



THE RURAL LANDSCAPE INSTITUTE

A CATALYST FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL INTEGRITY
IN THE AMERICAN WEST

Minutes from:

A REGIONAL AGRITOURISM STRATEGY WORKSHOP

First Security Bank Conference Room, 670 South 19th, Bozeman, Montana

October 12, 2007

ATTENDEES

- Hannibal Anderson, Rancher; Superintendent, Livingston Schools; Chairman, RLI Board of Directors; Emigrant, Montana
- Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator, Montana Department of Commerce, Helena, Montana
- Bill Bryan, Executive Director, The Rural Landscape Institute, Bozeman, Montana
- David Cobb, Field Director, Office of U.S. Senator Max Baucus, Helena, Montana
- Chad Davis, Special Projects, Utah Office of Tourism, Governor's Office of Economic Development, Salt Lake City, Utah
- Todd Graham, President, Aeroscene Land Logic, Bozeman, Montana
- June Guertin, Executive Assistant, The Rural Landscape Institute, Bozeman, Montana
- Jael Kampfe, Manager, Lazy EL Ranch, Roscoe, Montana
- Paul Lachapelle, Assistant Professor, Community Development Specialist, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana
- Dawn Montanye, Manager of Conservation Economics, World Wildlife Fund, Bozeman, Montana
- Dave Pellatz, Rancher; Executive Director, Wyoming Hospitality and Outdoor Adventures (WHOA), Douglas, Wyoming
- Jim Peterson, Rancher, Buffalo, Montana; Executive Director, Undaunted Stewardship, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana
- Steve Pilcher, Rancher; Former Executive Vice President, Montana Stockgrowers Association, Helena, Montana

- Karen Searle, Owner, Montana Bunkhouses Working Ranch Vacations, LLC, Livingston, Montana
- Russell Stubbles, Professor, Department of Horticulture, Forestry, Landscape & Parks, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota
- Molly Thompson, Administrative Director, The Rural Landscape Institute, Bozeman, Montana
- Collin Watters, Manager, Growth Through Agriculture Program, Montana Department of Agriculture, Helena, Montana
- Becky Weed, Owner, Thirteen Mile Lamb and Wool Company, Belgrade, Montana
- Bill Yellowtail, Katz Professor in Native American Studies at Montana State University; RLI Board Member, Bozeman, Montana

In addition, twenty-one other invitees were unable to attend the meeting due to scheduling conflicts, health issues and other reasons. All sent their regrets and have asked to be involved in follow-up efforts.

BACKGROUND

The Rural Landscape Institute, formerly known as the Cook Center, has been working on a seven-state member cooperative for the past three years (Utah, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, and South Dakota). We believe enough work has now been done to aggressively go out and fund and implement the model.

The initial proposal and early business plan was created in the first half of 2005. We sought and received the support of all seven state tourism directors before and after their national conference in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho in August of 2005. Montana's former Senator Conrad Burns took an interest in seeking earmarked funds for the program but was defeated in the 2006 elections. Now, Montana Senator Max Baucus has told me personally that he will help me get "my agritourism project" off the ground.

A comprehensive business plan was developed in the summer of 2006 and revised in the spring of 2007.

A national market segmentation research project (500 interviews) was undertaken by Markitecture (a market research firm in Westport, CT). It was completed in July of 2007.

A detailed paper was produced in June – July of 2007 articulated how best to create a user-friendly mega website.

The low cost liability insurance issue has now been effectively addressed by a nationally-recognized insurance professional.

Furthermore, a beginning inventory of 418 farm and ranch recreation suppliers in the seven states has been developed.

It is now time to gain appropriate widespread approval of the member based cooperative in the region by state agricultural and tourism directors, state agricultural and tourism organizations, key agritourism suppliers, and state and congressional leaders.

It is also time to fund and launch this initiative as an independent entity. The Rural Landscape Institute wishes to be its incubator in its early phases of organizational development. But it eventually must be a “stand alone” member-based cooperative.

Bill Bryan, with over 16 years experience in agritourism strategic development and training in the region, will be the project leader in its formative stages but not its Executive Director or President.

PRESENTING THE CONCEPT

Bill Bryan presented his PowerPoint proposition: “Ranches on the Frontier” (available at www.RuralLandscapeInstitute.org).

DISCUSSION NOTES

- Wildlife is a liability to landowners and we’re doing a bad job of changing that to make wildlife an asset.
- “Instead of selling ranchettes – sell them an experience”. Patty Limerick, Faculty Director and Chair of the Board of the Center of the American West at the University of Colorado.
- Would the 7-state model be problematic dealing with issues between groups (e.g. Sierra Club vs. Enviro)
- Is the 7-state model too large? Too many interests?
- Regional focus makes sense from a marketing standpoint.
- As far as the 15% commission which the resource center would receive for booking, if targeted properly and the message gets out, it’s a great deal.
- Keep it authentic – quality experience. Less emphasis on amenities to get authentic, quality experience. Ideal versus what you’re going to get.
- Rocky Mountain Front has become the 3rd coast, but don’t know how to market it.
- If you can’t make a wave, make a ripple.
- Put a face on agriculture.
- Northern Rockies and Northern Great Plains – build on cohesiveness and diversity. Build on values - open space, wildlife, habitat.
- Working landscapes, but also a landscape that works.
- As far as location of center, marketing will tell, but a location that represents the West.
- Sell experiences – location becomes secondary: western, authentic, rural, active
- Wyoming “Forest West”; Utah “Life Elevated”

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

- Center for Entrepreneurship
- State Economic Development Departments
- NRCS
- Rural Development Agencies
- Economic Development Groups (incl. extractive, etc.)
- Regional CVBs
- Tourism Industry Promoters
- State Business Councils
- Utah Tourism Industry Coalition
- Wyoming Lodging and Restaurant Association
- State Tourism Offices
- Cody Board of Tourism (Gene Bryan)
- Wyoming Business Council
- Montana Dude Ranchers Association (Kristen Swenson)
- Tourism Advisory Councils
- U.S. Embassies overseas working on agriculture
- Cooperative Extension Programs
- Center for Rural Affairs
- Center for Rural Development
- World Wildlife Fund
- The Nature Conservancy
- Other conservation groups
- Wildlife conservation groups
- Hunting and fishing organizations
- Sonoran Institute
- Montana Land Reliance
- AERO
- Black Hills State University
- State FW &P and Game and Fish
- Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife Resources
- Wildlife Trust Fund (Wyoming, Bob Budd)
- Governors' Offices
- Food organizations interested in food health and security
- Corporation of the Northern Rockies
- Ranching for Profit (Dave Pratt)
- Holistic Management International
- NCAT
- Fred Provenza
- Greg Simmonds
- Real Estate Firms (i.e. Hall and Hall, Fay)
- State Agricultural Departments

- State Agricultural organization leaders (such as farmers union, Farm Bureau, stockgrowers, woolgrowers)
- Reservations (working with Native Americans)
- Tribal Tourism Alliance
- Intertribal Agricultural Association