

Bear River Strategic Development Plan



Prepared by the
Bear River Innovation, Development and Growth Society

and
Donna Hatt Consulting

June 2007

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Overview	4
3.0	Situational Analysis	6
4.0	SWOT Analysis	28
5.0	Opportunities Development Plan	32
6.0	Bear River Strategic Development Action Plan	41
7.0	Appendices	55
	7.1 Interviews	
	7.2 Funding Programs	
	7.3 Coordinator Job Description & Budget	
	7.4 Regional Map	

1.0 Introduction

Over the past year the Bear River Innovation, Development and Growth Society (BRIDGS) has held a number of consultations within the community regarding revitalization and economic development. Based on their consultations, a vision document was prepared that integrated the initiatives and opportunities that community organizations, businesses and residents felt were critical for their future growth and success as a community. This BRIDGS Vision document has served as the basis for the resulting Bear River Strategic Development Plan.

Developed as a community economic development strategy, it is important to acknowledge that the resulting plan takes into account and reflects those initiatives that were identified and considered critical by and for the community. At the same time, each idea, suggestion and initiative identified in the original vision document has been evaluated against research undertaken during the development process of the Plan. The resulting Bear River Strategic Development Plan represents a blending of the vision document with the most relevant and significant opportunities for the economic viability of the community.

It should also be noted that the Bear River Strategic Development Plan is a community wide economic development plan. Specifically, this plan establishes a profile of the area, identifies opportunities and offers an action plan that will be the responsibility of a number of organizations within Bear River. In the capacity of facilitator for the development of the plan, the Bear River Innovation, Development and Growth Society has channelled the energies and interests of a variety of community groups and organizations in Bear River.

Ultimately, however, the implementation of the resulting action plan rests with a number of “Lead Organizations” who have been identified in the plan. These “Lead Organizations” have been selected based on their existing (perceived and actual) role in Bear River. However BRIDGS, as the champion for the Strategy will continue to serve both as the “Lead Organization” in some projects while fulfilling the role of facilitator for the overall development and achievement of the actions outlined in the plan.

BRIDGS further acknowledges that the “Lead Organizations” identified in the action plan are in fact the same volunteer, not for profit organizations that have communicated that they are faced with ongoing operational challenges – financial and human resource. Therefore, BRIDGS will work to support and offer assistance to these organizations in an effort to enhance and expand their capacities to undertake the actions and initiatives.

The Bear River Strategic Development Plan, revealed on the following pages, has been developed by a Committee of BRIDGS consisting of three Board Members who have invested a significant amount of time and expertise. Donna Hatt Consulting was engaged to facilitate the development of the Plan over a period of several weeks. The Committee had met on several occasions throughout the process to review research compiled and were active participants in the articulation of the plan. Strengthening the process were two public meetings in which research was shared and the community was engaged in the action planning process.

The resulting plan builds on the existing infrastructure and organizations in a manner that facilitates increased communication, partnerships and shared vision for the future.

2.0 Overview

The Bear River Innovation, Growth and Development Society is a registered not for profit organization consisting of volunteers from a variety of community groups, businesses and residents who are committed to fostering and supporting positive economic growth for the community of Bear River. The Society formed over the past couple of years in response to community concern over the need for a coordinated approach to overall economic development.

BRIDGS has been a champion of building linkages between organizations and resources within the community to facilitate enhanced communication within and amongst organizations and residents. Volunteers have also undertaken a number of activities to respond to changing needs in the community including the establishment and sponsoring of the Bear River Youth Centre as well as undertaking the development of this Strategic Development Plan on behalf of Bear River.

The following mission statement and vision document were developed by BRIDGS and have served as the foundation and terms of reference for the development of this multi-year strategic development plan for Bear River.

BRIDGS Mission Statement

BRIDGS will undertake and facilitate activities and initiatives in partnership with community organizations and individuals that will positively impact Bear River's infrastructure, commerce and economic viability and thus foster community pride while offering improved quality of life for residents, quality of experience for visitors and incentive for people to make the community their new home while encouraging and facilitating volunteerism.

BRIDGS Vision Document

The Bear River Plan is a multi-faceted plan that will result in:

- a) Revitalization and revival of our main street and waterfront;
- b) Development of new and renewed year round attractions to draw visitors and new citizens in the community; and
- c) Encourage and facilitate volunteerism.

Based on public meetings and discussions held within the community, BRIDGS has identified the following list of projects as potential initiatives that they believe can and will lead to the achievement of the above noted results.

1) Streetscape and Waterfront Development

- completion of sewerage system;
- development of comprehensive water sourcing and delivery system for the area;
- installation of sidewalks from seniors' home to village and through the village;
- appropriate signage;
- repair and replace cribwork along the riverbank;
- strengthen and secure roadside retaining walls consistent with village heritage;
- establish better accessibility and visibility of waterfront park, Solar Aquatic Treatment Facility and Full Time interpretive tours;
- repair riverside boardwalk;
- a canoe/kayak launch on old mill property;
- trails for walking, riding, cycling;

- organized recreational activities for youth, adults and seniors such as softball and soccer;
- new office (including technical updating for e-commerce), shop & residential space;
- streetscape cosmetic improvements – paint, light posts and flowers.

2) New and Renewed Attractions

- assist the Oakdene Centre & others interested in enhancing recreational programs and facilities for youth to encourage them to enjoy positive, productive activities, including the building of a multi-purpose court for basketball, skateboarding and so on;
- assist the Bear River Heritage Museum Board in development of programs, upgrades, etc;
- “The Bear River Centre” to be housed in retrofitted, underutilized community buildings and offering cultural and technological immersion experiences in the form of day-long to week-long workshops during which participants will be housed at local B&B’s; workshops to be offered in specialized areas such as master art classes, alternative energy technology, drama, computer animation, etc.;
- “Tidal River Interpretive Centre” highlighting the role of the river within the community’s heritage, again housed in existing buildings; possibly including a major water sculpture illustrating the nature of our tides, interactive displays and models of Bear River’s logging, shipping, and guiding heritage, “green” technology exhibits, costumed character interpreters, etc.;
- Community radio station;
- Consistent Staffing at C@P site and Library;
- a Farmers’ Market for local produce;
- Regular presentation of an original play about Bear River history at the Oakdene Centre and the Exhibition grounds

Building on the strengths of the citizens of Bear River, the Strategic Development Plan outcomes will result in:

- Increased economic activity, employment, visitor & tourism traffic;
- Enhanced self-sustainability of community; and
- Initiatives that will build upon and complement Village’s reputation:
 - as an Artistic Community;
 - of noteworthy heritage;
 - for unique geography, tides, and architecture;
 - as a popular community with visitors.

3.0 Situational Analysis

The following situational analysis has been developed to provide BRIDGS with a closer look at their community as they begin to evaluate the projects listed within the vision document and begin to move forward with the development of their plan. A number of sources have been consulted throughout the process and reviewed by the committee as part of the development plan initiative. It will be important that this information serve as a reference document that is reviewed and updated appropriately on an annual basis, particularly the statistics.

Historical Overview

For centuries, the woodlands, tidal river and estuary, waterways, climate and geography of Bear River have been a draw for people from many walks of life, from its first inhabitants, the Mi'kmaq dating back more than 10,000 years, who used this area as a gathering place, through to the Europeans in the early 1600's, and into the successful shipbuilding and lumbering era fuelled by Loyalists, who arrived after the American Revolution (1783). During the 19th and early 20th century, Bear River experienced steady economic growth based on an industry rooted in shipbuilding and exporting of lumber.

With the introduction of steel hulled ships and steam engines, the demand for sailing vessels and lumber that had fuelled the economy for many decades, came to an end. The economy of Bear River and the surrounding communities began to transform. Employment was sought within surrounding communities and in particular, within the newly opened Department of National Defence Base in Cornwallis. Rejoicing in the economic prosperity due to employment opportunities within the Federal Government, the community continued to survive economically. However, the success was short lived. The closing of the Military Base in the late 1990's took with it a number of valuable salaried positions that provided solid and substantial income for many residents in and around Bear River. The impact of the base closure was felt throughout the region. Some employees took early retirement and remained within the community, while others sought employment elsewhere, many travelling outside the region resulting in moves to other communities.

In the years following the base closure, Bear River experienced a series of unfortunate events. The closure of their only school, loss of the Doctor and related medical services, loss of a banking institution as well as a number of businesses, had a very negative affect on the community. As in the past, when faced with challenges, once again the community of Bear River came together to overcome adverse conditions with creative approaches in an attempt to sustain the community.

In recent years, the community has continued to employ and build on the natural assets that surrounds it. Building on the natural appeal of area, tourism became an important industry for the community. The construction and operation of the Solar Aquatic Sewerage Plant also had a ripple effect within the region. When it was originally constructed, it was a demonstration site operating with the latest in technology. The plant, with a physical appearance resembling that of a Green House on the riverfront, drew visitors and observers making it not only an effective treatment centre but also an attraction with positive economic impacts in the area.

The natural assets of the area have also played a significant role in the evolution of Bear River. While many have worked and benefited from the land itself, Bear River has attracted the attention and hearts of many within the arts community. For centuries, the residents in the region have drawn inspiration from the natural beauty afforded by the environment; increasingly, artists from near and far have been

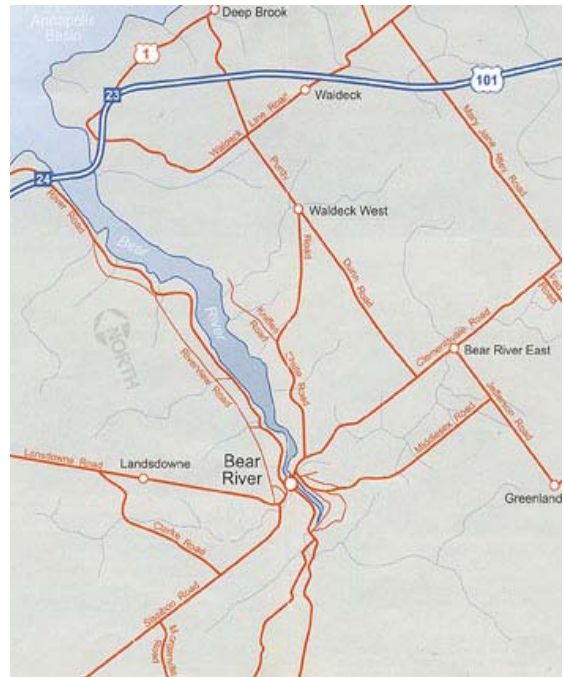
drawn to Bear River and its hills. Working predominantly from studios in their own homes, Bear River has become known as a haven for artists who enjoy sharing their work with residents and visitors alike.

Today, residents continually benefit from a more “softer” use of the environment. The natural attributes and resources have given rise to a prosperous commercial era, but resulted in more difficult times as well. Yet, through the determination and resourcefulness of its residents, Bear River continues to redevelop itself in an effort to sustain itself and survive.

Location

Perched along and within the valley surrounding the Bear River, is the village that has taken the name as its own. Bear River is located physically within South Western Nova Scotia, 219kms from Halifax and 110kms from Yarmouth.

Looking at a map, the roadways and river intersections suggests that Bear River in fact, is a crossroads of sorts. The community lies to the south of Highway 101, inland from the Town of Digby (13kms) and Annapolis Royal (29kms). Bear River is accessed off Highway 101, from either Exit 24 via Riverview Road, or Exit 23 via Chute Road and from Digby via Lansdowne Road. Approaching from Hwy 8 and Kejimkujik National Park, Bear River is accessed via Clementsvale Road.



Located near the head of the river, Bear River is some 6 kms inland and is on a tidal river which is affected twice daily by the rise and fall of the Bay of Fundy via the Annapolis Basin. The tidal action results in a 20ft transformation of the river, revealing a rich and diverse marsh wetland teeming with life.

From a Municipal Government perspective, Bear River is one of the most unique in the Province. Most communities have their parameters enclosed within one municipal unit. Bear River is effectively split down the middle and is shared between two municipal units. The River itself serves as the municipal dividing line. As a result, the portion of the village lying to the East of the river falls within the municipal boundary of the County of Annapolis and the western side falls under the municipal jurisdiction of the County of Digby. While municipal boundaries may physically divide the community, residents of Bear River have and continue to work to define themselves as a community, regardless of the boundaries imposed by municipal government. Over the years, this has presented a number of challenges in the community as they must work in collaboration with 2 units who may have differing priorities and relationships with Bear River at different times.

Indifferent to these municipal boundaries, the residents of Bear River define themselves as one community, one that consists of a region that reaches beyond Bear River proper, reaching out to and including Lansdowne to the West and Waldeck to the East, including Greenland and all points in between.

Bear River First Nation Community

Prior to colonization, the Mi'kmaq lived according to the laws of the creator, laws which governed their relationship with the land, nature and mankind. Today, the community of Bear River First Nation,

as with other First Nation communities, continues to be distinctly linked to the land through their culture and traditions. The Band Members act as stewards of the land. Outwardly, to the general public, stewardship is evident in their achievements in forest management and river enhancement. The members of the community are proud of their roots and are closely connected, striving to foster a positive environment for their people to grow and prosper.

Bear River First Nation Reserve itself is approximately 1500 acres of forested land. In addition to this land, there are two additional land lots belonging to the reserve, including approximately 60 acres in Lequille and 80 acres in Graywood. Presently it is estimated that there are just under 100 people residing on the reserve with another 100 Band members residing off reserve. As a community, Bear River First Nation is experiencing a decline in population.

Serving the members of the Band on and off Reserve, the Bear River Band Council oversees and maintains a variety of services and programs for their people. Falling under Federal jurisdiction, the community governs and manages itself through a Band consultation process. Through the Aboriginal and Northern Affairs programs of the Federal Government, the Band satisfies a number of the basic needs of the community.

The Mi'kmaq people have lived off the land for many centuries and have a wealth of knowledge to share. Their presence is an authentic cultural and historical attribute unique to the area. The historical significance of the ancestors of Bear River First Nation is one of Bear River's greatest assets, and, if relationships can be nurtured appropriately, could positively contribute to future development.

As a unique community within the area, it too has an extensive number of artisans and crafters who complement those residing within Bear River. It has been estimated that at least 17 households on the Reserve have members who produce, as a hobby or as a business, traditional arts and crafts in at least 10 areas of discipline. There are currently two shops on Reserve that welcome visitors to make purchases in addition to the Gift Shop within the Bear River First Nation Cultural Centre.

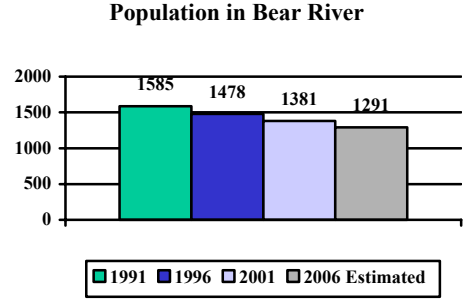
Located very close in proximity, the relationship between the Band and its members and the Community of Bear River is cordial; however, there are limited partnerships explored between the two. As economic development continues to be a focus of the region, there is an increased need and opportunity to engage in dialogue to explore mutually beneficial partnerships that will generate positive impacts for the area as a whole.

Demographic Profile – Community of Bear River

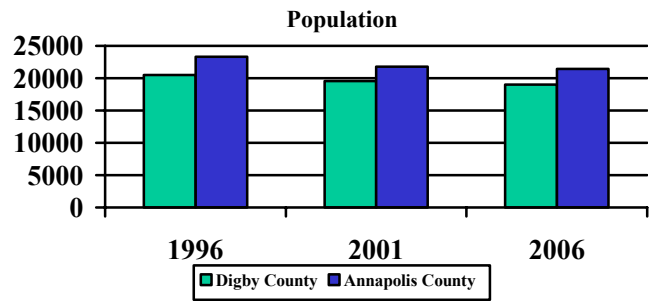
To develop an appreciation of the demographics of Bear River, the following community profile has been based on reports and statistics that are currently available from Statistics Canada (www.statisticscanada.ca). Specific data for Bear River is available up to 2004 after which time the reports for Bear River are not available, as they fall within 2 different census districts as divided by the municipal boundaries of the two counties, namely Annapolis and Digby. Where appropriate, comparisons have been drawn between the Bear River data and that of the surrounding counties, the province and the nation. Please note, that the data does not include those residing on the Bear River First Nation. It is also important to note that the Census 2004 data will soon be available and therefore amendments to incorporate this data would further enhance the value of this report and baseline data.

Population

Like many rural communities, Bear River has been experiencing a steady decline in population. Over the 1991 – 2001 period, the population reflects an annual average decline of 6.5% representing an overall decline of 13% from 1,585 to 1,381. In keeping with this trend, the population in 2006 has been estimated to have fallen to 1,291. This represents a decline of 90 people. While this may not appear significant in larger populated areas, within a community of just over 1,300, it is very significant with the impacts being felt throughout the community. Declines have been attributed to the out migration of youth and families in search of employment, as well as deaths and lower birth rates.



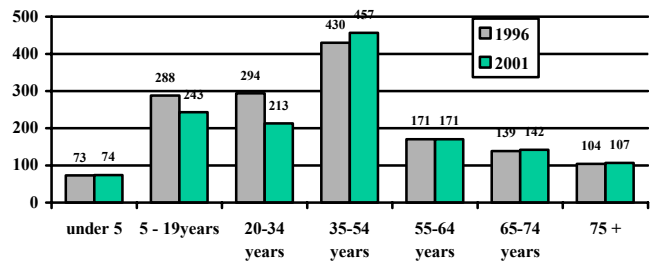
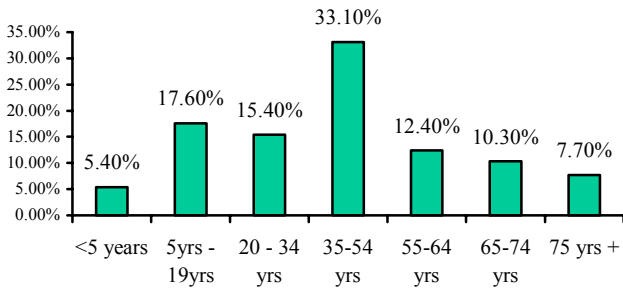
The overall decline in population is not a Bear River phenomenon; the population in Annapolis and Digby Counties has also been negatively affected. Between 1996 and 2006, the population in Digby County declined by 7.4% to 18,992 while Annapolis County declined by 8% to 21,438. Interestingly, over the same period, the overall population in Nova Scotia grew by .9% predominantly in the urban centres. This growth is at a much slower rate than the 9.9% national rate.



