploratory paradise, offering a unique New Brunswick step-back-in time experience. The St. John River Society is the managing partner of The Lower River Passage Network, a sustainable tourism development initiative involving four (4) municipalities and one community-based organization on the lower St. John River. As the managing partner, The St. John River Society is directly responsible for providing Passage Support Services – marketing; interpretive coordination and development; and, technical services. Within this mandate The Society is undertaking a number of initiatives: a services and attractions inventory; an inventory and prioritization of viewsheds and subsequent landowner outreach program (in partnership with a conservation-based NGO); the establishment of a tourism monitoring program that incorporates a broad set of socio-cultural, economic, ecological, managerial and experiential principles; a third-party auditing protocol; and, the development of tourist and operators Codes of Conduct. The Lower River Passage represents a strategic inter-community and intra-community partnership to meet growing visitor needs for river-related sustainable tourism infrastructure, services and products in the lower St. John River, New Brunswick. The project's unique regional approach to sustainable tourism involves a diversity of methodologies and processes that brings together interested partners in a nontraditional co-management framework and proposes a unique sustainable tourism model that is highly dependent on the water resources of the lower St. John River.

**Biographical sketch:**

Simon J. Mitchell, R.P.F., Technical Services Officer

A Registered Professional Forester, Simon has over a decade of experience in natural resources management, having worked as a consultant for small woodlot owners, the forest industry, government and NGOs. He has most recently been employed by the Meduxnekeag River Association in Woodstock to oversee the Meduxnekeag River Watershed Classification project and to assist with education and outreach programs in local schools and on the Associations Meduxnekeag Valley Nature Preserves. The New Brunswick Environment Network recognized Simon in 2004 for his commitment to the stewardship of New Brunswick's forests with the Gaia Award. He is currently a member of the Ducks Unlimited—Mactaquac chapter, the Dumfries Local Service District and is working to establish his company "Goods from the Woods" as a local value-added business recognized for producing quality natural products from a wellmanaged forest.