

Information Byway



NORTH WESTERN ONTARIO
TOURISM ASSOCIATION

www.nwota.com

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North Western Ontario Tourism Association 2004 Annual Fall Meeting Thursday, October 28, 2004, Emo Legion, Emo, Ontario

TENTATIVE AGENDA

- General Meeting – Members Only**
- 9:00 AM Committee Reviews
Border Crossing Update
NWOTA/KDCA Joint Meeting
Proposed Amendments to Crownland Use - specifically in the Pipestone Area
Members Concerns
- 10:45 AM Coffee Break - Sponsored by Cloverleaf Shop-Easy
- Meeting Open to Everyone**
- 11:00 AM Abby Errington, President NOTO – Tourism Licensing
- 11:30 AM Jim Ticknor, Greetings from the Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters Association (MLOA)
- 11:45 PM Lucy Perillo, Pardon Services Enterprises – Need help to cross the Border with a criminal offence?
- 12:00 PM Lunch - Sponsored by Kaemingh Fuels Ltd.
- 1:00 PM Tom Mosindy, Lake of the Woods Fishery
Steve Duda/Bob & Peg Hunger, Aulneau Peninsula Advisory Committee
Scott Lockhart/Bob & Peg Hunger, Update on AKRC Meeting
Discussion about proposed amendments to Crownland Use – Pipestone area
Fort Frances & Kenora Ministry of Natural Resources - Updates, questions & answers.
- 2:30 PM Lake of the Woods District Property Owners Association - Water Quality on Lake of the Woods, Kelly Saunders
- 2:45 PM Abby Errington, President NOTO – New Drinking Water Regulations
- 3:15 PM Coffee Break - Sponsored by Fort Frances Times Printing/Fort Frances Times Electronic Publishing
- 3:30 PM Wayne Helliard, New Drinking Water Regulation
- 3:50 PM Pat Kunza/Jeff Mitchell, Aqua Pro Water, Thunder Bay
- 4:20 PM John Cameron, Ministry of Tourism and Recreation – RSA Summit
- 4:50 PM Meeting Wrap up

Our evening will continue with Social Hour, Dinner and Entertainer, Dean Jenkinson.

Dinner Wine – Sponsored by Pinewood Sports & Marine Ltd., Lund, Honda and Mercury

Entertainment – Sponsored by Tompkins Hardware & Yamaha Canada

Tickets for dinner and entertainment are \$35.00. Available at Helliard's (Nestor Falls), Tompkins Hardware (Emo), True North Outposts & Cabins (Clearwater), Fort Frances Times (Fort Frances), or by calling the NWOTA office at 807 488-5514.

ONTARIO TOURISM STRATEGY

Jerry Fisher, Vice President, NWOTA

In early 2003 MTR released the Ontario Tourism Strategy. It was the culmination of MTR's effort to gain input from stakeholders the year before.

NWOTA was invited to a workshop on Friday, September 17, 2004. The objective of the workshop was to update the industry on the strategy, and have us prioritize the actions and suggest implementation strategies.

There are five action items in the strategy that are worth mentioning.

1. Visitor First Philosophy. (Not much of an issue with the RBT industry)
2. Developing Destinations. (Develop icons in Ontario, like the wilderness in NWO)
3. Building the image and influence of Tourism. (Improving our image in the community)
4. Strengthening strategic Marketing.
5. Developing an "all of Government" approach. (Not a bad thought)

Lofty objectives to say the least. Have we not heard some of these before?

Marketing seemed to be on everyone's minds. This was surprising to me as nothing was mentioned about having trouble getting them here. All the marketing in the world will not help if they can't get to us. I guess not everyone was as dependent on the U.S. for customers. Infrastructure development was next. And Research was third.

All of government and developing the importance of tourism were close behind.

It was loud and clear from the participants that more useful data was needed to defend our positions and issues. Top priority. All of the recommendations stated the importance of good information in the tourism strategy.

Good information was also key in the recommendations for the implementation strategies.

MTR has never been a strong advocate for RBT issues and it will remain to be seen if they can pull this off. In particular item 5. In the past MTR has never been of much influence. Border

dispute with Minnesota, DWI issue, Spring Bear, Gun registration, issues with MNR over capacity, access, and assets, the list could go on and on. The impact of these issues has been dramatic on our industry and no one is held accountable. It is sapping the very essence of our industry.

I am cautiously optimistic.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF CROWN LAND USE DIRECTION TO PROVIDE FOR CROSSINGS OF 23 PROVINCIAL PARKS AND CONSERVATION RESERVES

NWOTA has been asked by MNR Peterborough to respond to a proposed amendment to Crown land use direction. It is called a minor amendment to 23 parks and protected areas of which one is the Pipestone Conservation Reserve C2348. It calls for road crossings for companies to access wood timber.