Age

A closer look at the age profile of the 1,381 residents within Bear River in 2001 indicates that 1/3rd of the population falls within the 35-54 age range. Looking at the chart illustrating the ages, it is evident that the birth rate will not be able to compensate for the death rate; furthermore, the data would suggest

Population by Age 2001



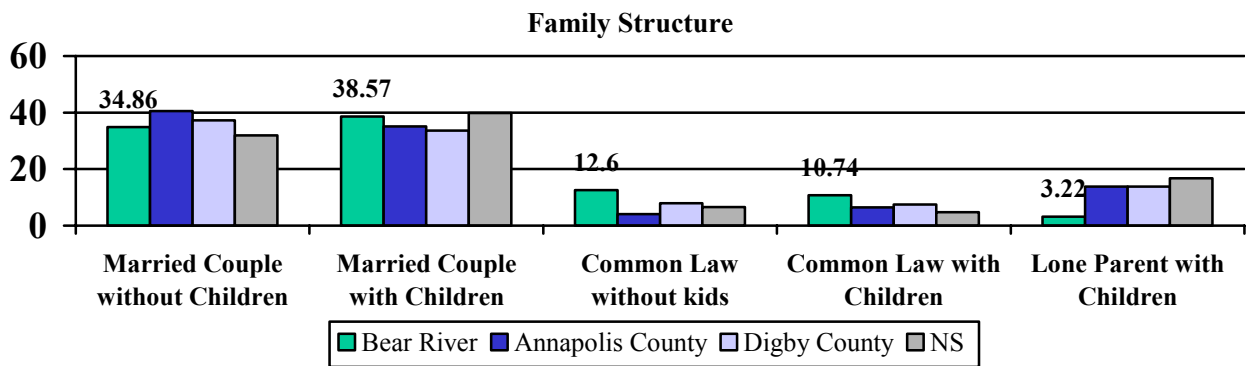
that the youth in the 5 – 19 years range are not staying in the community. This may be attributed to schooling outside of the community and out migration for employment. A closer look at the 1996 – 2001 period reveals a number of trends that will have implications for the community. Specifically, the number of people 65 years and older is on the increase, while those under 34 years is on the decline. This shift in demographics will have an impact on the overall services and facilities that can be accommodated and sustained, and in some cases, required, if people are to remain in Bear River.

In the future, consideration must be given to the increasing need for health care and services for the elderly, while at the same time, if the number of those under 34 years continue to decline, the community will continue to see overall declines in population.

Family Structure

In 2001, Bear River reported having 450 families. Of these families, 47% reported having no children or no children at home. Of the 53% with children, 3% were lone parent families where the parent was primarily female.

A majority of the families are comprised of married couples; however, there continues to be a slight decline over the past ten years while Common Law continues to represent, on average, 12% of the population; lone parent families, albeit in small increments, are on the rise in Bear River, representing 13% in 2001.

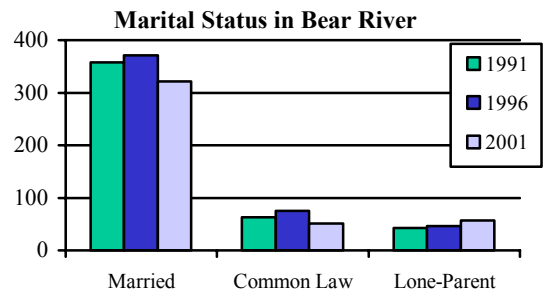


The family structure of a community directly impacts the overall functioning of the community. Families will seek different activities, services and experiences that enhance their overall quality of life compared to those who do not have children. It is important to be aware of these structures within smaller communities.

While the family make-up in Bear River appears to be reflected in its parent Counties of Annapolis and Digby, the trend is different to that of the Province whereby 61% of families (married and common law) have children.

Marital Status

Based on the 2001 census, 56% of the population in Bear River is married while 23% is single. The balance is either widowed or divorced at 8% each, while 4% are separated. Again, this is a reflection of the composition of the community that will have an impact on the nature of the services and programs that will be sought out in the community.

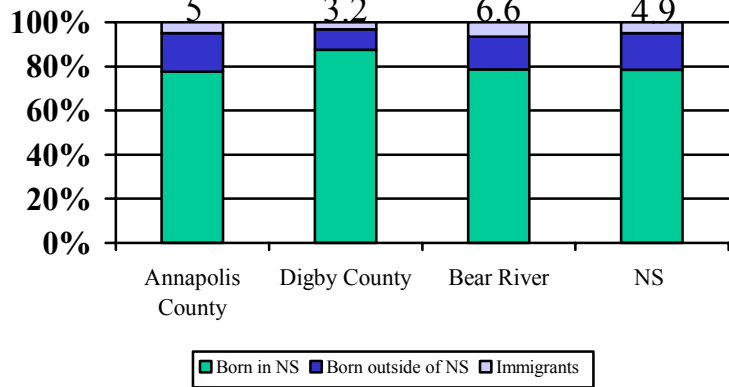


Origin of Population

The origin of residents within Bear River has continued to remain primarily from Nova Scotia with an increasing percentage of immigrants from 3.4% in 1991 to 6.6 in 2001. In actual numbers, however, this represents a mere 52 to 91 people over this same period. At the same time, the community has been attracting fewer individuals born outside of NS.

A comparison of origins within Annapolis and Digby Counties and NS, based on 2001 figures indicates that, Bear River is leading the way in immigrant residents as they represent 6.6% of the population. This would suggest the community’s perception of more than average number of “Come from Aways” is true, however, the volume is not as great as many have suggested.

Origin of Population

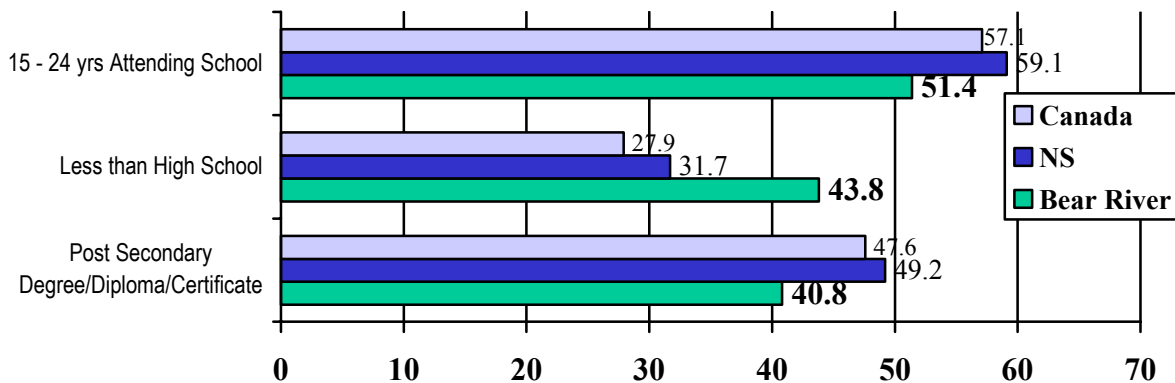


Education

In light of its location, age of population, related demographics and employment, it is not surprising that nearly 44% of the population over the age of 24 have less than a High School Diploma. By comparison this is higher than the provincial and national average. At the same time, it is interesting to note the extreme on the other end which suggests that 40.8% of the residents of Bear River have a Post Secondary Degree or Diploma; while still lower than the provincial and national averages, within a population of 1381, this is significant. It is also interesting to note that only 51.4% of those between 15 – 24 years are attending school, again lower than the averages.

Currently, the community of Bear River is not served by a grade school. Several years ago, the School Board made the decision to amalgamate a number of rural schools, including the one in Bear River. As a result, due to the municipal boundaries, the youth of Bear River are sent in two different directions for their schooling. Those residing on the Annapolis County side of the river, go to schools in Annapolis County, including Annapolis Royal Regional Academy, the Clark Rutherford Memorial School in Cornwallis and Annapolis West Education Centre. Those residing in Digby County are bussed to schools within that district, including Digby Regional High and Digby Elementary School. As a result, the youth in Bear River are attending at least 5 schools in different locations. Many residents have suggested that this has made it difficult for the youth to connect and identify themselves with Bear River as their home community.

Levels of Education



Employment

Based on the 2001 Community Profile, the unemployment rate in Bear River was 6% while 50% were employed; 44% were not in the workforce. Based on the population over 20 years and under 65 years, there are 841 people or 60% of the population; this would suggest that 420 people are employed with 50 seeking work and the remainder not in the workforce or seeking employment.

Industry in the region varies depending on the resources of the County; however, it would appear that within the Counties of Digby and Annapolis it is fairly balanced.

From an employment basis, the region derives a significant portion of its positions in sales and service at 26%, followed by the trades (16%) and primary industry (13%). Manufacturing and Business fall close behind at 10% and 11% respectively.

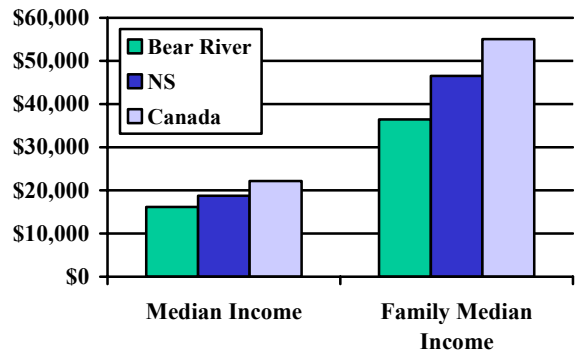
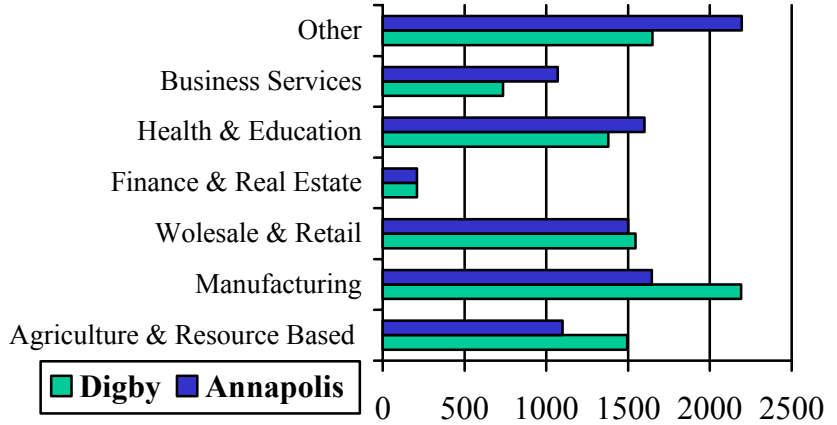
While the above notes the County-wide employment base in which Bear River falls, it does provide insight into where the residents are finding employment. In Bear River itself, the employment opportunities are limited in scope. Specifically, there is a general store, gas station, post office, a couple of art/craft stores, and a small seasonal restaurant, a few service related businesses primarily operated by the proprietor; and a number of self-employed artists. This would suggest that many of those in the workforce residing in Bear River are employed in the surrounding area communities and possibly beyond.

It should be noted that the 2004/05 Business Plan prepared by the former Western Valley Development Authority suggested that the economy in the region, which includes Bear River, is much stronger and more diversified. Furthermore, it cites that the workforce has become more balanced between supply and demand and will require inward migration in the future to accommodate the employment opportunities.

Income

Based on 2001 figures, the average annual median income for residents in Bear River was lower than both the provincial and national level at \$16,183. Similarly, the family median income was well below average at \$36,439 annually, \$10,000 less than families in NS and nearly \$20,000 less than those in Canada. Specifically within the region previously served by the Western Valley Development Authority, the 2001 family median income was reported at \$42,902 annually, an increase of 12.2% over 1996. Again, this would suggest that there is an opportunity for Bear River residents to seek

Employment in Annapolis County & Digby County



higher income positions within the region. However, the lower than average family income could be affected by the higher numbers of seniors and single parent families in a relatively small sample of 1380 people.

Dwellings

A comparison of Bear River to the province suggests that there are a greater number of people owning their homes in this community, specifically, 84% compared to 71%. According to Statistics Canada and the Realty Board, in 2001 the average value of homes in Bear River was \$61,512, which is an increase of .3% over 1996. By comparison, homes within the Western Valley region in 2003 was \$76,123, a 12.9% increase over 1996. In 2001 homes in NS had an average value of \$101,515, up 27% over 1996. Thus, these figures would suggest that homes are more affordable in Bear River; however, they are older and therefore require repairs. In 2001, 58% cited their homes were in need of repair, an increase of 25% over 1991.

From a rental perspective, it is also interesting to note that the average monthly rental rate in Bear River has declined substantially from \$636/month in 1991 to \$396/month in 2001. This may be attributed to lack of market demand or supply and overall aging of the physical plant of the homes thus making it difficult for landlords to justify the higher rental rates.

Property Taxes are set annually; however, the averages for residential and commercial in both Annapolis and Digby Counties is as follows:

	Commercial	Residential
Digby County	\$1.60/\$100 of assessment	\$1.35/\$100 of assessment
Annapolis County	\$1.69/\$100 of assessment	\$0.95/\$100 of assessment

Infrastructure

Sewage Treatment Plant

Servicing approximately 150 homes/businesses in the core area of Bear River on both sides of the river, the Sewerage Treatment plant is located within the Waterfront Park in Bear River. Owned and operated by the Municipality of Annapolis and has not yet met its operational capacity. The facility is housed in a green house like structure which is very unique and certainly more eye pleasing than most other typical structures. The windowed structure enables people to look into the facility and the operation, another unique feature that has, and continues to be, very popular in light of its location within the Community’s waterfront park.

When first established, the facility was a showpiece for innovative environmental technology. The Solar Aquatic Treatment Facility, as it was then known, served as a tourism attraction for the community as people came to see “green house” technology. Scheduled tours provided visitors with an in depth look at the technology and operation. Over the years, the ecological uniqueness of the facility has attracted a variety of news media including writers and television. The previously available Public Tours have not been offered over the past number of years due to a number of issues including insurance, staffing, and primarily due to a change in the operation.

The Engineer with the Municipality of Annapolis County has indicated that the facility, as it was originally established, did not meet performance objectives, and therefore the treatment process reverted to a microbiological process which is used by many treatment plants in Nova Scotia and elsewhere.

At the request of the company from whom the Solar Aquatic technology had been purchased, and in light of its termination of use, the Municipality has removed the “Solar Aquatic” reference from its name. The building continues to have plants inside its operation, however, they do not serve a specific role in the treatment of effluent.

While the plant may not serve as a demonstration site for environmental technology, it does continue to educate visitors to the site regarding the microbiological treatment of sewerage. In place of the official tours, the manager of the plant, has provided training to the Visitor Information Centre Staff regarding the overall operation of the plant enabling them to respond to basic inquiries. Visitors are able to view the operation safely by looking in on the plant through the greenhouse glass walls. When specific requests are made for group tours, the Municipality makes all attempts to provide a guided tour.

Discussions are currently ongoing within both Municipal units to explore ways in which to expand service provided by this system to consumers in the outlying areas of Bear River.

Water Supply

The community of Bear River is not on a municipal water system. Presently, most homes/businesses are served by private wells. A number of homes are connected through the Hillburgh Water Society that serves some 25 homes on the Digby County side of Bear River. The Society has been in operation since 1870 providing water to homes within the service area.

Water service has been identified as a primary concern of residents and business owners in the community. After several years of petitioning by locals for municipal assistance in this area, they are now making some headway. Earlier this year, CBCL, an engineering firm, was hired to conduct a water study on behalf of both the Municipality of Digby County and Municipality of Annapolis County. The Study will assess the capacity of the existing water reservoir currently in use, and identify others for potential use. As part of the process they have undertaken a survey of local residents to assess their level of support and interest in participating in a municipal water supply system. To date, a total of some 30 surveys have been submitted.

Municipal sources indicate that the study is moving along well and they had expected a Draft Report in May (2007). The findings in the report will not be shared immediately, rather the final document and its recommendations will be presented to the community later this summer.

It is important to note that this process represents the initial stages of the project, and should the reports and community support for the resulting proposed approach, the system, if approved by Council and endorsed by the potential users, is at least 2 years away from completion. While this process does not supply a “quick fix”, it does at least offer a solution to a long-term issue. It will be imperative that the community continue communicating with the Municipalities to ensure their interests and opportunities are taken into consideration.

Community Development Organizations

Bear River has numerous incorporated not-for-profit, volunteer driven organizations all of whom provide valuable services and resources within the community. There are at least three that have primary mandates relating to facilitating economic development within the community each operating independently of one another. However, there has been interest expressed in looking at opportunities to work collaboratively towards a common vision. It is important to note as well, that two of these organizations own heritage buildings and facilities in Bear River that require substantial maintenance

and upkeep annually. Interestingly, of the 16 main buildings in the community, at least ten are owned and maintained by not for profit societies.

In addition to the three economic development related organizations in Bear River, there are a significant number of organizations who deliver or coordinate a variety of programs and services that enhance the social, health and well being of the community. The following is meant to provide an overview of a variety of these organizations and highlight the role they play within the community.

Bear River Innovation, Development and Growth Society (BRIDGS)

BRIDGS is a new addition to the community in the last year. As a volunteer-driven, not for profit society comprised of members from both community and business sectors, it is working together to facilitate the development and implementation of a multi-year strategic plan that will be endorsed and supported by the community of Bear River and area. The Society, as the acronym suggests, is meant to serve as a “bridge” that connects the many organizations in their community together in an attempt to develop partnerships and collaborations that will facilitate economic and community growth.

The founding and serving members are a combination of long time local residents and “come from aways” who have been concerned about the overall decline in the economy of Bear River and the impact it is having on all aspects of life in the area.

