

Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan

This pilot project was completed in June of 2008, and has received the endorsement of 42 rural and urban municipalities, two tourism regions, and Whitecap Dakota First Nation. It was published and released during July and is currently being implemented. The plan covers about 17,400 square kilometers, stretching from Whitecap Dakota First Nation south of Saskatoon, to Cabri Regional Park which is west of Saskatchewan Landing.

Discussions which led to the selection of the Lake Diefenbaker area were initiated by MidSask CFDC/REDA (now MidSask CFDC/ER). The tourism sector had been a priority for MidSask since its inception, and the area had long been regarded by Tourism Saskatchewan as having outstanding tourism potential. For example:

- A successful tourism marketing consortium had been operating throughout the area since 2000 (Lake Diefenbaker Tourism)
- The award winning Dakota Dunes Golf Course had opened in 2004 and the largest Casino in Saskatchewan was under construction at Whitecap Dakota FN
- Visitation to the area's three Provincial Parks, five Regional Parks, and Provincial Recreation Sites had been steadily increasing
- Demand for recreational properties was at an all time high - the lake itself has a shoreline stretching 800 kilometers
- A major reconstruction of highway 219 from Saskatoon to the junction with highway 15 (26 km north of Danielson Provincial Park and 20 km east of Outlook) was underway (with designation as the "Whitecap Trail" pending)
- Four of Saskatchewan's cities are within a 70 km to 200 km drive from Lake Diefenbaker itself; and
- In the summer of 2007, while the planning process was underway, a world record Rainbow Trout was landed at Lake Diefenbaker, catching the attention of anglers from all over North America.

In response to these and other developments, and the new demands accompanying increased tourism, it was recognized that an area-wide tourism plan should be prepared. MidSask offered to provide its administrative resources, including staff, meeting rooms, GIS capabilities, and its communication network as "on site" support for the project.

Twenty-eight tourism issues were identified through committee meetings, six public meetings, and various other consultations between April 2007 and June 2008. Strategies are provided to deal with each of the issues, and step by step actions are then outlined.

Management of the implementation of the plan is being undertaken by WaterWolf Economic Developments Inc, which is a subsidiary of MidSask CFDC/REDA. Financial support totaling \$360,000 over a three year period is being provided by Tourism Saskatchewan, MidSask CFDC/ER, the Whitecap Trail Association, and Lake Diefenbaker Tourism.

For further information regarding this Destination Area Plan, visit www.waterwolf.org