In our opinion this is a little more important than a minor amendment especially after with our track record on stopping roads.

Before we respond, by November 29th, 2004, we would like to get input from members and owners in the area.

Please send all comments to the NWOTA office before the end of October. We will also be discussing it at the NWOTA Fall meeting on October 28th in Emo. Please attend.

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO NWOTA
FOR AREA BUSINESSES TO
SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS TO
BETTER THE TOURISM
INDUSTRY IN OUR AREA.**

**If you have not renewed your
membership, please do so now.**

**MAKE NWOTA A STRONG
VOICE FOR TOURISM**

NOTO - The Voice of Nature & Outdoor Tourism in Ontario
Doug Reynolds - Executive Director

Plan To Attend!

This year's NOTO Conference is scheduled for November 23rd and 24th at the Valhalla Inn in Thunder Bay. Our conference format is slightly changed for this year in order to make it easy for you to participate in the Eco-North 2004 Conference which runs from November 24th to 27th at the Valhalla Inn in Thunder Bay. NOTO, along with other major tourism organizations like NONTA, Destination Nord and others decided to coordinate our conference schedules to make it easier for members to attend both conferences and have an opportunity to get together with colleagues from the other organizations.

As a result, the NOTO conference program has been shortened to a single day, with an opening reception on the evening of the 23rd, and information sessions on the morning of the 24th with the NOTO Annual General Meeting in the afternoon, followed by the annual dinner and awards presentation. We are scheduled to finish in time for you to attend the Eco-North Welcome Reception at Old Fort William at 8pm.

NOTO has been a key player in planning the Eco-North 2004 Conference, and we hope that many of you take advantage of the excellent range of speakers and sessions that have been planned for this event. NOTO will be among the presenters at the Eco-North 2004 Conference, so this is a great opportunity to bring the experience and concerns of our industry to a wider audience. The larger audience provided by this event is also a great opportunity for our NOTO Allied Members to expand their reach.

Visit the NOTO website www.noto.net for the tentative NOTO Conference agenda and registration form, as well as a link to the Eco-North 2004 agenda. We hope many of you choose to stay on for the full NOTO-Eco North 2004 Conference and help make this the premier event for the industry.

TO ALL KDCA, NOTO, AND NWOTA MEMBERS AND LOCAL TOURIST OPERATORS

WE NEED YOUR HELP.

PLEASE RESPOND NO MATTER HOW UNIMPORTANT THIS MAY SEEM.

IN AN EFFORT TO PREPARE FOR A MEETING WITH NAULT'S OFFICE, CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATIONS, THE BUSINESS GROUP, WHICH INCLUDES CHAMBERS (NOACC), MUNICIPALITIES (NOMA), NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (NODN) AND TOURISM KDCA, NOTO AND NWOTA, WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU RETURN THE SURVEY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GIVE US ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE SEND ON SEPARATE SHEET. IF YOU NEED ANOTHER QUESTIONNAIRE PLEASE CALL THE NWOTA OFFICE FOR MORE COPIES. IT IS ALSO ON THE WEB SITE WWW.NWOTA.COM.

YOU CAN FILL THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE WEB.

IF THERE IS AN OPERATOR NEAR YOU THAT MAY WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN DOING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, PLEASE CONTACT THE NWOTA OFFICE SO THAT ONE CAN BE FORWARDED TO THEM.

Please fax to the NWOTA office at **(807) 488-5514** (preferred)

Or KDCA office at (807) 223-3266 or NOTO office at (705) 472-0621

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation

NWOTA

KDCA

NOTO

NODN

NOMA

NOACC

Dates to mark on your calendar:

Monthly NWOTA Meetings

October 28, NWOTA Annual Fall Meeting, Emo Legion

December 9, 12:00 noon, Emo Inn

NEW WATER REGULATIONS

We are starting to hear that there will be very significant changes to the water regulations. This does not necessarily mean that we will get what we need unless we keep the pressure up. Any contacts you have in the industry, small communities, rural church groups and community centres should be encouraged to write letters to the Premier and Ministers below.

This has been a very long, hard battle for NOTO and consumed significant resources. We have had some great allies in this battle such as Well Safe, Chambers of Commerce, and numerous municipalities. We need to make sure that we get the best return possible on what NOTO, and our allies, have invested in this issue, and that our industry has water regulations which fit our needs while protecting public safety.