Last Fall, the Society hosted a number of community consultations seeking input from community members and organizations regarding key areas of concern and more importantly, their vision for their community. It became apparent during these consultations that there were a number of common issues, projects and opportunities that resonated throughout the community. The resulting vision document developed through this process serves as a basis for the more formal development plan currently underway. At the same time, the Society has begun to take on specific initiatives including the establishment of the Bear River Youth Centre and the development of the Bear River Pageant, both of which have been outlined below.

Bear River Youth Centre

In an attempt to provide youth with recreational and social opportunities, a number of volunteers came together to form a Youth Centre Committee under BRIDGS. In the Fall of 2006, the committee opened the doors to the Youth Centre in the Bear River Trading Company Building. It is a drop in centre that provides youth with a central venue that encourages them to gather and socialize in a safe and convenient location. Although the hours of operation are limited to Tuesday nights for ages 16-18 years and Saturday afternoons from 1 – 4pm for 8 – 16 year olds, the uptake has been very positive.

Volunteers with the Centre suggest that the Centre enables youth to reconnect with other youth in the community and the community itself – especially since they are heading out to different schools and many do not even know each other. Thanks to the support of the community, the centre has a number of games, crafts and equipment that are available to the youth. Furthermore, the Centre and its activities, including fundraising for additional equipment, has helped to bring the community together. The support and popularity of the recent Variety Show hosted and coordinated by the volunteers with involvement of the youth at the centre clearly illustrates the communities commitment to this initiative.

It should be noted that the Centre is a new, initiative and has been made possible due to the tireless efforts of a handful of volunteers. The future success of the Centre relies in the committee’s ability to engage the youth, their families and other citizens in the area to become volunteers with the Centre.

The Youth Centre volunteers in conjunction with the youth are currently exploring additional recreational programs and activities that will further diversify the opportunities for youth in the community. BRIDGS has secured funding under the Job Creation Partnership program for a staff position to assist in coordinating and facilitating the Centre.

Bear River Pageant

The Society has supported and facilitated the development of a Bear River Pageant that will celebrate and share the heritage and culture of the community through a series of vignettes. This initiative engages a number of residents in the development and implementation. With financial assistance from a number of local and provincial partners, the scripts are being prepared, contracts have been developed for set designers, costuming and marketing. It is anticipated that the Pageant will be showcased during the Bear River Cherry Carnival in July and then becoming a regular feature attraction/experience for the community that will maintain a regular schedule in the next year.

Bear River Economic Development Society (BREDS)

This Society has been in operation for several decades. Originally coming together to revitalize the “downtown” area, the Society worked towards saving and converting vacant buildings in an attempt to lure and secure new tenants. During the late 1990’s, the Society worked to champion the “Downtown Redevelopment” and “Business Improvement District”, programs introduced by the Province. These were attempts to assist communities to revitalize their downtown core in the face of declining business occupants and deteriorating infrastructure.

The Society currently focuses its efforts on redevelopment of the Old Trading Company Building located within the downtown area. Built in the early 1700’s, the building has undergone a number of capital investments that continues today. The Society has recently submitted a proposal for funding to a number of agencies for capital projects including plumbing, electrical, roofing and stabilization of the pillars on which the building stands.

In keeping with its original mandate, the Society serves as a landlord/developer for the building. Today the structure houses 2 seniors apartments, a restaurant, the recently opened, Youth Centre and several small businesses. For obvious reasons, the number of tenants has a direct impact on the sustainability of the building – the financial resources are required to maintain the building and attempt to ensure it remains standing as a tribute to the heritage of the community of Bear River and a business centre. The Society is not able to sustain the building on its own revenues from tenants at this time.

The Society has indicated that sourcing volunteers, funds for repairs and businesses continues to be an ongoing challenge.

Bear River Board of Trade

The Bear River Board of Trade has been in operation for over 100 years and has a mandate to advocate for a positive business environment in Bear River for businesses and the community. As a not for profit, volunteer driven, membership based organization, like many others in the community, they are challenged financially and from a human resource perspective. Traditionally, businesses served as the primary membership base; however, over time and with the closure of a number of businesses, there has been a decline in membership. The Board currently consists of approximately 10 members.

The Board of Trade has been and continues to initiate and be involved with a variety of initiatives. Currently, the organization owns, operates and maintains the Waterfront Park located on the riverfront, as well as the Windmill structure on this site. During the summer months, the Windmill serves as the

communities Visitor Information Centre. As well, they own the former Green Lantern Building and 4-5 acres of river frontage on the west bank of the river referred to as the Mill Property.

As a Board of Trade, they also undertake a number of marketing activities on behalf of their members and the community, including annual review and submission of the Bear River profile in the NS Doers and Dreamers Guide, and they have recently launched a revised website for Bear River (www.bearriver.ca). This website has a solid foundation and with continued expansion and development has the capacity to become an excellent vehicle for the promotion of Bear River as a destination. To ensure the site gains increased support and popularity with the businesses and the community, it will be important for the Board to encourage and invite partnership opportunities for other businesses and organizations including continued promotion of the listing program. The current cost to participate in this site is \$30 in year one, \$20 there after which enables them to have a listing with 75 words and a photo.

The future growth and sustainability of this website will require the Board of Trade to evolve the presentation to reflect a Bear River Community site that expands on the many experiences and opportunities it offers, rather than the overall thrust of a Board of Trade site.

Based on the 2006/07 annual report, the Board indicated that it will continue to work on behalf of the community in a number of areas including being a champion for the water system, sewerage treatment systems, and trail development. A number of additional projects have been shared and adopted within the vision document prepared by BRIDGS.

Bear River and Area Health Centre

The Heath Centre was born out of the tireless efforts of volunteers and the community's need for accessible health care services. The Centre serves as a venue through which Doctor's and other health professionals can see patients, deliver health related programs and services, and a place where other community support groups and organizations can host their programs. The facility has been and continues to be a partnership between the community, the Department of Health and many related partners.

Following the rebuilding of the Centre after an unfortunate fire, the volunteer board secured financial assistance from the Province through the Regional Health Board that enabled them to hire a full-time coordinator in a paid position. This achievement was very timely as the volunteers who had served in so many capacities to keep this resource available had reached a burn-out point.

With the addition of a paid staff person, the Board will invest its volunteer time more directly into the development and securing of programs and services for the community, leaving its coordination and day-to-day management to their new Coordinator.

It is important to note that the community is not being adequately served by medical care and that this is not a Bear River issue. Recently, the Town of Digby announced it would be launching its own recruiting campaign for Doctors, as the entire region is in need of additional services. The Out Patient Room alone had seen 20 Closure Dates within the first four months of 2007 due to Physician shortage. It will be imperative that the community continue to support the efforts of the Heath Centre and the Regional Health Board and Municipalities to attract and retain Physicians as they are an essential service in the community.

Oakdene Centre Society

Formerly an Elementary School, the Oakdene Centre is a fully accessible building that is operated by a not for profit society consisting of volunteers from the community who are committed to the continued enhancement and use of the facility as a community centre for Bear River.

Since the Society has taken over the operation of the building, it has undergone a number of renovations and offers a full range of space for a variety of uses. The spaces previously used as classrooms currently house 5 tenants including a hairdresser, an art therapist and 3 artists studios. In addition, there are a number of programs and events that make use of the auditorium (200 person capacity) and other studios in the building. The auditorium has been, and continues to be used for a variety of purposes including performances, recreational programs and social events.

The Society is currently able to meet its operational budgets annually; however, it does have additional space available for rent. There are a number of capital projects that they are proposing to undertake and have submitted funding applications to a number of sources to assist in these expenses. It will be imperative that the facilities continue to undergo façade and structural enhancements to assist in its appeal as a venue within the community for businesses, organizations and events.

While the facility is currently used well by the community, it has not reached its full capacity. The Society is very interested in working with the community and businesses to further utilize the building, thus rendering it more financially sustainable.

Digby County Exhibition Society

The Digby County Exhibition has been in operation since 1879 on grounds that offer a spectacular mountainside view of Bear River. The grounds and buildings are maintained by the Digby County Exhibition Society which has a county-wide mandate, however, the majority of Board members and volunteers are from the Bear River area. The Exhibition is hosted in August of each year offering a variety of activities including horse pulls, ox pulls, ox relay races, tractor tilt and pulls, yarding demonstrations, riding competitions and much more. The regional 4-H organization continues to be very involved in the events annually.

The Exhibition itself is hosted over 4 days with an average attendance of 2000 people. The facility consists of a number of buildings, including barns, 2 outdoor rings (one with new fencing and bleachers), an entertainment hall with electrical capacity for live entertainment, a dining hall complete with kitchen and dining/multi-purpose space, canteen facilities, and some 30 fully serviced camping sites. Over the past number of years, there have been ongoing capital improvements undertaken in an effort to render the facility and visitor experience more enjoyable. This Exhibition currently attracts the smallest gate numbers in the province yet continues to strive to survive.

The Society has indicated that they are challenged annually in their volunteer recruitment for the event and serving on their Board of Directors. While the event itself is in August, the Society also maintains the facility year round and contracts out some of the on-site maintenance. Off-season use of the facility includes storage of recreational vehicles which generates a small amount of income.

The Exhibition Grounds have a significant infrastructure which can serve a variety of purposes through the year. The Society is open to exploring partnerships and serving as a venue for other events and purposes. Increased use of the facility is acknowledged as not only a potential revenue opportunity (\$100/day) but also enhances community awareness and economic spin-offs for the community.

Bear River Fire Department

Not only does the Bear River Fire Department provides valuable Fire Protection Services, it also maintains and operates the Fire Hall which is available for a variety of events and activities for the community. In July, the Department volunteers also coordinate the Annual Cherry Festival which has been a long standing tradition in the community. Several years ago, the Department also took on the responsibility of owning and managing the Bear River Ballfield. Similar to other volunteer based organizations, the Fire Department too continues to struggle with declining and aging volunteers, increased fundraising challenges, increasing insurance costs and building maintenance costs.

Other Organizations

There are many other organizations within Bear River. Interviews with a number of them revealed many commonalities that are worth taking into consideration:

- increasing operational and capital costs
- declining volunteer base due to burnout and lack of time
- increased fundraising challenges
- aging volunteer base
- aging physical infrastructure resulting in need for costly repairs

Heritage & Culture Resources

The community is rich in heritage and culture that is expressed through museums and centres, art and craft shops and festivals including:

Bear River First Nation Heritage & Cultural Centre

Located on the Bear River First Nation Reserve adjacent to the Village of Bear River, the Centre is owned and operated by the Bear River First Nation community. Welcoming some 5000 visitors annually, it is open primarily between May and September. Through its Interpretive Centre, Heritage Gallery, Workshops, Demonstrations and Interpretive Trail, the Centre both exposes and immerses visitors to the rich and authentic heritage of Bear River First Nation.

Bear River Heritage Museum

Operating for the past number of years from the I.O.O.F. Hall in Bear River, the Museum is operated by the Bear River Historical Society, a volunteer, not-for-profit organization. The Museum, through a number of artefacts and exhibits, shares the heritage of the community. Open during the months of July and August, the museum is staffed primarily by volunteers drawn from a membership base of about 15 and supported by a summer student every three years as funding permits. The Society is well known in the region for their community newsletter. "The Tributary" is produced primarily by two society volunteers and is widely read by the locals near and far.

Annually the Museum welcomes approximately 1200 visitors, the majority of whom are from away and contribute some \$600 through donations. The balance of the operating costs are funded through a variety of fundraisers hosted by the Society including the sale of calendars, a book they published in 2001, photographs and postcards, etc.

In late April, the Society hosted a meeting to explore the future of the Museum. The I.O.O.F. building in which the Museum is currently located has been put on the market by the owners, the Bear River Legion. The Society has secured a relationship with the Bear River Board of Trade to relocate to one of their buildings, the former Green Lantern building. This building is located on the bank of the river on the west side of the bridge. Funds are currently being sought and secured through a number of sources

by the Society to undertake building renovations that must be completed prior to their move. Completion of these renovations will result in a reduction of rental fees for the Society.

The museum has not qualified in the past for a Community Museum Assistance grant however, it does continue as a member of the Federation of NS Heritage. The marketing activities for the museum primarily include a listing in the Museums section of the Nova Scotia Doers and Dreamers Guide and any additional listings that are offered complimentary. Ongoing challenges for the Society include volunteer recruitment and fundraising.

Bear River Vineyard

The Bear River Vineyard has experienced success in their operation and have further expanded their business to offer Vineyard tours. Visitors are invited to learn about the process and environmental practices that are implemented at this Vineyard. Complementing the tour experience is the spectacular view planes of Bear River from the property.

Riverview Ethnographic Museum

Over the past number of years this Museum has operating within a private residence. The museum had contained authentic folk costumes and artefacts from many exotic lands, early Americana and turn of the century clothes and accessories worn in Bear River. At the time of this report, its operational status was not known.

Waterfront Park

Operating within the Waterfront Park are the Visitor Information Centre (VIC), the Sewerage Treatment Plant and a riverfront walk offers visitors an up close look at the tidal river and its ecology. The VIC itself is located within a Windmill structure that is owned, maintained and operated by the Bear River Board of Trade from May to October depending on staff funding. The Windmill and Riverfront Boardwalk are in need of significant repairs this year. The Board has begun structural renovations to the Windmill earlier this spring which was an unexpected expenditure for this fiscal year. They are aware of the Riverwalk repairs that are required and are investigating funding partners and opportunities to fix the infrastructure.

Visual Arts and Crafts

Bear River has a long-standing reputation as a community rich in handicraft and visual arts. There are several locals and “come from aways” who have and continue to pursue their art as a career. Bear River’s concentration and variety of visual artists is considered to be a very unique feature of this community. From potters, painters, carvers to chair and jewelry makers, there are more than a dozen quality and accomplished artists who pursue their art as their primary career. These, of course, are in addition to the multi-talented artists of the Bear River First Nation. The majority are self-employed with studios located in their place of residence.

With more than a dozen Artists who open their studios to the public and a couple of shops featuring works of many other talented artists, Bear River has a healthy and vibrant arts community. Building on their natural attraction and need to find an efficient and effective means to promote their work and studios, several Artists came together a number of years ago to develop and produce a self-funded brochure (10,000 annual print run). The Bear River Artists Studio Map is considered to be a very successful undertaking by the artists. Participating Artists each contribute \$250 for their listing which includes a profile of themselves and their work along with a locator map.

Many artists have indicated that they are pleased with the initiative as it delivers clients to their doors annually. While many have national and international recognition, they have chosen to reside in Bear River and still have exhibitions and shows in Galleries throughout North America. At the same time, many media producers have visited, documented and profiled a number of the Artists residents in Bear River.

In the 2004 Census, the region of Annapolis and Digby Counties reported some 350 people employed in the Art, Culture and Recreation Sector. While the exact figures for Bear River are not readily available, based on the Bear River Artists Workshops brochure alone, there are at least 14 in business and actively marketing themselves. It has been suggested that there are at least double this number working within the area. Furthermore, there are a number of artists, visual and performing, who have expressed interest in hosting workshops, clinics and lessons; however, they have not yet taken the next steps to organize themselves in this manner.

The presence and operation of these artists in Bear River impacts the overall character, feel and appeal of the community as well as the economy. These individuals create employment for themselves and in some cases for others. These artisans are an attraction and generate increased economic activity within the community through the visitors they attract and the sale of their products.

Economically, according to the “Profile of Cultural Activities in Nova Scotia” (published in 2003), the sector represented 3% of the GDP or \$741 million, employing some 1800 people specifically in the visual arts sector and artistic design occupations (craftspeople, photographers, designers and architects) in 2002. This represents an increase of 47% since 1991. The report further suggests that Nova Scotians, on average, spend less on cultural activities and events annually than others on a National level at \$1230. Many artists in Bear River have indicated that Nova Scotians are not their primary market. As a result, they do not price their work based on provincial spending, rather they see their market as a global opportunity and have had relative success in these markets.

Annapolis Regional Community Arts Council

The Council, observing their 25th anniversary this year, is a not-for-profit organization consisting of representatives from the arts sector and their supporters. The Council strives to enable artists in the region to grow and flourish through exhibitions, events and workshops. The Council also operates ArtsPlace in Annapolis Royal which is a venue for hosting an annual schedule of events, shows, programs and workshops. ArtsPlace also rents space to artists for their shows and workspace. As with many volunteer, not-for-profit organizations, they are interested in initiatives that address their challenges of funding and volunteer recruitment to ensure they are able to fulfill their mandate.

The Council has offered programs and workshops in other communities to a limited degree in the past and are interested in exploring partnerships that will see increased outreach programs that expose the community to art and generate revenue opportunities for artists. There is an opportunity to potentially work with the Council to offer a variety of programs in Bear River for a number of audiences.

The Council also has a number of communication channels in place including their website, a newsletter that is sent to some 260 people (artists and patrons) and through programs and events. Arts programs and initiatives developed and hosted in and for Bear River could take advantage of these channels.

Festivals and Events

There are a variety of events that groups and organizations host within the community, a few of which include:

- Canada Day Celebrations
- Cherry Carnival in July, an annual tradition that is no longer linked to local cherry harvesting;
- Digby County Exhibition in August;
- Christmas Craft Sales;
- Plant Sales;
- A variety of Suppers and Breakfasts throughout the year; and
- Variety Shows, showcasing the musical and performing talents of the community which are always popular.

It should be noted that these events are primarily community events that have attracted locals for social and recreational purposes. The programming and marketing undertaken has directly influenced the volume and demographics of attendees. Like many festivals and events across Nova Scotia, those being hosted in Bear River are faced with increasing insurance costs, declining attendance and volunteer workforce. It is important that each hosting organization be realistic in their goals and objectives and look at more creative approaches to programming, partnerships and marketing if they are to continue in the future.

Attractions Nearby

Bear River boasts a variety of attractions and recreational spaces nearby, including:

- Kejimikujik National Park;
- Tobiatic Wilderness Area;
- Upper Clements Park;
- Upper Clements Wildlife Park;
- Annapolis Royal and its attractions;
- Digby “Scallop Capital” and
- Bay of Fundy whale watching

Recreational Programs, Services and Facilities

For a small population base, Bear River has a number of recreational and social programs and services that are primarily provided by and through not-for-profit volunteer organizations for their members. There are also a number of activities and programs that are accessible through the two Municipal Recreation Departments that Bear River is a part of. The Recreation Directors have indicated that they are available and willing to assist the community in their recreational endeavours partners. Potential programs, partnerships and resources need to be further explored and engaged with the Recreation Departments.

