SOUTHERN LAKE HURON ASSESSMENT

Charting the Course for the Bluewater Coast

2010-2012
Rural Heritage and Tourism

Included in this presentation:

- Status and trends
- Priorities and challenges
- Options
- Tools and resources
- Local case studies
  - Bike Routes
  - Port Austin Kayak
  - Blue Water Winery
- Heritage Routes

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Why People Come to the Thumb
Searches for “Michigan Fishing”
Searches for “Michigan Boating”

Status and Trends
Priorities and Barriers
Options
Tools and Resources
Current Projects
Searches for “Michigan Golf”
Searches for “Michigan Kayak Fishing”
Searches for "Michigan Kayaking"
Searches for “Michigan Beaches”

Highest level of all years
Searches for “Michigan Breweries”
Searches for “Michigan Winery”
Searches for “Local Food”
Searches for “Farmer’s Market”
Why People Come to the Thumb

Status and Trends

Priorities and Barriers

Options

Tools and Resources

Current Projects
Priority Strategies

• **Develop different recreational opportunities** Focus attention on recreational activities that capitalize on the region’s coastal resources AND will draw tourists to the area.

• **Maintain heritage and rural feel** and developing cool small towns

• **Take a collaborative approach** to packaging the region’s tourism/recreation resources to present a more attractive destination to tourists
Options

- Beaches
- Kayaking
- Biking
- Scuba Diving
- Bird Watching
- Festivals
- Events
Tools and Resources

• Recreation profiles:
  – Kayaking
  – Scuba
  – Wildlife viewing
  – Biking
  – Beaches

• MDOT Heritage Route Program
  – Recreational Route
Current Projects

Thumb Area Bike Routes
Carl Osentoski

CREATE – Port Austin Kayak
Chris Boyle

Blue Water Winery
Steve Velloff

M-25 Heritage Route
Chad Gainor
Heritage Routes
Benefits (from MDOT)

• **Preservation Benefits** Identify, preserve and enhance Michigan's scenic, historic and recreational resources.
  – Promote a greater awareness of and appreciation for those resources.
  – Provide an opportunity for growth management within a corridor by encouraging appropriate development.
  – Provide an opportunity to manage the traveler/tourist impact on resources.

• **Economic Benefits** Attract visitors, who bring additional revenues, enhancing economic activity in the region.
  – Attract new businesses.
  – Enhance existing jobs and create new jobs.

• **Community Benefits** Provide a Vision for the Future, uniting those who share that vision.
  – Enhance the local, regional and state image on a national level.
  – Identify, promote and preserve community uniqueness, enhancing community appeal.
  – Enhance the quality of life in the community.

• **Education Benefits** Provide an education for future generations by example.
  – Opportunity to share ideas, information, research and lessons.
  – Provide an effective hands-on teaching tool.
  – Establish an education network.
Other Benefits

• Priority MDOT funding for communities on routes
• Defines region as a destination
• Inventories, categorizes and promotes resources, businesses and attractions
• Helps identify gaps in tourism product
• Establishes a theme
• Helps promotion and branding
• Fosters structure for regional collaboration
Type of Heritage Routes

• Scenic (5 in MI)
  – A state highway having outstanding natural beauty

• Historic (7 in MI)
  – A state highway having outstanding historic buildings and resources along its length

• Recreational (5 in MI)
  – A state highway maintained to serve the recreational driver as well as to capture that recreational setting of the facility or area itself, and set the mood for the recreational experience
Criteria

- Local Support
- Logical Section
- Management Plan

**Scenic**
- Regional Attributes
- Visual Quality
- Adjacent Land Use (not commercial or industrial)

**Historic**
- Nat’l Register Quality
- # of resources
- Visibility
- Setting

**Recreational**
- Trip purpose (predominant use for rec/tourism)
- Areas/Activities served
- Roadside environment
Application Process

• Local government support
• Pre-application (Short and describes noteworthy qualities)
• If potential, full application
  – Application
  – Evidence of eligibility
  – Local government support
  – Narrative description of project
  – Route location maps/photos
  – Roadside inventory forms
  – Management Plan
    • Goals for protection, preservation and enhancement of resources.
    • List of existing and potential mgt. issues, problems and needs.
    • Corridor Mgt. Plan (commitment to things such as regulation of land use, detailed site planning, traffic controls, etc.)
    • Appropriate illustrations
    • Plan for local promotion
Next Steps

• Gather local support
• Nominating Team
• Pre-application
**Heritage Routes**

**What are Heritage Routes?**

Heritage Routes are a way to not only protect the highways that receive the designation, but also a way to preserve and respect the areas that these highways travel through. This is done by officially recognizing the highway as having some recreational, historical, or scenic value.

**What benefits do they provide?**

The Michigan Department of Transportation designates four categories of potential benefits.


**What is the process for a road to be designated as a Heritage Route?**

Getting a highway designated as a heritage route is initially a rather simple process that can be started by a government entity or a private organization or individual working with a government entity by filling out a simple pre-application form. MDOT will then make a determination as to whether a lengthier, formal application should then be filled out.

**How are heritage routes selected?**

A heritage route will eventually be selected based on both general and specific criteria:

- General: Local Support, Management Plan, and Logical Section
- Specific: Would it be a scenic, recreational, or historic route?

**Any Heritage Routes in the Thumb area?**

Currently, only two highways in the Thumb area have received the designation as heritage routes:

- **M-15 Recreational Heritage Route “Pathway to Family Fun”**
  Running along the Western edge of the Thumb, M-15 is designated as a heritage route running from Clarkston in the south to Bay City in the north. A website ([http://www.m15heritageroute.com/index.html](http://www.m15heritageroute.com/index.html)) provides information on different events and businesses along the highway.

- **Bay City’s Heritage Route**
  A grassroots effort in 1997 succeeded in getting 1.5 miles of M-25 running through Bay City officially designated as a historic heritage route. The rest of M-25 has received no such designation, even though it closely follows the coast of Lake Huron. It may be a viable candidate to receive designation.

**The Huron Shores Heritage Route**

The Huron Shores Heritage Route is a 200 mile strip of highway that runs along Lake Huron in the Northern part of the Lower Peninsula. It has a variety of different attractions, including 34 different biking and hiking trails and 10 access points to water trails.

The website for Heritage Route 23 is designed to make planning an ideal trip easy. The information available ranges from restaurants and lodging to bird migration waypoints.