Thank You,
Al Errington
President of NOTO
The Voice of Nature & Outdoor Tourism in Ontario

Key Addresses:

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

The Honourable Leona Dombrowsky
Minister of the Environment
12th Floor, 135 St. Clair Avenue West
Toronto, ON M4V 1P5

The Honourable Jim Bradley
Minister of Tourism and Recreation
9th floor, 900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2R9

The Honourable Rick Bartolucci
Minister of Northern Development and Mines
99 Wellesley St. West, Whitney Block, Room 5630
Toronto, ON M7A 1W3

The Honourable George Smitherman
Minister of Health
Suite M1-57, Macdonald Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

The Honourable David Ramsey
Minister of Natural Resources
6th Floor, Room 6630
Whitney Block
99 Wellesley St. W.
Toronto, ON M7A 1W3

The Honourable Gerard Kennedy
Minister of Education
Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

The Honourable Micheal Bryant
Minister of Native Affairs
720 Bay St. 4th floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2K1



The Honourable Dalton McGuinty
Premier, Province of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

September 9, 2004

Dear Premier McGuinty:

This has not been a good year for Nature and Outdoor Tourism in Ontario. For the majority of operators this year has ranged from difficult to disastrous. All the while Ontario's "safe" water regulations have been hovering over us like a dark cloud. The proposed water regulations are a dysfunctional legacy of the past Conservative government. They do little to ensure public safety, while exponentially increasing costs to those responsible for decontaminating source water for drinking. Although Minister Dombrowski has initiated a review of the water regulations, without a radical change in focus and intent, these regulations will initiate a significant exodus of the tourism industry from Ontario. We will also see substantial closures of rural schools, community centres, volunteer fire departments and churches. The viability of small and rural communities across Ontario will be compromised and there will be significant increases in expenses for government agencies such as the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Native Affairs and Ministry of Education.

Although prompted by the best of intentions, Ontario's proposed drinking water regulations are fundamentally flawed in concept and focus. They rely on old technology, are onerously expensive to Ontario's economy and only superficially address the findings of Justice O'Connor. They fail to address the two basic problems that led to the tragedy at Walkerton; the source water was not protected from contamination and government inspectors were not performing on site inspections and independent water sampling to prevent fraud.

Here is a brief synopsis of the most significant shortcomings of Reg. 170:

1) These regulations are design rather than outcome-based and rely heavily on a specific water treatment design technology, chlorination. The extremely broad definition of "water distribution system" contained in the regulation makes chlorination mandatory for most systems. Drinking water regulations should be outcome based, requiring that drinking water be healthy and public safety be maintained. This would allow for use of the best available technology according to the needs of the situation.

2) Chlorination carries with it a range of health and environmental concerns, since it creates by-products that are well known carcinogens. Furthermore, because chlorine is ineffective on giardia and cryptosporidium, the regulation mandates very rigorous filtration requirements in order to remove these organisms. An outcome-based approach would allow for selections of the most appropriate and effective treatment technology.

3) The expensive regime of frequent water testing by private laboratories creates the illusion of safety, while actually removing some of the existing checks within the system. In the Walkerton tragedy, test results were falsified, and there was no system of external inspection to prevent such fraud. Reg. 170 continues this approach. By contrast, inspection of water systems in the tourism industry prior to Reg. 170 was the responsibility of local health units. Public health laboratories performed the tests, and this was supplemented by periodic on-site inspection.

Approved, private testing lab services are not readily available in many parts of the province, especially rural and northern Ontario, and the added cost of transporting samples will be considerable. We have a network of public health labs conveniently located throughout Ontario who have done an outstanding job of protecting public safety, but they are completely shut out by Reg. 170. Many tourism establishments post their water test results for their guests to see, and these operators indicate that their guests trust the results from public health labs, but have little or no confidence in a private lab.

4) The water regulations rely on extremely expensive and onerous individual engineering reports for each water system. Engineering a small water system could easily cost \$3,000-\$5000 or more for systems which cost less than \$1000 to build. The 1000's of small water systems in Ontario are extremely similar in circumstance and capacity and water treatment is not rocket science. Unfortunately, MOE has refused to develop component standards and system templates, as is done with every other aspect of our facilities under the Building Code. Not only does the engineering requirement create an unreasonable cost burden, there are also not nearly enough engineers available for the many thousands of water systems that must be approved.

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Lack of periodic government inspections is the primary circumstance which allowed Walkerton to happen. It is also the circumstance that will encourage future Walkerton type events on a more widespread basis since the MOE is now responsible for all public water systems, not just the municipal systems. Without inspectors to do periodic on-site equipment maintenance inspections

and independent water sampling, as the Ministry of Health inspectors did for our industry until this year, there is no way to prevent the probability of fraudulent sample testing and neglect of maintenance. If inspectors perform periodic on-site inspections and sampling there is no need for the frequent and expensive water sample testing and water system engineering required by Reg. 170.

Many people, rightly or wrongly, attributed the Walkerton tragedy to downloading of responsibility to the private sector by the previous government. Reg. 170 increases private sector involvement and reduces government oversight. It removes testing and inspection responsibility from health units and hands it over to private engineers and laboratories.