Within the community of Bear River, the recreational facilities may not be plentiful but they are present and available none the less. The following facilities do exist currently:

- Waterfront Park with green space;
- Ball Field;
- Multi-Purpose Auditorium in the Oakdene Centre – can accommodate most recreational sporting activities and houses a number of recreation gatherings and groups;
- A field space in back of the Oakdene Centre once used as a playing area could be revitalized; and
- Youth Centre housed within the Bear River Trading Company Building.

There are also a number of recreational facilities located on the Bear River First Nation Reserve. The Band members are the primary users of these facilities including an outdoor pool, basketball court and the Cultural Centre which houses an indoor gymnasium and multi-purpose centre. There has been limited access to these facilities in the past; however, the Band Council and Recreation Committee are open to requests and discussions around possible partnerships.

Architectural Features

Architecturally Bear River is a novelty - it is a “community on stilts”. Building to accommodate the dramatic rise and fall of the river tides, many of the structures built during the shipbuilding and lumbering era were virtually built on stilts rising high above the river. Today, Bear River still boasts a number of buildings which remain on stilts and have survived fire and demolition. These buildings add to the charm and unique visual appeal of the community and also offer insight to its heritage. These buildings are of historical value to the community and add personality to Bear River; however, many are in need of extensive repair.

In an effort to save the physical heritage of the Bear River, many of the buildings have been purchased by not for profit organizations which struggle with the annual operating costs and are faced with rising repair and insurance expenses. At the same time, there are others that have been purchased by absent residents who have boarded up the buildings with a future that is unclear.

The fate of these buildings is of particular concern to residents and the organizations that own them. Due to building code, these buildings can be repaired but not replaced should anything happen to them. The implications of this are of grave concern to the community – if a building is lost, it will not be replaced as a “stilts” property, therefore threatening the architectural integrity that has been treasured and sought by so many. The fate of the buildings on stilts will continue to be a concern for the community in the coming years.

Natural Assets

The natural and geological infrastructure continues to inspire and serve as the fuel for Bear River’s existence and survival. While the steep sloping and timber lined hills are a spectacular landscape, they are further enhanced by the tidal river and estuary of the River itself which is directly influenced by the Bay of Fundy.

Bear River offers one of the best venues to experience the power of the Bay of Fundy and its effects in related waterways. Daily, the tide rises and falls some 20 feet which is dramatically emphasised when the “stilts” of the buildings are revealed to onlookers. The changing of the environment with the tides reveals ecological treasures in the mudflats and tidal estuaries of the river system. Furthermore, there is a social heritage unique to the River that is linked to centuries of civilization full of folklore.

Affected by the phenomenal Bay of Fundy, the tidal river in Bear River is a unique experience that can and should be capitalized upon from a scientific, educational and tourism perspective. Bear River offers one of the most visible and accessible locations from which to appreciate the full force and impact of the Bay of Fundy. There are a number of partnerships that can be fostered and developed to nurture this resource including the Bay of Fundy Tourism Partnership, the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, the Bay of Fundy Eco-System Partnership, Acadia University Centre for Estuary Studies and the NS Ecology Action Centre to name a few. These partnerships would enable the community to expand its familiarity, knowledge and expertise associated with this resource. There are a number of

environmentally sustainable development opportunities for Bear River in this area that should be further explored.

To truly appreciate and benefit from the natural assets in Bear River, it will be imperative that the community engage in specific projects and initiatives that expands on and shares the knowledge base regarding this resource. Undertaking specific research and projects that document the assets will provide the resources that can then be utilized for a variety of purposes – interpretive and educational programming for schools and visitors while new business opportunities may be revealed.

Businesses & Industries in Bear River

It is well known that the lumbering, shipbuilding and shipping industries were once the backbone of the economy in Bear River; however, today the economy is based on a softer use of the environment. The community presently boasts a handful of more traditional businesses found in many small communities including a Post Office, Grocery/Convenience Store, seasonal Restaurant, 2-3 Art Shops, and 4 accommodations until recently when 2 B&B's closed. There are also a number of other small service based businesses. A new welcomed addition to the community is the Bear River Vineyard which opened in 2006 and is being met with positive reviews. Currently there are two others in the development process.

One business stands out particularly in Bear River that warrants attention. The “Flight of Fancy” can and should be considered a heritage and cultural attraction in Bear River as well. For 26 years now, Rob Buckland, a local artist and businessman, has operated this Art Shop and Studio. It has been, and continues to be a cornerstone of the community. Located in a former shipping office building on the edge of the Bear River on stilts, it is a landmark that visually makes a statement and draws attention to itself.

Flight of Fancy represents and sells wares from more than 250 artists and crafts people of which approximately 75% are Nova Scotian. The main floor offers a collage of unique and original works, as does the gallery on the second floor. Rob also has a dedicated studio and showroom for his own paintings on rocks. The appeal of this mix, reputation in the marketplace, unique location, and Rob's extensive familiarity with the works, is a combination that has led to a successful May – October season of operation. Patrons have indicated that they come primarily due to referrals, are repeat customers or due to the online or Doers and Dreamers Guide advertising done by the company.

It will be important for the community and economic development organizations to ensure that there is ongoing discussion with the newly formed Digby Annapolis Regional Development Agency. This agency is supported and guided by a Board of Directors consisting of representatives from the Municipalities of Annapolis and Digby Counties.

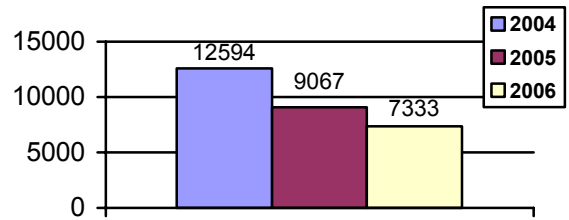
Tourism

The Tourism Industry in Nova Scotia is a \$1.3 billion dollar industry that welcomes over 2 million visitors annually, employing some 33,000 people. Its effects are felt in every community and most businesses throughout Nova Scotia, including Bear River. Although the industry has and continues to struggle with growth, it is important to note that Bear River has not yet fully realized its tourism potential. The following provides an overview of the tourism industry activity in and around Bear River and Nova Scotia where relevant.

Accommodation Occupancy in Bear River

Occupancy represents the number of rooms sold or guests spending the night in registered and licensed fixed roofed accommodations which includes Bed and Breakfasts, Resorts, Inns, Motels, Hotels and excludes campgrounds and hostels. The following occupancy reports have been sourced from the NS Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture and are specific to accommodations listed in the Bear River area that had been operational up to and including 2006. (Please note, it has been suggested that at least two of the Bed & Breakfast's in Bear River will not be open for the 2007 season.)

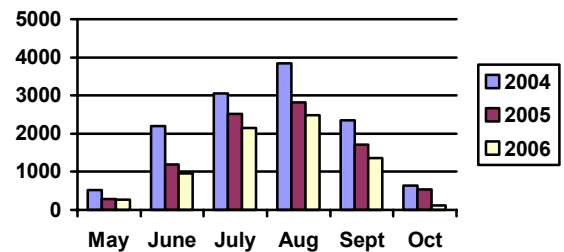
Rooms Sold in Bear River 3 Year Overview



Until 2006, there had been a total of 3 licensed Bed and Breakfasts in Bear River offering a total of 7 rooms, 4 of which had been available year round with the remainder open between May and September. Within the immediate area of Deep Brook and Smith's Cove, there are an additional 11 accommodation operators with a combined total of 167 rooms, the majority of which are open between May and October. A 3-year occupancy report accessed through the NS Department of Tourism specific to these accommodations, indicates that the industry has been experiencing a decline in rooms sold and as a result a decline in guest nights (number of guests having stayed versus the number of rooms themselves sold). Specifically, a significant decline of 5,261 room nights sold over a three-year period.

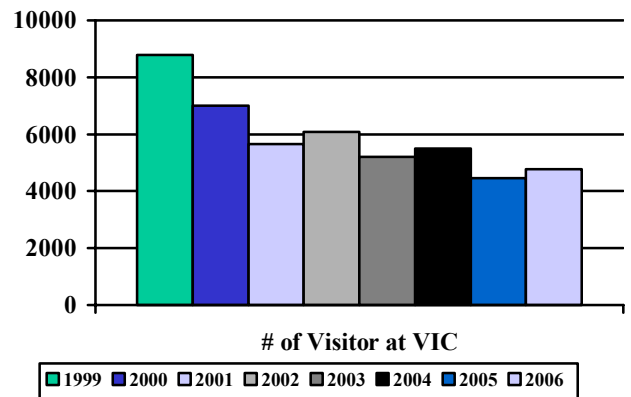
Annual average occupancy rates have declined from 46% in 2004 to 31% in 2006. The most significant decline has been experienced during the months of July and August which have traditionally been prime tourism season. While they have declined, they continue to represent the strongest volume of visitors for the region. Over the past number of years, the number of room nights has been declining throughout the May – October season of operation. Specifically, in 2006, while the number of room nights continued to decline to 7,333 (-19%), this still resulted in some 17,000 guests spending the night within these accommodations.

Monthly Rooms Sold (000's)



These 17,000 visitors represent significant potential for Bear River businesses and attractions. Based on current Visitor Information Centre (VIC) figures, the community is capturing less than 26% of those within reach of Bear River. The Bear River VIC has reported some 4-5,000 annually. While the community has been experiencing an overall decline in the volume of visitors, again, it is important to acknowledge that there are a significant number of visitors who already stop or stay within minutes of Bear River. Businesses and the community must look at ways in which to attract and capture a greater percentage of these visitors. Presently, there are few experiences and

Bear River VIC Visitors



services offered in Bear River, which when combined with limited marketing activity, we get the current results.

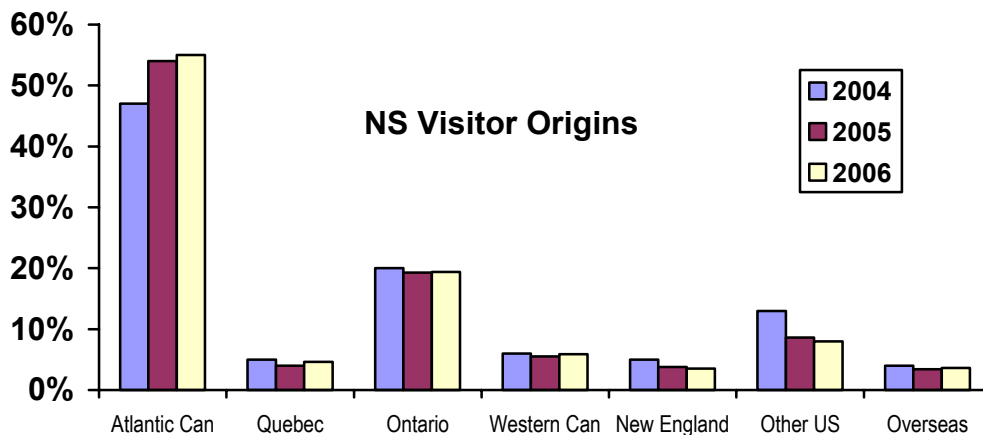
There is a tremendous opportunity to work with businesses in the community as well as those outside to explore potential product development and cross-promotional initiatives that will generate positive economic impacts.

Visitor Parties

Based on the personal experiences of businesses in Bear River and validated in the data that is available from the NS Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture, visitation to the province has been declining. In 2004, NS hosted some 2.14 million, in 2006 that number declined to 2.12 with Atlantic Canadians continuing to be our largest market representing 55% of all visitors, the only market in which there was growth. In fact, Canadian visitors represent 84.9% of our visitors with increases from all provinces.

Visitors from the US continue to decline in numbers annually, dropping by 8% in 2006. On a more positive note, visitors from overseas continue to remain stable representing some 76,000 visitors annually. At the same time, it is important to note that while the number of visitors may be declining, they have been staying longer and therefore spending more while in province. Based on the 2004 Visitor Exit Survey the following offers a profile of our visitors:

- On average there are 2.2 people per party;
- Parties spend \$947/party - \$48 of which is spent on NS Handcraft Products;
- Visitors travelling in couples continues to increase;
- The top 2 activities cited by visitors included Leisure Walking and Visiting Craft shops;
- 50% come for General Pleasure; 33% visit family an friends;
- 2% of visitors enter through Digby while 5% come through Yarmouth;
- Visitors are likely to be older, with 29% being 45-54 years and 21% being 54–64 years;
- 39% have university degree, while 29% have technical college;
- Average Household income is \$40 – \$80,000 (44%) followed by greater than \$80,000 (38%); and
- 56% cite that they visited craft shops or studio, on their visit, while 17% cite visiting a gallery.



It should be noted that the Visitor Exit Survey 2004 also revealed that 31% of all the visitors to Nova Scotia drove past Bear River, while only 10% actually stopped in Annapolis Royal and 16% stopping in Digby.

Tourism Growth Opportunities

The NS Tourism Partnership Council, after extensive research analysis, has provided the industry with specific direction to the future development of the industry. Their insights and partnerships will be very useful to Bear River, and warrant a closer look as the community considers tourism as a potential economic opportunity. The following is based on presentations and documents from the NS Tourism Partnership Council (a partnership between industry and government) and shared with the industry.

Consumer Profile

According to the Canadian Tourism Commission, today's travellers are looking for

- natural wonders;
- historical sites;
- different and distinctive cultures; and
- unspoiled landscapes.

Today's travelling consumers are also described as:

- Affluent;
- Time-starved – taking shorter more frequent trips and have a shorter planning time;
- Info-Junkies – access to more information than ever before with a reported 70% doing online research before buying;
- Option-Rich – low cost fares to exotic destinations with all-inclusive packages are plentiful; and
- Experience Hungry in that they want an enriching experiences

New Marketplace

The market is now global and we in Nova Scotia are feeling the impacts. The strengthening Canadian Dollar, increased security concerns, increased travel options and availability, have and will continue to affect our ability to attract traditional and new markets.

Product Development Focus

Based on market research and evaluation of our product match to the market, the following have been identified as key areas that Nova Scotia can be competitive and need to invest in development in order to grow the tourism industry:

- Building on our seacoast heritage and culture, continue to develop experiences and activities that celebrate the sea and allow visitors to experience it first hand.
- Continue to grow special event experiences like signature festivals and events, music, sports.
- Special Interest Tourism that enables people to engage in activities that are of interest to them, maybe even passionate about. There are a variety of opportunities including arts, hobbies, golfers and even motorcycles.
- Contemporary cultural tourism enables people to explore and experience other lifestyles and learn from them. This is a high yield market that travel frequently. Some opportunities include wine, cuisine, and agri-tourism; arts and crafts demonstrations at economusees.
- Getaways that are shorter but more frequent and decided upon on very short notice. These are reliant upon accommodations as a partner.

4.0 SWOT Analysis

Based on a review of the Situational Analysis, the planning committee developed the following Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities profile of Bear River which has been reviewed and validated at a public meeting.

Strengths

Community

- Personality – artsy, quirky, funky yet traditional and connected to the environment.
- A safe community
- Municipal interest and support for Bear River
- Variety and number of potential partnerships within and outside the community
- Residents have an overall sense of concern & pride for the community
- Community attracts a higher than average immigrant population
- Skill sets within the community are diverse

Community Infrastructure

- Affordable housing
- Affordable labour
- For a smaller population, there are a significant number of volunteer organizations committed to variety of causes and interests
- Persona in the Province – unique and quirky
- Sewage Treatment Plant – structure enables people to learn about the microbiological process

Business Infrastructure

- Basic services available in the community – Cherry Brook Convenience Store, Canada Post, hair salon, gas station, Flight of Fancy (26 years), Inn out of the Fog and a number of other businesses.
- Bear River Vineyard and a couple more in development

Location

- Service centre just minutes away – keeps the development at a manageable distance.
- Bear River is a cross roads for the smaller surrounding communities
- Easy access to Highway 101, Route 1 and Route 8

Natural Assets

- Bay of Fundy Tidal River
- Natural and unique geography
- Year round scenic beauty
- “Micro” climate conditions of the area

Tourism, Recreation, Heritage and Cultural Assets

- Unique, historic architecture in Atlantic Canada, still in tact
- Volume of Artisans in the region - rich and diverse Arts community – visual and performing
- Digby County Exhibition Grounds
- Youth Centre
- Historical Pageant being developed

- Bear River First Nation – historical significance and cultural diversity of community
- Bear River First Nation Heritage and Cultural Centre
- Oakdene Centre
- Bear River Heritage Museum – artefacts and documented history
- Waterfront park offering public riverfront access
- Visitor Information Centre with public washroom
- Tobiatic Wilderness Area
- Kejimikujik National Park
- Proximity to other attractions in the region
- Centuries of heritage and folklore
- Accommodations within reach of the community
- Winery tours being offered
- Trails that are almost ready-made
- Volume of visitors travelling to, through and staying in the area

Communications & Marketing

- Bear River website
- The “Tributary”
- Bear River Studio Rally co-op brochure
- Visitor Information Centre

Weakness

- Declining, aging population, low birthing rate
- Aging physical infrastructure that requires significant capital and façade enhancements – building on stilts
- Community structures “appear” tired and run down
- Declining volunteer base due to population decline, less time for volunteering due to both parents in families working and commutes outside of community for employment, number of single-parent families
- Number of volunteer organizations – too few volunteers being shared or divided up amongst the organizations
- Aging housing infrastructure – requires repairs
- Concern that the youth and families connectedness to the community is weak
- School aged youth divided and sent to different Schools not within the community
- Stalled economy in the community
- Lack of retail/services mix
- Lack of professional employment opportunities
- Declining tourism volumes from traditional markets
- Location – not on a travel way or visible from highway
- Geography – steep slopes and river are a challenge for trucks and vehicles, river banks are deteriorating.
- Lack of tourism infrastructure within the community to hold visitors for a period of time
- Lack of interpretation of the tidal river
- Poor signage – directional and locator from Highway to and within community
- Beautification efforts are needed
- Aging business infrastructure
- Too many facilities owned by the not for profit sector who do not have the financial resources to sustain and maintain them

- Decline in the number of businesses in the community – resulting in empty buildings, lost employment and expenditures within the community by locals and others
- Lack of employment and career opportunities within and nearby community – for adults and youth
- Lack of working knowledge of the natural environment
- Lack of municipal water supply
- Lack of municipal sewerage on Digby County side of river
- Solar Aquatic Treatment Plant no longer Solar Aquatic and thus has lost its appeal and positioning as a unique environmental demonstration site
- Lack of communication and collaboration between organizations
- Overall lack of awareness of the roles and initiatives undertaken by the organizations in the community
- Lack of a “lead” organization for the community
- Significant level of turf protection within and amongst organizations
- Lack of financial investment in the business core of the community – from businesses and government
- Process to access funding programs for organizations is challenging for majority of organizations
- Community organizations lack business skills and mind set in their operation
- Lack of process to deal with absentee building owners and derelict buildings
- Internal jealousies within the community between organizations
- Lack of sufficient medical services
- Lack of appreciation of the full scope of skills and abilities of the community residents
- Apathy within the community
- Reputation within the province as a community with “drug” issues
- Significant number of projects and initiatives identified by organizations with lack of coordinated approach within community and to funding sources
- Volunteer burn-out
- Dependence on public money for projects

Threats

- Community Organizations unwilling to cooperate, collaborate and support each other in an effort to achieve a common goal for the community
- Lack of ability to prioritize the needs – too many projects for community of this size
- Continued disconnect within and amongst the community
- Attitudes
- Continued decline in population
- Loss of built heritage infrastructure on stilts could negatively impact the overall charm and appeal of the community.
- Lack of community and business financial investment in the projects within the community
- BRIDGS not becoming a bridge between the groups as originally planned – just another organization with volunteers, seeking funding
- Tourism opportunities if not taken seriously, will not see fruition
- Increased competition for employment, tourism dollars, business development
- Overcoming a “have-not” attitude
- Continued out-migration of youth and families

Opportunities

- Build on and promote Bear River's unique art/architectural/wine-gourmet/funky culture appeal in ideal natural setting
- Capitalize and support the expanded recognition of Bear River's reputation as a geographically unique, picturesque community with building on stilts, tidal river and abundance of artists.
- Support Trail development
- Take advantage of and build on existing programs, initiatives and projects – don't need to start from scratch or reinvent the wheel
- Facilitate and engage in collaborative marketing, promotion and communication activities including the expansion and positioning of bearriver.ca
- Undertake a Tourism Destination Area development process (expanding on any initiatives undertaken to date) through a public process.
- Build on the Bay of Fundy experience that is readily available and visible in Bear River. Develop interpretation, research and business opportunities.
- Establish Partnerships that generate increased economic development and benefits to the community
- Develop an the Arts Centre – hosting an annual series of workshops, demonstrations, guest speakers, festivals and shows. This could be done in conjunction with the Annapolis Region Community Arts Council as an extension of their programming yet under the direction of those in Bear River.
- Continue to develop recreation programs and activities in conjunction with the Municipal Recreation Department.
- Increased use of Oakdene Centre – used as a hostel, house an Arts Centre Program, youth activities
- Continued operation of the youth centre and engage the youth in other community activities
- Increased promotion and marketing of area within tourism
- Cultural heritage brought to life by talented locals through Pageant
- Increased personal connections to community
- Arts & Music festival – the hills come to life
- Bear River ...Bay of Fundy Festival of ...
- Partnering with other local tourism organizations and events
- Build festival, events around the Fall Foliage showing
- Immigrant support system/orientation

5.0 Opportunities Development Plan

BRIDGS has facilitated and overseen the development of a Strategic Development Plan for the community of Bear River. In keeping with the original goals of the process, the resulting plan, developed in consultation with community members, has explored and validated those initiatives from the vision document that represent the most significant and tangible impact for the community.

While facilitated by BRIDGS, the Bear River Strategic Development Plan belongs to the community and more specifically the organizations who initially participated in the development of the vision. Throughout the process it has become very evident that the community relies heavily on the strengths and abilities of the many organizations within the community. Furthermore, residents look to each organization with expectations regarding their role within the community which will play a critical role in the implementation of this plan.

The resulting multi-year community based Strategic Plan establishes for BRIDGS, its partners and the community, a specific direction and set of actions that responds to those initiatives identified as critical by community members, while taking advantage of real opportunities that will positively impact Bear River. Working collectively towards achieving the Strategic Plan, Bear River as a community will facilitate achieving their economic and social goals as originally identified in its vision document and outlined here:

- 1) Revitalization and revival of our main street and waterfront;
- 2) Development of new and renewed year round attractions to draw visitors and new citizens in the community.
- 3) Encourage and facilitate volunteerism.

BRIDGS Mission Statement

The Bear River Innovation, Development and Growth Society, has within its mandate to undertake and facilitate activities and initiatives in partnership with community organizations and individuals that will positively impact Bear River's infrastructure, commerce and economic viability and thus foster community pride while offering improved quality of life for residents, quality of experience for visitors and incentive for people to make the community their new home, and to encourage and facilitate volunteerism.

Over the course of the coming years, BRIDGS mandate will continue to be relevant and specific to the realization of this Strategic Plan. BRIDGS will oversee the implementation of the Strategic Plan, continuing to monitor and review the progress of the activities outlined and undertaken by each of the partnering organizations, including itself, on a regular basis.

Based on the Situational Analysis, SWOT and building on the Community "Vision" document prepared by the community, the following opportunities will effectively build on the strengths of the citizens of Bear River, address specific areas of concern and will be supported by actionable plans that and will facilitate achieving the following outcomes:

- Increased economic activity, employment, visitor & tourism traffic;
- Enhanced self-sustainability of community; and
- Implementation of initiatives that build upon and complement the Village's reputation as an artistic community with noteworthy heritage and culture that is surrounded by unique geography, tides, and architecture which continue to be popular with the community and visitors alike.

Bear River Strategic Development Plan “Opportunities”

The following have been identified to represent the most strategic approach to achieving the Plan goals and as a result serve as the basis for the Strategic Action Plan included in this document.

1) Strengthened Advocacy Voice for Bear River

To capture and maintain the attention and partnership of the two municipalities within which Bear River falls, it is imperative that the community advocate, with a collective voice with frequency and clarity on all matters relating to community and economic development.

Bear River is uniquely situated within two municipalities which has and continues to pose challenges for the community in communication and garnering support for community initiatives. While the community may be declining in population, the community vision for growth and success will generate incremental tax base and therefore revenue. As partners in facilitating economic and community development in the region, the municipalities must be engaged in the process.

The following objectives have been identified as critical to achieving the opportunities outlined herein.

a) Communication

Establish and maintain a regular program of communication with both municipalities through joint consultations. Engaging both at the same time with a collaborative approach focusing on a vision that will serve the greater community of Bear River. There are several key areas that need immediate and ongoing attention, namely:

Annapolis Municipal Sewerage Treatment Plant

Request clarification and ongoing communication regarding the process utilized with this treatment system, the homes currently being serviced, as well as operational capacity. Furthermore, it is imperative that the status of the “Solar Aquatic” system of operation be established, and conveyed therefore clarifying the significance, if any, of the ecological and environmental practices utilized.

Municipal Water Supply

Request clarification and ongoing consultation with the joint municipal effort currently underway to assess the water source supply and development. As Bear River is the subject of the study undertaken by CBCL on behalf of the municipal units specifically to determine and recommend water-servicing options for the community, an open and public consultation with the residents of Bear River should be permitted within the process. The Study is currently nearing completion with a DRAFT report being received by the engineering department by mid-May. However, it has been suggested that the public would not be engaged until summer. Where possible, communication and consultation should be encouraged and requested as early as possible in the process, thus reducing ongoing and growing concern and confusion about the project. This issue has been identified as a critical issue by the community as it directly impacts Bear River’s future economy.

Roadway/Sidewalks

Condition and maintenance of the roadways and sidewalks are joint responsibilities of the municipalities and the province of Nova Scotia. Infrastructure concerns regarding sidewalks, curb repair and roadside retaining walls and other related issues, need to be documented and brought to the attention of the municipal and provincial representatives, both employees and elected officials. Progress on any of these initiatives will be subject to departmental assessment processes; however, these concerns must be raised through the appropriate channels and must be conveyed by a collective voice within the community.

b) Community & Economic Development

Establish a working relationship with the Annapolis Digby Regional Development Agency and continue to educate and garner support for community and economic development initiatives identified and selected by the community as being critical to the growth and prosperity of the community. This relationship should also seek out and nurture opportunities for partnership and collaboration in all aspects of positive economic development for the community.

Furthermore, there is a need to clarify the assistance this agency can and will provide to the community over the coming months as it is established. Regular and ongoing communication should be established with the Agency Board and Manager.

2) Enhance Communication within the Community

Building on recent success, continue to encourage, support and enable increased communication, partnerships and awareness amongst the community groups, organizations and businesses. Through the following actions:

- a) Continued support and expanded use of the “Tributary” as a primary communication tool within the community.
- b) Through continued monthly gatherings of BRIDGS, host a circle discussion to provide a time for sharing of initiatives, concerns, and issues as a forum to collectively determine what action, if any, may be possible. Engage participation from as many organizations as possible from the area. The practice of sharing meeting minutes with all organizations and conveying that the meetings are open to all must continue.
- c) Host an Annual Community Conference to review and celebrate annual achievements of all community groups and organizations, and share upcoming plans, challenges and opportunities for partnership and collaboration.
- d) Maintain and enhance communication with media sources and outlets within Digby and Annapolis County to raise awareness and to educate the region about the initiatives and activities taking place in Bear River. This should involve identifying key reporters who are willing to receive information on a regular basis.
- e) Bear River Website (bearriver.ca), established and currently maintained by the Board of Trade, is a solid foundation from which to build a community site. To effectively promote and sell Bear River, the site will need to expand its content and visuals through partnerships and certainly advertising (through listings). Ideally, partnering community groups, organizations and businesses would utilize the site to communicate with each other and visitors, sharing a sense of ownership and pride in the site as a “hub” for information on all things related to Bear River and area.

3) Sustaining and Revitalizing Built Infrastructure

The personality and essence of Bear River, “the Village on Stilts”, is directly linked to and reliant upon the existing infrastructure of the community and particularly the historical buildings on stilts. Presently, 10 of 16 buildings in the business area of Bear River are owned by Volunteer Organizations who have been challenged by both human and financial resources; the buildings themselves are in poor condition. While some are private, most serve as multi-purpose buildings and have Boards that are very interested in exploring and expanding partnerships and collaborative approaches that result in increased use, revenues and sustainability. The community has correctly identified a number of enhancements/improvements that are needed if Bear River is to move forward economically in a positive manner and breed community pride.

The buildings specifically operated by volunteer organizations include:

Oakdene Centre	Old Trading Post
I.O.O.F. which is currently for sale	Bear River Legion
Masons Lodge	Green Lantern Building
Bear River Fire Hall	Bear River and Area Medical Centre
Digby County Exhibition Grounds	
Windmill Building housing the Visitor Information Centre	

Accepting that currently Bear River has a small population base of some 1,380 which is declining and aging, has a lower than average annual family household income, and that those in the workforce travel primarily outside the community for employment, it is not surprising that organizations collectively cite ongoing challenges in the areas of volunteers and financial stability. Adding to their challenge is the building structures themselves. The majority are aging, structurally unique (on stilts) and are deteriorating; these combined result in costly capital and operational expenses.

The following actions would assist in sustaining and revitalizing the built infrastructure in Bear River:

- a) Building on the principle of partnership and strength in numbers, BRIDGS will facilitate bringing together representatives from each of the building owners in a meeting to explore collective challenges and opportunities for cooperation and partnership to strengthen their organizations' ability to effectively address building maintenance and usage.
- b) As the primary voice of business in Bear River, the Board of Trade can use its position and influence to initiate and encourage a partnership; for community wide voluntary façade improvement program in Bear River that will build community pride and support.

4) Expanded & Enhanced Recreational Activities, Programs and Facilities

Bear River is fortunate to have a variety of facilities that are readily accessible to the community. While the facilities, and in many cases, the equipment exist, the community and building owners have expressed a desire to see expanded recreational programming for Bear River. As with many recreational programs, the expanded opportunities and offerings will likely need to draw and rely on the availability of volunteers and the creation of partnerships. Initially, new programs should be conducted through existing organizations with a supporting volunteer base already in place. This will result in an expanded program, rather than new ones from scratch. There are a number of programs and resources in place and available to support the development and operational costs, through the Recreation Departments, NS Office of Health Promotion and Protection and others.

Specific initiatives to be undertaken include:

- a) BRIDGS will facilitate bringing together facilities and program providers to discuss the development of a coordinated approach to developing, implementing and maintaining a regular schedule of recreational opportunities for all ages that make optimum use of existing recreational facilities and equipment, including the ball field, Oakdene Centre rooms and auditorium, parks, Exhibition Grounds, etc.
- b) Encourage facility owners to continue to seek opportunities to increase use of and revenue for their facilities.
- c) Engage and partner with the Annapolis Region Community Arts Centre to host outreach programs in the Oakdene Center for the area residents and surrounding communities.
- d) Initiate and continue exploring potential partnerships with the Bear River First Nation and their Recreation Committee regarding joint programs and use of facilities.

- e) Support the Board of the Digby County Exhibition Fair Grounds to explore potential partnerships and use of its property and facilities as a venue for a variety of activities including recreational basketball and skateboarding, temporary camping, etc.
- f) Continue to provide ongoing support and leadership towards the development of recreational trail development in the region, which will result in multi-use trails for hiking, walking, cycling, skiing, trail riding, etc.
- g) Continue to monitor use and potential increased opportunities associated with the Public Boat Launch. The Bear River itself continues to play a very prominent role in the community. While the Waterfront Park and the roadways provide access to waterfrontage that enable residents and visitors alike to appreciate the tidal river, the community has expressed interest in a Public Boat Launch for canoes and kayaks, and the possibility of a rental business in the future. While the business case for operation of a rental outlet has not been validated, there is an opportunity to look at expanding the launch area located within the Waterfront Park, which currently does provide an access point. Signage and promotion would at least convey that this resource is available to the public.

5) Grow the areas Tourism Industry

Bear River has yet to realize its full tourism potential. Bear River's assets and appeal match the overall average visitor profile of the province. Visitors travelling as couples who are slightly older with higher income and education, who appreciate natural wonders and cultural diversity, have been and increasingly could be attracted to Bear River. The dramatic 20ft tidal river activity and estuaries, the unique architecture of buildings on stilts, the spectacular geographic features, the diverse and accessible arts community and the authentic and rich aboriginal and ensuing cultural heritage of Bear River are a real treasure for visitors looking to connect and experience Nova Scotia.

Annually, some 2.12 million visitors come to Nova Scotia. Communities strive to explore ways in which to develop themselves and their assets in a manner that is appealing to visitors and therefore capture some of the \$1 billion in expenditures being made. Bear River has been attracting a nominal amount of tourism activity with the potential of much more without negatively impacting the charm and appeal of the community.

Based on data previously collected, the Bear River Visitor Information Centre, numbers indicate that some 4,500 visitors currently come into Bear River. While this may sound significant, it is not when we consider that there are some 17,000 visitors staying in accommodations within a 5-10 minute drive of Bear River. This number does not include those spending the night in and around the Town of Digby, the Town of Annapolis or staying in Kejimikujik National Park. Based on the numbers, Bear River is capturing less than 26% of the potential market with little effort.

Tourism represents significant economic and social opportunities for Bear River. Tourism currently serves as a viable source of income and employment through visitor expenditures for all businesses and organizations providing tourism products, services and experiences in Bear River. Furthermore, tourism enhances the sustainability and availability of a number of recreational, cultural and social resources that may not otherwise be financially feasible for Bear River. Tourism is an exchange and sharing of a community's culture, heritage, nature and arts, and therefore is a celebration of the community. Tourism can, in many instances, help boost community pride and connectedness as well as attract new residents and businesses.

To effectively grow tourism in a meaningful way for Bear River, it must build on existing resources and infrastructure and be adequately communicated. Based on the current trends in the industry and assets of Bear River, the following product development initiatives best match the opportunities.

Product Development

Community Tourism Development Plan

To effectively develop a plan that is relevant and responsive to both the needs of the community and the tourism market, a community tourism development plan is recommended. The process, driven and determined by the community is facilitated through a workbook program that has been developed by the Province of Nova Scotia and can be implemented by volunteers. Done in consultation with tourism industry stakeholders, public, private and community members, the process enables a community to effectively assess their tourism resources and identify opportunities that complement the community's vision and positive growth.

The research and analysis prepared for the Bear River Strategic Development Plan will be an asset to the development of a community tourism plan. The following tourism initiatives would find their place within a Bear River Community Tourism Development Plan as they have been previously brought forward by the community for inclusion and have been considered to have marketability.

Bear River Pageant

Continued support and development of this initiative will bring to life the rich, authentic and diverse aboriginal and ensuing heritage of Bear River through a series of storytelling experiences that engages, educates and entertains – critical elements of successful interpretation. Furthermore this initiative has and will continue to generate expenditures within the community. Staged, marketed and delivered effectively, this experience will be sought out by visitors throughout the region and must be packaged with accommodations. Sustainability of the final production will rest with the manageability of the cast and expenses.

Bear River Arts Centre

Building on the significant number and reputation of artists and the visitor interest of the arts, facilitate the development and operation of a Bear River Arts Centre that encourages, supports and strengthens the arts community through the delivery of an annual program of workshops, lectures, demonstrations and shows. The program must be designed to respond to interest and marketability within the local, regional and tourism audiences. Bearing in mind that the programming developed for visitors will may be different from that for the locals from a price point, duration of the program and scheduling (locals could participate over a 6 – 8 week program versus visitors that may be from 2 hours to a 1 week retreat) and supporting infrastructure including the facility, possibly accommodations, food service and complimenting experiences for longer retreat-like workshops. Specifically, those designed for visitors should consider packaging with accommodations and food providers.