The root of much of Ontario's problems with drinking water is that the MOE is responsible for both preventing source water contamination as well as regulating decontamination of source water for drinking. This is a conflict of interest which not only jeopardizes public safety, it also jeopardizes environmental protection. MOE is responsible for preventing and regulating toxic and other negative effects to the environment. One of the primary measurements of success for the MOE is the quality of the ground and surface water from which we get our drinking water. An easy way to avoid the complications of dealing with environmental contamination is to be the regulator of the decontamination of the most important resource coming out of the environment, drinking water. As an environmentalist it concerns me that the MOE is not completely focused on protecting the environment. The MOE can neglect protecting the environment from contamination by focusing on decontamination instead. Unfortunately, the decontamination would be paid for by individuals and businesses who are not the cause of the contamination. Simply stated, MOE should concentrate on preventing pollution and catching the polluters, rather than forcing individual water system owners to clean up the polluters' mess.

Minister of the Environment Leona Dombrowski has been sympathetic to our industry and rural Ontario's problems with the drinking water regulations. However, some in the bureaucracy within the MOE seem reluctant to admit that their approach to the water regulations was significantly flawed and that drinking water does not belong in the MOE. Drinking water comes from the environment, but aside from source water protection, it is not an environmental issue. Drinking water belongs in the Ministry of Health because drinking contaminated water makes people sick, just as eating contaminated food makes people sick.

The MOE's responsibility is to prevent contamination of the source water, from which we get our drinking water. Ontario needs the MOE to approach the responsibility of protecting Ontario's source water and environment without distraction or conflict. The health implications of drinking water are a distraction from protecting the environment and a conflict of interest.

The Ministry of Health, through local health units has the inspectors and test labs needed to ensure Ontario's drinking water is safe. Furthermore, they have experience in health promotion and voluntary compliance, a well established track record of success, and the support and respect of local communities. Returning drinking water to the Ministry of Health, which already has the expertise and most of the resources needed to properly safeguard public health, would allow development of practical drinking water regulations, which actually protect the public.

Best Regards,



Al Errington
President of NOTO
The Voice of Nature and Outdoor Tourism in Ontario

- cc. Minister of the Environment - Leona Dombrowski
- Minister of Tourism - Jim Bradley
- Minister of Northern Development - Rick Bartolucci
- Minister of Health - George Smitherman
- Minister of Natural Resources - David Ramsey
- Minister of Education - Gerard Kennedy
- Minister of Native Affairs - Michael Bryant

Border Incident Report Form

Date _____ Time _____

Name of Customs/Immigration Officer _____

Port (town) of entry _____

How many people were in the group? _____

What was the issue? _____

Detail information.

How long ago did offence happen? _____ (If applicable)

Did the guest get any documentation from border officials? _____

Would they be willing to provide our office with a copy? _____.

(This would be very important in presenting our case. Personal information could be X'ed out.)

What did your guest have to do? _____

If guest refused entry what happened to the rest of the group? _____

If your guest was refused entry, what was the loss to you business? _____

Will your guest rehabilitate in the future? _____. Will your guest return to Canada? ____

Do you think the action was fair or reasonable? _____

Please provide as much detail as possible.

2004 border survey.

- 1) To what extent, would you say the border has affected your business?
Significantly _____
To some extent _____
Not at all _____ (Please skip to question 8)
- 2) On average how would you rate the attitude of the border officials?
Good _____
OK _____
Poor _____
- 3) Since our last questionnaire in 2003 has the attitude of the border officials,
Improved _____
Stayed the same _____
Became worse _____
- 4) On average do your customers experience hostile or offensive treatment?
Majority of the time _____
A few times _____
Never _____
- 5) Since our last questionnaire in 2003 has hostile or offensive treatment,
Increased _____
Stayed the same _____
Decreased _____
- 6) On average how would your customers rate the overall experience at the border?
Better than expected _____
OK _____
Worse than expected _____
- 7) Since our last questionnaire in 2003 has the border experience,
Improved _____
Stayed the same _____
Became worse _____
- 8) Have your customers been affected by the potato or other issues? Yes ___ No ___
- 9) Have your customers been affected by a minor criminality issue? Yes ___ No ___
- 10) Which border do your customers use? (Please use % in each if more than one)
Rainy River ____, Fort Frances ____, Pigeon River ____, Sault Ste. Marie ____, Sarnia ____, Windsor ____,
Niagara Falls ____, Gananoque ___ Other _____
- 11) What percent of your customers are American? ____
- 12) If you have lost customers due to incidents at the border, in the last two years, what would you estimate is the dollar figure lost **per year**? _____

If you have any particular incident that you would like to share, **you can use the incident report form on this web site.**
We would sure like to hear about it and pass it on to government.

Your lodge Name _____
Nearest Major Town _____