To maintain integrity, this initiative must be developed by and involve artists in the Bear River area. Although the Centre must be managed and operated on sound business principles, this must be driven by artists themselves as committed partners and owners of the project.

The creation and delivery of the Bear River Arts Centre does not involve ownership of a building but rather makes effective use of existing facilities. Specifically, the Oakdene Centre and Bear River Trading Company buildings have space availability and supporting resources. Their use will generate mutual benefits for the community.

A complete Business Plan would be required to fully develop the concept of the Centre, identify program matched to market opportunities, logistics and operations plan. This initiative should draw upon the resources and experience of the Annapolis Region Community Arts Centre, establishing partnerships where possible.

Bear River Waterfront Park

Owned and operated by the Bear River Board of Trade, the Waterfront Park serves a valuable role for both residents and visitors. The Park located on the shore of Bear River includes green space with benches and picnic tables, a riverside boardwalk, flower gardens, and the seasonally operated Visitor Information Centre with public washrooms. The site is also home to a greenhouse structure in which the municipal sewage treatment plant operates and a boat launch access point.

This public space offers the perfect perch from which to truly appreciate the impact and scope of the Bay of Fundy's phenomenal tidal action that affects this river twice daily. The viewplane from the park also affords a spectacular view of the Village itself and the stilts upon which a number of the buildings are resting. The stilts, and their exposure due to the tidal action of the Bay of Fundy emphasize the magnitude of the 20ft tidal activity.

The riverside boardwalk, which is accessible year round, is currently in need of repair and must be a focus of attention in the immediate future. Efforts to support the Board of Trade to undertake and finance these repairs is essential and required. Assistance in securing funds and completing the work is more of a challenge this year as the organization has had to undertake a major repair job on the windmill structure itself which houses the VIC.

Bay of Fundy Tidal River Interpretive Centre

The Bay of Fundy is renown for having the highest tides in the world. Bear River is one of the best locations from which to observe and appreciate the impact of this natural wonder. Communities sharing this resource in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have capitalized on a variety of opportunities including new business development, scientific research and data collection, interpretation, education and tourism.

Residents and visitors alike have enjoyed the viewplanes of the Bear River tidal activity for centuries. The heritage of the people and industry along the river is echoed in the exhibits at the Bear River Heritage Museum. Bear River as a community has not yet fully realized the potential of this resource. Nowhere else on the Bay of Fundy coastline, are the tidal variations more readily visible and accessible than in Bear River, accentuated by the "Village on Stilts".

Building on this natural resource, there is an opportunity to further explore, develop and deliver an interpretive program(s) that effectively communicates, educates, entertains and engages residents and visitors alike to appreciate this natural wonder. The ecology, flora and fauna, wildlife, biology, etc., of the river, the bay and estuary present unique and rich aspects of the environment that will, through interpretation, enable people to have a deeper appreciation and understanding of this resource.

The development of an interpretive centre, can and should include a combination of interpretive panels, exhibits, and educational programs that make effective use of and build on existing infrastructure and be well researched. The Waterfront Park and the Heritage Museum are two obvious venues. Established and developed with credible resources and quality programming, the Interpretive Centre has the capacity to serve as a valuable contributor to the economic viability of the community.

While initially, the community would benefit greatly by increasing its promotion and positioning as a Bay of Fundy experience as a “Village on Stilts” resting above a 20’ tidal river. With the Waterfront Park and its riverside boardwalk as well as the viewplanes throughout the village, combined with some additional training of the Visitor Information Centre staff, the “experience” already has a foundation.

To fully appreciate the scope and capacity of this initiative, however, prior to a full development plan being completed for an Interpretive Centre, significant effort must be invested in research and documentation of the environmental assets contained within the tidal river, basin and estuary. This research shall serve as the basis for all that will be created.

Established Museums & Attractions

Existing museums and attractions need to be strengthened and enhanced both from a product perspective and organizationally. BRIDGS and the Board of Trade must continue to support and encourage ongoing information exchanges and cross-promotional opportunities for the sustainable operation and management of established tourism attractions and resources in Bear River including the Bear River Heritage Museum, the Bear River First Nation Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre, Tobiatic Wilderness Area, Bear River Vineyard and tourism accommodations.

Festivals & Events

Existing festivals have the capacity to partner, expand, diversify and respond to changing demographics. Their ongoing survival will depend on it. Continued support for information exchange, cross promotion and co-operation within the community and surrounding area is essential. Events like the Cherry Carnival and the Digby County Exhibition present the community with an opportunity to celebrate its heritage and culture and share it with others. Their ability to attract partnerships, volunteers and audiences will directly impact their sustainability and economic impact in the community.

Marketing

There are a number of tourism related marketing activities underway by a variety of organizations for a number of aspects for Bear River. These include the Board of Trade who prepares and submits copy for the NS Doer’s and Dreamer’s Guide, copy on the bearriver.ca website and copy within the Fundy Coast of South West Nova Tourism Guides and websites. The Bear River Studio Rally, produced by a group of artists releases 10,000 copies of their publication into the marketplace, while others, like Flight of Fancy, purchase advertising in the Doer’s and Dreamer’s guide. The Bear River First Nation Cultural Centre too purchases a variety of advertising and produces a promotional piece.

Collectively, they are all promoting the community, each focusing on, and presenting differing aspects. As budgets continue to shrink, costs for marketing increase, competition intensifies and the tourism product is developed in Bear River, a more strategic and collaborative approach to marketing the community to achieve consistency in both messaging and branding will be essential.

Signage

In support of the overall messaging and branding of Bear River, welcoming signage at the entrances to Bear River would enhance the overall visitor experience and reinforce the communities identity.

Directional signage would greatly enhance the movements throughout Bear River. A locator map placed outside the Visitor Information Centre would support year round visitors. The map previously developed and utilized in the Bear River Studio Rally would serve as a solid basis.

Utilization of standard directional signage for the Visitor Information Centre, available from NS Department of Transportation, would greatly enhance credibility and visitor experiences.

detail in an effort to secure their support and commitment to assist the community in its implementation.	
6. BRIDGS will begin undertaking those actions identified as their area of opportunity as indicated in the Action Plan.	July and ongoing
7. Monitor and review the implementation process on an ongoing basis to ensure that the partners have been engaged and are continuing to make progress. BRIDGS, as the facilitator for the Strategic Plan, will seek opportunities to support and empower partners throughout the process. An annual review of the activities undertaken measured against the time lines identified in the action plan will be reviewed at the Annual General Meeting of BRIDGS.	October and ongoing

Bear River Strategic Development Plan – Implementation Action Plan

Based on the opportunities and resulting goals identified within this plan, the following Action Plan has been developed in collaboration with the community through BRIDGS. Specifically, the Action Plan provides a blueprint for implementing the overall plan.

There are a number of elements contained within this Action Plan. Each Goal has been supported with a number of Objectives or Actions that are critical to the achievement of the Goal. As in all community development strategies, there are a number of organizations with various resources and expertise that are engaged in the implementation. Specifically within the Bear River Action Plan, after careful consideration of the “actions”, the committee identified specific groups and organizations within the community that need to be involved in the “action”.

Taking it one step further, in each instance, a specific “Lead Organization” was identified for each action. The “Lead Organization” has been selected because it is considered the best champion for the action. The actions are perceived to match the “Lead Organization” mandates and role they have played in the community. It is expected that the “Lead Organization” will become the facilitator for the specified action and will engage those listed in the “Who needs to be involved”, and possibly others, in their quest to implement the actions. It is not the intent of the Action Plan to miss-match organizations to actions as it will not generate the desired results.

Giving the plan and Lead Organizations additional structure are the details included in the columns “When”, “What Resources will be needed” and “Challenges” that have been included. These sections provide some general timelines for initiation, resources that may be required and acknowledgement of the challenges that may need to be overcome.

During the Plan Roll-Out, BRIDGS will invite each “Lead Organization” to review the plan, their related actions and timelines, and prepare their own “Action Plan” for implementing their activities. What will be critical throughout this process is that the “Lead Organizations” be engaged in the process and adopt an approach that is achievable given their resources and abilities.

This is a community plan that will require ongoing and open communication, development of partnerships and collaborations. BRIDGS will continue to serve in a facilitator role to support and enable the various “lead organizations” to take on and achieve the actions identified. It is also important to acknowledge that this is a working document, meant to move the community towards a common vision; it will change as the dynamics of the community and the environment change.

Please note that the Action Plan outlined on the following pages is presented in brief, for more fully expanded descriptions, reference the Opportunities Development Plan section starting on page 32.

Bear River Strategic Development “Action” Plan

Goal #1 - Strengthened Advocacy Voice for Bear River

To capture and maintain the attention and partnership of the two municipalities within which Bear River falls, it is imperative that the community advocate with a collective voice with frequency and clarity on all matters relating to community and economic development.

Action	Who needs to be involved?	Who should be the lead organization?	When should it start?	What resources will be needed to achieve this?	What challenges may need to be overcome?
<p>1) Communication - Establish and maintain a regular schedule of communication and consultation with both municipalities. There are several key areas that need immediate and ongoing attention, namely addressing the items outlined below and altered or expanded as necessary over time:</p> <p><u>Annapolis Municipal Sewerage Treatment Plant</u> - Request clarification and ongoing communication from Annapolis County CAO and Engineer regarding the current process utilized with this treatment system, the homes currently being serviced as well as operational capacity.</p> <p><u>Municipal Water Supply</u> - Request clarification and ongoing consultation with the joint municipal effort currently underway to assess the water source supply and development. The Study, being completed by CBCL, is nearing completion with a DRAFT report being received by the engineering department in May.</p> <p><u>Roadway/Sidewalks</u> - Condition and maintenance of the roadways and sidewalks are joint responsibility of the municipalities and the province of Nova Scotia. Infrastructure concerns regarding sidewalks, curb repair and roadside retaining walls and other related issues need to be documented and brought to the attention of the municipal and provincial representatives both employee and elected officials to find a solution.</p>	<p>BRIDGS All Organizations in Bear River Warden, CAO and Engineer of the Mun. of Annapolis County & Digby County MLA/MP</p>	<p>BRIDGS</p>	<p>Initial meeting will be called in July/Aug '07 following the sharing of the Strategy with community partners.</p> <p>Then meetings will be scheduled 2x's/yr in October and April and used to update, share and address any challenges/opportunities</p>	<p>Volunteer time Meeting location in Bear River Communication re: notice of meeting to all those involved</p>	<p>Possibly resistance to cooperation between municipalities Time Conflicting schedules</p>

<p><i>2) Community & Economic Development</i> Establish a working relationship with the Annapolis Digby Regional Development Agency and continue to educate and garner support for community and economic development initiatives identified and selected by the community as being critical to its growth and prosperity. This relationship should also seek out and nurture opportunities for partnership and collaboration in all aspects of positive economic development for the community.</p>	<p>BR Business Leaders BoT BREDS BRIDGS Municipalities of Digby County and Annapolis County RDA MLA/MP</p>	<p>BRIDGS</p>	<p>Invite the Executive Director to meet BRIDGS in Bear River to review strategy in June and explore areas of support, partnership and opportunity. Then meet on a regular basis for communication and ongoing partnerships, liaison.</p>	<p>Volunteer time Meeting location in Bear River Partnerships</p>	<p>Communication</p>
--	--	----------------------	---	---	----------------------

Goal #2 - Enhance Communication within the Community

Building on recent success, continue to encourage, support and enable increased communication, partnerships and awareness amongst community groups, organizations and businesses in Bear River. Through the following actions:

Action	Who needs to be involved?	Who should be the lead organization?	When should it start?	What resources will be needed to achieve this?	What challenges may need to be overcome?
<p>1) Support the Bear River Historical Society in their development and production of the Tributary as a primary communication tool within the community. In addition to contributing information and offering sponsorship, assist in promoting and recruiting additional skilled volunteers to help the 2 person committee and look at potential sources of revenue that would strengthen the production and delivery of this resource ensuring its sustainability.</p>	<p>Historical Society Community residents Board of Trade BRIDGS BR Heath Centre BR First Nations BREDS School Board</p>	<p>Bear River Historical Society</p>	<p>Production is monthly. Volunteers need new partnerships and opportunities to enhance sustainability of this communication tool now. BRIDGS can continue to help get the message out and match volunteers.</p>	<p>More volunteers Technical design and layout assistance Distribution assistance Contributing editors FUNDING: Sponsorships Sell advertising</p>	<p>Need to generate some income from publication – ads? Post Office relationship Time commitment Coordination Volunteer burnout</p>
<p>2) Through their monthly meetings, BRIDGS will continue to facilitate increased communication amongst community organizations and partners by providing each with an opportunity to share their initiatives, concerns, and issues as a means by which to seek input, assistance and support. BRIDGS will continue its efforts to ensure that all organizations are invited and become engaged in this process. These meetings provide a venue for communication and creating opportunities to explore partnerships.</p>	<p>Residents (year round and seasonal) All community organizations</p>	<p>BRIDGS</p>	<p>BRIDGS meets 2nd Wed. of each month throughout the year. Notice of meeting and minutes will continue to be distributed to all partnering orgs while at the same time notice will be published in the Tributary.</p>	<p>Commitment from each organization to assign at least one representative to attend each meeting to enable 2-way communication. Meeting space. Volunteers Ongoing support and interest by organizations.</p>	<p>Scepticism Conflicting schedules Personality conflicts Organizations leaders unwillingness to respond to community desire for cooperation. Lack of buy-in Perceived competition</p>

<p>3) BRIDGS will enhance and expand the current annual meeting of the community into an Annual Community Conference to review and celebrate the annual achievements of all community groups and organizations, share upcoming plans, challenges and explore opportunities for partnership and collaboration. Each organization will be asked to reflect on their pervious year presenting their achievements, challenges and share their opportunities for the coming year. Guest speakers/workshops may be considered as part of the program as needs evolve.</p>	<p>All community volunteer organizations Both municipal units RDA Media Residents</p>	<p>BRIDGS</p>	<p>To be held in early November as it has been for the last 2 years.</p>	<p>BRIDGS volunteer time to coordinate A few \$s for and coordination of publicity. Oakdene Centre for space. Organizations to send leaders or delegates. Facilitator and basic equipment.</p>	<p>Possibly resistance of leaders not wishing to be held accountable for their organizations delivery on mandate. Scheduling conflicts Lack of buy-in Perceived value for the event</p>
<p>4) BRIDGS along with other businesses and organizations will work to develop increased promotion and communication of community initiatives by maintaining and enhancing communication with local media sources within Digby and Annapolis County.</p>	<p>Board of Trade Historical Society through Tributary. All organizations in the community. BRIDGS</p>	<p>BRIDGS Historical Society to send a copy of the Tributary to media, and post to BR website</p>	<p>Ongoing, Media has been very supportive. Contacts are now in place and information is distributed regularly.</p>	<p>Volunteer time</p>	<p>Cooperation between BR organizations to get their messages out. Management of the communications</p>
<p>5) Expand and strengthen the Bear River Website (bearriver.ca) as a “Bear River” community site that celebrates and communicates all that the community has to offer and as a medium through which the community stays connected. Established and maintained by the Board of Trade, the site has a solid foundation and with strengthened partnerships with other community groups, businesses and organizations, it can be expanded to enhance the quality, content and sustainability of the site. It can serve as a hub for the community while fulfilling a promotional mandate. Strengthened partnerships should generate increased resources, both financial and human, to support the ongoing development and sustainability of the site.</p>	<p>Entire community, businesses, organizations, individuals, within and outside of Bear River Board of Trade BRIDGS RDA</p>	<p>Board of Trade</p>	<p>Ongoing maintenance Increased communication and engagement of the potential partners must be sought by the BoT. Require additional web & marketing skilled volunteers to support the ongoing development and expansion of the site.</p>	<p>Competent web management Content expansion and updating Human resources and finances for upkeep/maintenance. Increased partnerships to support overall development, maintenance and content. Marketing support Increased BoT membership and online participation Expand “community” branding within the site v.s. Board of Trade branding.</p>	<p>Lack of community buy-in and support for the site Lack of skilled volunteers or paid support for the ongoing development and production of the site. Absence of professional marketing expertise within the organization to nurture, manage and develop the site.</p>

Goal 3 - Sustaining and Revitalizing Built Infrastructure

The personality and essence of Bear River, “the Village on Stilts” is directly linked and reliant upon the existing infrastructure of the community and particularly the historical buildings on stilts. Presently, 10 of 16 buildings in the business area of Bear River are owned by Volunteer Organizations who have been challenged in both human and financial resources; the buildings themselves are in poor condition. While some are private, most serve as multi-purpose buildings and have Boards that are very interested in exploring and expanding partnerships and collaborative approaches that result in increased use, revenues and sustainability.

The following actions would assist in sustaining and revitalizing the built infrastructure in Bear River:

Action	Who needs to be involved?	Who should be the lead organization?	When should it start?	What resources will be needed to achieve this?	What challenges may need to be overcome?
<p>1) Building on the principle of partnership and strength in numbers, BRIDGS will facilitate bringing together representatives from each of the building owners in a meeting to explore collective challenges and opportunities for cooperation and partnership to strengthen their organizations ability to effectively address building maintenance and usage.</p> <p>While BRIDGS shall serve as the facilitating organization, a number of resource people will be invited to actively participate including structural engineers, building inspectors, Heritage Advisory Committee members and Recreation Directors. The meeting should be facilitated by an individual capable of helping define the outcomes and support BRIDGS in achieving this, possibly one of the municipal Recreation Directors.</p>	<p>Building owners including: BREDS, BoT, Legion, Fire Department, Health Clinic, Digby County Exhibition Society. Both Municipalities RDA ACOA MLA MP</p>	BRIDGS	<p>Begin promoting meeting during summer '07 BRIDGS to begin planning over Summer Secure partners and facilitators by end of Sept. Host meeting in October 2007. Follow up as determined at the meeting.</p>	<p>Volunteer time, Expertise and coordination Use Recreation Directors as Facilitators Resource people from municipality including Building Inspector, Engineer, Heritage Advisory Meeting location Promotion and Publicity Engage the facility owners</p>	<p>Conflicting schedules Lack of perceived value of the exercise. Communication Perceived competition</p>
<p>2) As the primary voice of business in Bear River, the Board of Trade can use its position and influence to initiate and encourage a partnership, community wide voluntary façade improvement program in Bear River that will build community pride and support.</p> <p>Starting with existing Board of Trade members, initiatives that should be undertaken to positively affect the community and business include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - installation of garbage receptacles - building on the existing gardens, initiate a Communities in Bloom program in conjunction with the national program, 4-H organization and other youth based orgs, could be actively engaged. Hangers 	<p>Board of Trade BRIDGS BREDS All building owners Mun. of Digby and Annapolis Bear River First Nation Flower shops Community Organizations</p>	<p>Board of Trade should lead a community beautification initiative as an aid to businesses.</p>	<p>Planning to begin over Winter 2007 and implemented over a period of 3-5 years</p>	<p>Leadership and coordination from BOT; Buy-in from members, property owners and businesses. Volunteers Finances Partnerships Sponsorship Regional partnerships with other Chambers/Boards of Trade</p>	<p>Lack of support and involvement within BOT will make coordinated buy-in difficult to achieve. Need more businesses to invest in façade improvements Level of financial resources Level of appreciation and understanding of the impact these activities will have Possibly vandalism</p>

<p>or pots could be sponsored by various groups, businesses and families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring in window display workshops to create appealing displays - Encourage building painting and signage enhancements - Look at installation of benches along the business district to encourage lingering longer. - Work towards engaging and involving absentee building owners in the overall façade improvement program. - Explore a schedule of programs/guest speakers to address “best practices” in business and community development. 					Schedule conflicts
---	--	--	--	--	--------------------

Goal 4 - Expanded & Enhanced Recreational Activities, Programs and Facilities

Bear River is fortunate to have a variety of facilities that are readily accessible to the community. While the facilities and in many cases the equipment exist, the community and building owners have expressed a desire to see expanded recreational programming for Bear River. As with many recreational programs, the expanded opportunities and offerings will need to draw on and rely on the availability of volunteers. Initially, new programs should be conducted through existing organizations with a supporting volunteer base already in place. Specific initiatives that should be encouraged include:

<i>Action</i>	Who needs to be involved?	Who should be the lead organization?	When should it start?	What resources will be needed to achieve this?	What challenges may need to be overcome?
<p>1) BRIDGS will facilitate bringing together facilities and program providers to discuss the development of a coordinated approach to developing, implementing and maintaining a regular schedule of recreational opportunities for all ages that make optimum use of existing recreational facilities and equipment including the ball field, Oakdene Centre rooms and auditorium, parks, Exhibition Grounds, etc.</p> <p>This meeting will explore what is currently being offered, what is available to the community (resources both financial and human) and how a coordinated program development initiative may be sustained and supervised. One possibility is having the Heath Clinic assume an active role in facilitating this process and</p>	<p>Digby and Annapolis County Recreation Departments Oakdene Centre Area schools, Health Clinic BRIDGS Bear River First Nation BoT (parks) Fire Department (ball field) Youth Centre</p>	<p>Initially BRIDGS will take the lead in facilitating bringing together the stakeholders for the purposes of discussion. It is hoped that Health Clinic may consider the leadership role on this initiative as a strategic effort to promote and</p>	<p>Initial meeting to take place Fall 2007. If a “sponsor” or leader comes forward like the Health Clinic, BRIDGS would support them in this endeavour. If a Recreation Coordinator is achievable, should be in place by Spring/Summer 2008</p>	<p>Communication Paid recreation coordinator to develop and supervise recreational programs and provide assistance to organizations, groups interested in coordinating their own. Assistance and support from the municipal recreation departments. Volunteers Buy-in from the community Sponsors, Partnerships</p>	<p>Finances Volunteer burn-out Need for a lead organization to come forward.</p>

with the support of partnering organizations, seek funding to put in place a paid coordinator to engage the community and partners.		enable active, healthy living.			
2) Initiate and continue exploring potential partnerships with the Bear River First Nation and their Recreation Committee regarding joint programs and use of facilities.	Health Centre Youth Centre Recreation Departments with Municipality BRIDGS	BRIDGS	Initial meeting to share plan over summer then a meeting to explore opportunities to take place in Fall 2007	Willingness to communicate Ability to share resources	Lack of recognized "lead" organization for recreational matters in Bear River Possible resistance to partnerships
3) Facility owners to actively seek opportunities to increase use and revenue for their facilities. Community organizations and facility owners need to become more actively involved in exploring partnerships with the two recreation departments serving the community and other organizations/businesses to make use of available space. This can include day camps, workshops, training programs etc. as well as working with the Sport Animator to expand potential programming. Increased use will generate increased revenue which supports the financial sustainability of the facilities.	BRIDGS Health Clinic Recreation Departments Facility owners	Each facility owner must take responsibility for themselves.	Ongoing Facilities need to make use of all existing channels of communication to promote their space availability, explore partnerships on an ongoing basis	Volunteer time to manage coordination, paid facilitation of events is available but must be secured through grant applications.	Volunteer burnout Perceived competition Lack of marketing and outreach activities. Potential FUNDING: Healthy Active Kids Municipal Rec. Department
4) Engage and partner with the Annapolis Region Community Arts Centre to host outreach programs in the Oakdene Center for the area residents and surrounding communities. ARCAC currently hosts a variety of programs within the region, Bear River has space availability to host workshops, however, they have not pursued outreach in this community in particular and are open to exploring the potential if approached by an artist or local partner. Programs offered would be integrated into their overall marketing program.	Community artists ARCAC Oakdene Centre	Bear River "Working Studios," members	ARCAC should be approached with ideas in Summer 2007 in anticipation of Fall or winter programs.	ARCAC interest and buy-in Artists buy-in Facility Coordination & marketing Potential FUNDING: NS Cultural Arts Board, Canada Council, rec. Depts Market/Participants	Overall coordination and specific lead organization from Bear River to facilitate this initiative. ARCAC interest Possible wrong market match for programs
5) Support the Board of the Digby County Exhibition Fair Grounds to explore potential partnerships and use of its property and facilities as a venue for a variety of activities including recreational basketball and skateboarding, temporary camping, etc.	Exhibition Committee Recreation Department Clubs Board of Trade Health Centre	Digby County Exhibition Society	Has been initiated by the members and is ongoing.	Communication Marketing Partnerships Board support for expanding use Community awareness of facility and opportunities	Exhibition Board and members resistance to new initiatives and partnerships.

<p>6) Continue to provide ongoing support and leadership towards the development of Recreational Trail development in the region which will result in multi-use trails for hiking, walking, cycling, skiing, trail riding, etc.</p>	<p>Board of Trade County Recreation Departments</p>	<p>Board of Trade</p>	<p>The BoT has been actively engaged in this project and will continue to provide the community with updates.</p>	<p>Development funds Volunteers and support Access to trail ways</p>	<p>Development funds Communication Volunteers</p>
<p>7) Continue to monitor use and potential increased opportunities associated with the Public Boat Launch. The Board of Trade will monitor the use and demand of the existing launch within the Waterfront Park, and if warranted, pursue potential enhancements and funding options.</p>	<p>Board of Trade Municipality of Annapolis</p>	<p>Board of Trade</p>	<p>Should be monitored on an annual basis</p>	<p>Funding Standards Insurance System of monitoring use/demand</p>	<p>Lack of demand Cost Insurance</p>

Goal 5 - Grow the areas Tourism Industry

As illustrated in the Situational Analysis, tourism represents significant economic and social opportunities for Bear River. To effectively grow tourism in a meaningful way for Bear River, it must build on existing resources and infrastructure and be adequately communicated. Based on the current trends in the industry and assets of Bear River, the following product development initiatives best match the opportunities.

<i>Action</i>	Who needs to be involved?	Who should be the lead organization?	When should it start?	What resources will be needed to achieve this?	What challenges may need to be overcome?
<p>1) Undertake the development of a Community Tourism Development Plan for Bear River which builds and expands on the work completed to date by the Board of Trade. Updating and integrating this document into the initiatives being undertaken by the Digby and Area Tourism Association and Destination Southwest Nova Scotia will enable Bear River to identify areas of strengths and opportunities and its competitive advantages. A sub-committee of the Board of Trade should be struck that facilitates community wide consultation and extensive input from tourism operators and businesses in the region. At least 5 committee members should be sought and consist of representatives from businesses, attractions and community organizations with an interest and connection to the industry as well as the Digby Area Tourism Association as a resource.</p>	<p>Tourism industry stakeholders, Provincial Dept. of Tourism, Community as a whole Board of Trade RDA DATA BRIDGS</p>	<p>Board of Trade through the establishment of a Committee</p>	<p>Fall 2007 to see completion by Spring 2008</p>	<p>Coffee/Tea Volunteer Time Computer access Office Supplies Assistance/Support from NS Tourism and DATA Facility for meetings Committee Members Community/Business buy-in</p>	<p>Volunteer time Apathy Lack of recognition of the value of tourism for the community and its economic opportunities.</p>
<p>2) The riverfront boardwalk within the Bear River Waterfront Park is in need of immediate and extensive repair to render it safe for use this</p>	<p>Board of Trade and its members Municipal</p>	<p>Board of Trade</p>	<p>Immediate June/07) & ongoing</p>	<p>\$ for structural maintenance and labour. A detailed</p>	<p>Overwhelmed by repairs jobs for 2007</p>

<p>summer. While this facility is operated by the Board of Trade, if requested, it is likely that partnerships within the community would be forthcoming to support the undertaking of the repair work. It is imperative that this boardwalk either be repaired immediately or closed off from public access.</p>	<p>governments Community</p>			<p>survey of needs and an achievable plan of action to accomplish them. Potential FUNDING -municipality</p>	<p>Lack of funding Delay in addressing the repairs could lead to problems.</p>
<p>3) Support the completion and sustainable delivery of the Bear River Pageant. This initiative will bring to life the rich, authentic and diverse aboriginal and ensuing heritage of Bear River through a series of storytelling experiences that engages, educates and entertains – critical elements of successful interpretation. Sustainability of the final production will rest with the manageability of the cast, expenses and schedule that optimizes audience. While BRIDGS has facilitated the initiation of this project, as the project unfolds, as a heritage related initiative, at some point, the Historical Society may be able to become the primary sponsor for the program. In either case, this initiative will require resources (human and financial) that enable it to be effectively marketed and promoted with point of sales established.</p>	<p>BRIDGS Historical Society Board of Trade Community Volunteers</p>	<p>BRIDGS</p>	<p>Already started Will be piloted in August of '07 Regular seasonal schedule to be launched in summer 2008 under the Historical Society.</p>	<p>Actors & Stipends 8 – 9 months/year Coordinator Sets Potential FUNDING: Sponsorships, Advertising, NS Tourism, Heritage Canada. Overall marketing and business plan – NS Tourism, RDA.</p>	<p>Volunteers Revenue Funding/Sponsorship Administration</p>
<p>4) Building on the significant number and reputation of artists and the visitor interest of the arts, facilitate the development and operation of a Bear River Arts Centre that encourages, supports and strengthens the arts community through the delivery of an annual program of workshops, lectures, demonstrations and shows. The program must be designed to respond to interest and marketability within the local, regional and tourism audiences. A complete Business Plan would be required to fully develop the concept, markets, logistics and operations plan. This initiative should draw upon the resources and experience of the Annapolis Region Community Arts Centre establishing partnerships where possible. To initiate this project, BRIDGS will facilitate bringing together the artists in the community along with the Bear River First Nation, RDA, ARCAC, NS Cultural and Tourism reps, to explore the level of interest of the artists and potential partners in taking this project on. A “lead” organization will be identified to facilitate the</p>	<p>Oakdene, BREDS, BoT, BRIDGS, All levels of government, Artists ARCAC</p>	<p>BRIDGS in concert with the Artists (Studio group)</p>	<p>Initial meeting to take place during the Spring of 2008 to explore the project and decide next steps.</p>	<p>Buildings Instructors Business Plan Marketing Program development Potential FUNDING - ACOA Business Plan Development program - NS Tourism - Office of Economic Development</p>	<p>Lack of a lead organization coming together Lack of buy-in, interest from artists Lack of effective planning, development and management of both the concept and resulting plan</p>

<p>development of the project until a Business Plan is completed that identifies the most effective and sustainable management structure.</p>					
<p>5) Establish the Bay of Fundy Tidal River Interpretation Centre in Bear River. Due to the phenomenal tidal action readily visible and accessible in Bear River and accentuated by the “Village on Stilts”, an Interpretive Centre should be developed that is based on this natural resource while delivering an interpretive program that effectively communicates, educates, entertains and engages residents and visitors alike. The ecology, flora and fauna, wildlife, biology, etc., of the river, the bay and estuary present unique and rich aspects of the environment that will, through interpretation, enable people to have a deeper appreciation and understanding of this resource. The development of an interpretive centre, can and should include a combination of interpretive panels, exhibits, and educational programs that make effective use of and builds on existing infrastructure and be well researched. Furthermore, this development should consider integration of the Visitor Information Centre and Bear River Museum. Currently there is no clear “leader” or sponsor for this project; however, as it represents one of the most significant opportunities for the community, BRIDGS will facilitate bringing together potential partnering organizations and individuals to explore interest and establish a project team to oversee the development of a feasibility study and Business Plan that will determine the most effective collaborations, partnerships and look at the potential of incorporating existing facilities accommodating the VIC and Historical Society.</p>	<p>BRIDGS Board of Trade BR Historical Society Bear River First Nation Tobiatric Wilderness Committee Digby and Annapolis County Digby and Area Tourism Association Destination Southwest Nova Bay of Fundy Tourism Partnership NS Tourism, heritage and Culture ACOA MLA , MP</p>	<p>BRIDGS to facilitate bringing potential partners together for a meeting to explore the project and establish a project team if supported by partners.</p>	<p>Planning for meeting should begin immediately and be scheduled to take place over the in the Winter of 2007. A development plan to oversee the evolution of the project will be generated at the Meeting and monitored by the resulting Project Team, if interest warrants.</p>	<p>Facilitator for meeting Securing interest and support of partners Partnerships Vision Communication Potential FUNDING: - NS Tourism -ACOA - Office of Econ. Development</p>	<p>Need for a champion organization to take the lead.</p>
<p>6) Continue to provide opportunities for information exchange and support for the ongoing development and sustainable operation of established Museums, Attractions and Festivals in Bear River. Operators need to communicate on a regular basis through the channels available to them including media, Tributary and community organization meetings and relevant information will be shared when and where possible.</p>	<p>Board of Trade BR Historical Society BRIDGS Federation of NS Heritage NS Festivals Association</p>	<p>Organizations themselves</p>	<p>To take place during monthly meetings of BRIDGS and Board of Trade, monthly publication of the Tributary, etc.</p>	<p>Communication Initiative of the operators</p>	

Tourism Marketing

There are a number of tourism related marketing activities undertaken by a variety of organizations for Bear River. However these are done in isolation from each other without solid indication of impact. While the community does not have the resources to undertake and manage a marketing program, there are a number of initiatives that can and should be undertaken to maximize their participation in regional activities. While each tourism business and attraction should maintain its own marketing plan, the following actions should be undertaken on behalf of the community.

<i>Action</i>	Who needs to be involved?	Who should be the lead organization?	When should it start?	What resources will be needed to achieve this?	What challenges may need to be overcome?
<p>1) As the primary organization within Bear River with a mandate for tourism, there is a need for the Board of Trade to foster and facilitate a more strategic and collaborative approach to marketing related activities for the community to achieve consistency in both messaging and branding that strengthens the positioning of the community.</p> <p>An annual marketing plan with partnering opportunities should be shared with the BoT members and partners that integrates opportunities presented by the Digby and Area Tourism Association, Destination Southwest Nova and NS Tourism as well as others that present themselves. This would incorporate advertising, promotion and publicity, website development, etc. To effectively develop and monitor the annual plan, a tourism committee should be struck under the BoT for this purpose. It is imperative that the committee involve industry stakeholders and partners.</p>	<p>Board of Trade & its members BREDS BRIDGS Museums/Attractions Tourism Businesses Artists</p>	<p>Board of Trade</p>	<p>Fall/Winter 2007 planning for coordinated action during 2008 season. Annual plan and review of pervious year to be presented at the AGM and promoted/communicated to industry members.</p>	<p>Partnerships Communication Marketing expertise Shared vision</p>	<p>Working in isolation Turf protection</p>
<p>2) Installation of welcome signage at the entrances to Bear River would positively impact the visitor experience and reinforce the communities identity.</p> <p>Rob Buckland has a supply of 11 signs that have been prepared and are ready for installation. Locations, posts and labour for installation are required as well as permits from the NS Department of Transport where necessary.</p>	<p>Board of Trade BRIDGS Municipalities</p>	<p>Board of Trade</p>	<p>Begin planning and budgeting for installation over winter 2007 and installed in spring 2008.</p>	<p>Volunteer time Labour Light Equipment Some funding</p> <p>Potential FUNDING: - Municipality -sponsorship</p>	<p>Poor coordination Lack of initiative amongst stakeholders. Lack of labour</p>

<p>3) Development and installation of a Bear River locator map mounted on the outside the Visitor Information Centre supporting year round visitors. The map previously developed and utilized in the Bear River Studio Rally can be used as a basis for the map with a few enhancements like placement of key information on the map. This can be paid for through advertising along the boarder if necessary</p>	<p>Board of Trade BRIDGS Tourism Businesses and Organizations</p>	<p>Board of Trade</p>	<p>Begin exploring in 2007 with realization before summer of 2009</p>	<p>Funding Coordination Potential FUNDING: Incorporate it into the Tidal River Interpretive Program for funding.</p>	
<p>4) Replace Visitor Information Centre signage currently in use with the standard directional signage and symbols available from the NS Department of Transportation. This would greatly enhance credibility and visitor experience as they are the standard signs used throughout the province.</p>	<p>Board of Trade Tourism related businesses Municipality of Annapolis and Digby</p>	<p>Board of Trade</p>	<p>Purchase and install signs before 2008 season</p>	<p>Finances Coordination Installation Potential FUNDING: - Municipality - Sponsorship - NS Tourism</p>	<p>Finances</p>

7.0 Appendices

7.1 Interviews

The following is a contact list with whom Interviews were conducted during the development phase by the consultant in addition to the ongoing meetings help with the Strategic Planning Committee of BRIDGS.

Municipality of Annapolis County

Laurie Emms, Engineer regarding waste treatment facility, water study, 584-2188

Patrick McWade, Councillor, 638-3247

Carol Dibble, Sewerage Treatment Plant Manager for Bear River, 467-3836

Debra Ryan, Recreation Director, 532-3139

Municipality of Digby County

Bob Powell, Recreation Director, 245-5006

NS Office of Health Promotion and Protection, Mike Trinacity, 679-4390

NS Department of Transportation, Joe Crowell, District Supervisor, 527-5976

Terri McCulloch, Bay of Fundy Tourism Partnership, 254-2772

Linda Ross, NS Arts Council, 656-2712

Bear River Businesses/Organizations

Rob Buckland, Flight of Fancy

Bob Benson, Bear River Board of Trade (467-3695)

Linda Mae Findlay, Oakdene Centre (467-3184)

Glendene Parker, Bear River Economic Development Society(467-3695)

Leslie Harris, Digby County Exhibition Society (467-3027)

Norma Wagner, Bear River Community Health Centre (467-3313)

Sandy Burrell, Bear River Youth Centre (467-3986)

Mary Golding, Ladies Auxiliary, Bear River Legion (467-3097)

Don Rice, Bear River Artists and Tobiotic Wilderness Society (467-3313)

Rick Jacques, Hillburgh Water Society (467-0775)

Chief Frank Meuse, Bear River (467-3802)

Gene Lane, Annapolis Regional Community Arts Council

Zoe Kmorek-Onysko, Bear River Historical Society (467-0268)

Hal Theriault, Digby and Area Tourism Association

Other contacts:

Mike Gushue, Digby Annapolis Development Agency, 532-0232

Harold (Junior) Theriault MLA, 245-2991

Daryl Jelphs, Bear River Volunteer Fire Department, 467-0909

7.2 Funding Programs

Service Canada - JOB CREATION PARTNERSHIP

Program Description

To assist unemployed individuals prepare for, obtain and maintain employment by providing them with services such as employment counselling, job search techniques, job placement and labour market information. This measure focuses on measuring positive results and outcomes achieved by clients. It is available to all unemployed Canadians regardless of whether they have had an Employment Insurance claim.

Projects are normally approved for up to 52 weeks. Renewals are made on the basis of performance and results achieved. Funding may be provided to cover eligible costs such as overhead, wages, employment related costs and eligible expenses. Potential eligible sponsors are businesses, organizations, individuals, public health and educational institutions, municipal governments and band/tribal councils.

Office of Health Promotion and Protection

There are a number of resources available from the regional representative of the Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection. The regional contact for Bear River is Mike Trinacity. Services that are available include:

Consulting / Training

- Facilitation and mediation services for regional and community groups, and municipalities
- Technical advice on facility and program development
- Training in priority areas

Grant Administration (Recreation Facility Development)

- Capital and Other Grants
- Planning Assistance
- Life Cycle Planning
- Community Use of Schools
- Community Development Grant Program

Information

Provide quality information on a timely basis to public, volunteers, other government departments, elected officials at all levels of government, municipal officials, recreation directors, and regional health, school and economic development boards.

There are also a number of Funding Programs available including:

1) Recreation Facility Development Program

The Recreation Facility Development Program assists municipalities and community groups in the planning, construction, renovation, conservation or acquisition of facilities for public recreation purposes. Types of projects generally eligible for assistance are community centres, pools, sport facilities, parks, playgrounds, trails and other outdoor recreation facilities.

Guidelines: Applicants can apply for up to 1/3 of total capital cost of a project.

Deadline: First Monday in February

2) Community Recreation Capital Grants Program

The Community Recreation Capital Grant Program (CRCG) assists with the development of small scale indoor and outdoor capital recreation projects.

CRCG program funding must be used for:

- public, community recreation purposes;
- items of a permanent, non-consumable, capital nature; and,
- projects where the need for financial assistance is demonstrated.

Guidelines: Applicants can apply for up to 1/3 of total capital cost of a project to a maximum of \$3,000. Applications can be made year round, until funding is depleted. Eligible organizations: Incorporated not-for-profit societies, and municipalities. Applicants are only eligible for either the Community Recreation Capital Grant Program or Recreation Facility Development Program, once in any four year period.

3) Planning Assistance Program

Assists municipalities and community organizations obtain professional assistance in planning, designing and researching proposed and existing recreation facilities.

Guidelines: Applicants can apply for up to 50 per cent of total cost of consultants' fees, to a maximum of \$5,000. Applications can be made year round. Eligible organizations: Incorporated not-for-profit societies, and municipalities. Applicants are only eligible for either the Community Recreation Capital Grant Program or Recreation Facility Development Program, once in any four year period.

4) Recreation Facility Development Capital Grant Program

Increased access to sport and physical recreation facilities has a positive effect on the health of our population. The Nova Scotia Office of Health Promotion plays a role in the development of such facilities across the province through the Recreation Facility Development Capital Grant (RFD) Program. This program assists community groups, municipalities and other 'not for profit' organizations to develop facilities in order to increase public participation in sport and physical recreation. Facilities may include community centres and halls, pools, arenas, athletic fields, parks, playgrounds, trails, enhanced schools for community use and other facilities that promote sport and physical recreation.

The goals of the RFD Program are:

- to increase and broaden sport and physical recreation opportunities for the greatest number of citizens in a geographic area (community or region) through the improvement of existing facilities and the development of new facilities
- to encourage a planned approach to the development of sport and physical recreation facilities
- to improve the safety of users of sport and physical recreation facilities by helping facility owners meet provincial and/or national standards, regulations or guidelines
- to improve opportunities for groups within the community that traditionally face difficulties in accessing facilities for the purpose of participating in sport and physical recreation

Funding: Projects approved for funding are eligible to receive up to one-third of the total capital cost of the project. Funding received from other provincial government organizations, such as the Office of Economic Development or the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, can affect the amount of the grant awarded by the Office of Health Promotion. Program policy requires that provincial government funding for a project cannot exceed 50 per cent of the project's total cost.

Deadline: Application form, signed by two officers of the association, must be submitted to the regional representative by 4:30 p.m. on or before the first Monday in February to be considered for funding in the upcoming fiscal year.

Funding PROGRAMS from Municipality of Digby County

Active Kids Healthy Kids Funding

The goal of the Fund is to encourage and support the community in the development of innovative, non-traditional, creative physical activity initiatives which enable youth and their families to lead physically active lifestyles.

Project Examples include:

- Before or after school activities
- New recreational youth sports: indoor/outdoor volleyball, shinny hockey, flag football, ultimate Frisbee, etc.
- Outdoor clubs: cycling, hiking, canoeing, sports camps, conservation camps
- Girls in Motion & Youth Fitness Programs
- Art and/or cultural camps with a physical activity component

Contact Digby Area Recreation for funding information & applications.

Similar programs are available from the Municipality of Annapolis County.

Funding Programs from the County of Annapolis

There are a number of programs available from Annapolis County. The *deadline for grant applications is March 1st (June 30th for the Heritage Assistance for Lighthouses and Museums in 2006 and March 1st in subsequent years)*. Grants are intended to provide modest levels of support and assistance to community non-profit organizations. The program tries to balance on-going needs and a rotation of new applicants. Under the Grants Program there are five main categories:

A. Support Grants – Community-Based Organizations

B. Community Recreation Grants

- Community-Based Recreation Programming
- Property Development and Community Facilities (e.g., buildings, sites, trails)
- Volunteer Leadership Development
- Community-Based Arts (e.g., visual, performing and literary arts)

C. Community Heritage Grants

- Heritage Conservation
- Heritage Public Education
- Heritage Assistance for Lighthouses and Museums

D. Tourism Promotion & Development Grants

- Tourist Information Centre (TIC) Operations
- Tourism, Recreation & Culture Events

E. Strategic Recreation & Culture Initiatives

Grants and contributions are awarded at the discretion of council and only in exceptional circumstances. Awards are paid from the Recreation & Culture Reserve. Such awards are third in order of priority for use of funds from the Recreation & Culture Reserve.

The reserve was established for strategic recreation and culture initiatives of the municipality. The *primary* use of funds is for land acquisition and development of County owned parks, open space, trails and facilities for public recreation and historical & cultural purposes. A *secondary* use of funds is for County land assembly, conservation or development initiatives and projects of historical, cultural, recreational, environmental or community development significance to the County of Annapolis.

Regional Cultural Initiatives and Regional Trails Grants

Eligible applications include initiatives that demonstrate significant benefit to the region or a high degree of creativity, innovation, unique appeal or benefit, as determined by the

council. Awards are one-time grants and shall not normally exceed \$5,000.

Capital Pledge Grants

Applications shall only be considered for capital projects for facilities, programs and/or services the municipality would or might otherwise provide. Awards are one-time capital grants and shall not normally exceed \$25,000. The municipality may pay capital pledge grants over two or more fiscal years, subject to the availability of funds as determined by the council.

NS Tourism Heritage and Culture Funding Programs

1) Festivals and Events Assistance

This portion of the program is designed to provide assistance to those festivals or events that are able to impact on incremental visitation and spending to the Province. To work towards achieving these goals, the Program is designed to provide cooperative (partnership) support to a maximum of 50% of costs associated with the direct-to-consumer marketing initiatives that are strategically in line with both the festivals'/events' mandate as well as the Province's objectives. Applicable activities include marketing initiatives (i.e. brochure development / printing / distribution, advertising campaigns, direct mail initiatives, research, etc.) or new website development.

Guidelines and applications are available from www.nstpc.com

2) Tourism Destination Development Program

Tourism destination areas offer visitors unique, quality products and experiences. Investing in the development and enhancement of tourism attractions, sites and experiences that incorporate Nova Scotia's strategic priorities will help destinations create and enhance the products and services they have to offer. Examples of activities include: Tourism Planning, Interpretation Development, Tourism Infrastructure and Tourism Programming.

Eligibility: Private sector operators working as part of a group/consortium effort to implement strategic product development projects; non-commercial, not-for-profit organizations such as local development associations, municipalities and industry associations are eligible. Costs can include planning and design, capital costs and interpretation. Ineligible costs include land acquisition, purchase of equipment, operating costs, marketing initiatives, marketing plans, administrative and project management.

Deadlines: April 16, 2007

Applications are available from www.nstpc.com

3) Tourism Industry Development Program

Investing in educational, best business practice and market-readiness initiatives to enhance the quality of tourism services, businesses and products. Examples of activities include:

- Study tours / best business missions
- Seminars, workshops, conferences
- Mentoring assessments
- Mystery shop assessments
- French-readiness
- Sustainable communities
- Strategic community tourism planning
- Professional development of outdoor / adventure tourism operators

Eligibility: Private sector operators working as part of a group/consortium effort to implement strategic product development projects; non-commercial, not-for-profit organizations such as local development associations, municipalities and industry associations are eligible. Costs can include professional services, meeting expenses, travel expenses, registration fees, incremental administration. Ineligible costs include capital and operating costs, industry participation time. Guidelines, Applications and Deadlines are available from www.nstpc.com.

NS Cultural Division

Cultural Activities Programs

The presence of cultural activities in our communities contributes significantly to our well-being and enriches the experiences of visitors to our province. The purpose of the Cultural Activities Program is to help build communities through community arts and cultural activities. Communities can include geographic locales, as well as communities of interest such as those involved in visual arts, music or crafts.

The Cultural Activities Program supports the following goals of the Culture Division:

Community cultural development

The division recognizes that involvement in cultural activities contributes to the social, economic, educational and spiritual life of a community. The division aims to support opportunities for people to participate in and build community cultural life. The Culture Division's goals in the area of community cultural development are to:

- develop new and strengthen existing relationships among groups and organizations engaged in cultural activities
- encourage more cultural activities that explore and/or celebrate a community's or a cultural sub-sector's identity
- encourage more participation in and access to cultural activities
- encourage the development of Nova Scotia's cultural diversity
- support activity that contributes to the long-term development of the cultural sector.

Artistic development

Government has a long history as patron of the arts. It recognizes, supports, and celebrates the creative work of artists and the diversity of artistic expression within the cultural community, which includes fine crafts, literary, visual, media, and performing arts. Artistic creation and expression are fundamental because they reflect who we are. The work of artists lies at the foundation of the culture sector. The Culture Division's goals in the area of artistic development are to:

- support people at all levels of artistic involvement
- support artistic expression and the pursuit of excellence and innovation
- promote learning in the arts for people of all ages through education and participation
- develop new audiences for the arts and maintain existing audiences.

Under the Cultural Activities Program, government offers assistance to activities that develop or enhance the production or appreciation of community arts and cultural activities. Specifically, support is offered to:

- *Performing Arts Festivals or Competitions* ~ amateur festivals and competitions in which Nova Scotians participate to share their work and/or have it assessed by adjudicators or amateurs
- *Community Cultural Events* ~ activities and events which have a strong arts and/or heritage focus that bring people together around issues of cultural identity and planning. Priority will be

given to activities that build relationships within communities, particularly between arts and non-arts based organizations

- *Cultural Workshops* ~ hands-on learning and skills development in community arts, crafts, and heritage
- *Community Cultural Projects* ~ activities that promote and display community arts and/or heritage and explore or celebrate a community's or a cultural sub-sector's identity.

Funding: The department's contribution will not exceed 50 per cent of eligible costs and normally will not exceed a maximum of \$5,000. As well, the combination of provincial and federal funding for the project should not exceed 75% of project costs.

Capital building development costs and equipment purchase costs will not be considered eligible in determining the funding level.

Deadlines for applications are May 15, August 15, November 15 and February 15.

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Innovative Communities Fund

The Innovative Communities Fund (ICF) invests in strategic projects that build the economies of Atlantic Canada's communities. Working in partnership with Atlantic communities and stakeholders, ICF builds on the strengths of communities and provides the tools needed to identify opportunities available for their sustainable economic growth.

ICF focuses on investments that lead to long-term employment and economic capacity building in rural communities. Urban initiatives that stimulate the competitiveness and vitality of rural communities may be considered on a selective basis.

<http://www.acoa.ca/e/financial/aip/community.shtml>

Canadian Heritage

This Federal Department has a number of funding programs. Some of those which are most appropriately linked to this Strategy include:

Cultural Spaces Canada

The Cultural Spaces Canada Program (CSC) contributes to improved physical conditions for artistic creativity and presentation/exhibition. It is designed to increase and improve access for Canadians to performing arts, visual arts, media arts, and to museum collections, heritage displays, and exhibitions. CSC supports the improvement, renovation and expansion of arts and heritage facilities, and the acquisition of specialized equipment. Feasibility studies will not be considered a priority at this point in time.

Who can apply?

- Non-profit arts and heritage organizations operating in a professional manner incorporated under Part II of the *Canada Corporations Act* or under corresponding provincial or territorial legislation
- Provincial/territorial governments, municipal, or regional governments and their agencies, as well as First Nations and Inuit equivalent governments or equivalent Aboriginal peoples institutions or organizations (Aboriginal peoples include Inuit, Métis, Status and Non-Status people).

Website: www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/ecc-csp/index_e.cfm

“Celebrate Canada!” Program

To enhance pride in Canada by encouraging the participation of its citizens in “Celebrate Canada!” activities from June 21 to July 1 (including National Aboriginal Day – on June 21, Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day – June 24, Canadian Multiculturalism Day – June 27, and Canada Day – July 1).

Who can apply?

Non-governmental organizations, ad-hoc committees, community associations and charitable organizations, public and private corporations (except Crown corporations), municipal governments, public and private schools, school boards, and other educational institutions such as colleges and universities.

When is the deadline? February 28, 2008.

Contact the Celebrate Canada Committee in your province or territory or visit the website of “Celebrate Canada!” at www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/canada

Community Memories Program

To create a national online portrait of Canada’s history by connecting individual local histories, to stimulate community-museum partnerships in the development of online local history exhibits, and to strengthen the capacity of smaller museums to create digital content for use on the World Wide Web and in local programming.

Who can apply?

- Public, not-for-profit museums that have demonstrated their commitment to work collaboratively with colleagues across the country by becoming basic or contributing members of the Canadian Heritage Information Network and the Virtual Museum of Canada; and
- Institutions with no more than five full-time paid staff. Institutions that are entirely volunteer-run or whose communities are not defined geographically are included in this criterion.

When is the deadline? A call for proposals is issued on an annual basis.

Contact: Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN), Canadian Heritage

Community Memories Program

15 Eddy Street, 4th Floor (15-4-A)

Gatineau, Quebec

K1A 0M5

Tel.: 819 994-1200

Toll-free: 1 800 520-2446

E-mail: service@chin.gc.ca

7.3 DRAFT Job Description – Coordinator

Bear River Strategic Plan Coordinator

Reporting to BRIDGS, the position will serve in the capacity of coordinator with BRIDGS facilitating the implementation of the Action Plan.

Duties include:

- undertake research activities in support of the actions identified in the plan as required
- maintain communication with all “lead organizations”
- assist “lead organizations” in contacting and communicating with the potential partners that have been identified within the plan.
- assist in the development of all applications and proposals
- undertake research to update statistical information within the Strategic Plan.
- Fulfill the role of resource person for the organizations identified in the plan
- Coordinate ongoing communication amongst BRIDGS, lead organizations, partners and the community.
- Assist each of the “lead organizations” to build an actionable plan that incorporates those actions identified in the plan.

Budget

Item	Expense (estimate)	Revenue (potential)
Office Space \$300 x 12 months	\$3600	Part in kind \$1800 Job Creation Partnership \$1800
Office Supplies/Equipment - Phone - Computer - Internet - Admin. Supplies - Desk/Chair	\$4800	Part in kind \$2400 Job Creation Partnership \$2400
Travel/Training	\$1200	Job Creation Partnership \$1200
Salary \$425/wk x 52 wks	\$22,100	Job Creation Partnership \$22100
Strategic Plan Implementation Meeting space	\$1000	In-kind \$1000
Miscellaneous	\$1000	Job Creation Partnership \$1000
Totals	\$33,700	BRIDGS in kind: \$10,600 Job Creation Partnership: \$23,100

7.4 Regional Map of Bear River and Area

