

Chapleau Economic Development Strategy

The Chapleau Regional Development Corporation, Chapleau Community Adjustment Committee, and the Township of Chapleau, working with residents of Chapleau and subject matter experts, have developed a strategic plan for 2005-2007. The following are the projects that have been identified as priority for the Town (the projects are not in order of priority):

1. Tourism: We'll Drive You Wild!
 - a. Marketing: packaging tours (expansion of current businesses)
 - b. Crown Game Preserve infrastructure: phase 2 (see details below)
 - c. Cottages
 - d. Artists & cottage industries/home-based businesses
 - e. Trails & other tourism infrastructure: walking, ATV, beautification of downtown
2. Energy
 - a. Co generation expansion
 - b. Biofuels
3. Biomass & Value-Added
 - a. Slash & waste: fire logs, pellets, wood plastics
 - b. Value-added wood products: under study
 - c. Underutilized species: cedar mill
 - d. Non-timber forest products: blueberries, fireweed, Canada Yew, aromatic oils
4. Quality of Life
 - a. Telecommunication
 - b. Science Village
 - c. Training & Education Centre

1. Tourism

There are approximately 72 tourism businesses and organizations in Chapleau. Tourism is an export-oriented industry, catering to the needs of clients outside the Chapleau area who inject new money into the Chapleau economy. The development of the Crown Game Preserve could bring about new opportunities to expand the array of services and attract new tourists. Eventually, it will allow new services to be launched and create new jobs. There may be opportunities for seasonal businesses in the food and gift industry to meet the needs of tourists. Once the influx of tourists is more stable throughout the year, these businesses may find it worthwhile to be opened year-round. The Crown Game Preserve project would encourage the following:

- ❑ Guiding services to see wildlife, educational tours on herbs and forest foods, guiding for canoe trips, for walking and biking tours, snowmobile tours, and ATV tours;
- ❑ Food services for picnics in the Preserve;
- ❑ Souvenir items on the Preserve, photos services;
- ❑ Specialty tours such as in hot air balloons, helicopters;
- ❑ Special events in the Crown Game Preserve (races, treasure hunting, etc.);
- ❑ Investment for canopy tours;
- ❑ Research camp on wildlife;
- ❑ Children's camp;
- ❑ Non-timber forest product collection and manufacturing;
- ❑ Science Centre.

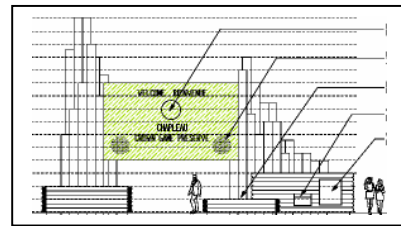
One of the largest assets of the Preserve is its wildlife and there more than five times the inventory of wildlife in the CGP compared to other Northern Ontario forests. Up to 2004, this asset was virtually un-used. The CRDC performed an assessment of opportunities in the late 1990s and put forward a funding proposal to start developing the Preserve in 2003. In 2004, the Corporation was granted funding from NOHFC and FedNor. The cornerstones of phase one for the Preserve were:

- ✓ Signage
 - Entrance/gateway signage
 - In-Preserve directional and interpretive signage
 - Out-of-Preserve marketing signage
- ✓ Products in the Preserve
 - Research on wildlife territory patterns and identification of best viewing areas
 - Bear viewing platforms
 - Moose licks
 - Development of training binders to eco-tourism and wildlife viewing guides
 - Working with local guides to develop new products and services
 - Small paths and interpretive areas in the Preserve
- ✓ Marketing

A biologist was hired to identify the movement patterns of larger game in the Preserve so that viewing platforms could be developed for photo safaris. One of the existing guiding operations was starting wildlife viewing vacations and became the pilot project partner with the CRDC. Additional guides are expected to join the project in 2005. The guides will be provided with training material and will become responsible for the bating, security of tourists, management of the wildlife resources, booking tours, and maintaining the sites.

Interpretive sites were signed and the CRDC developed some small access paths leading to interpretive or viewing sites, or to allow tourists to get out of their cars and reach specific locations.

The Preserve is very large and because there are a variety of activities that are permitted, such as logging, it is not obvious where the Preserve begins. The CRDC received funding to develop a clear sign indicating the start of the journey and a location where they can stop to obtain maps and brochures.



Marketing billboards: The Crown Game Preserve needed to be advertised on highways to encourage tourists to investigate and potentially come back for a visit which would incorporate a trip into the Preserve. In 2004, the CRDC installed three billboards at the connecting point of the three highways coming into Chapleau. In 2005, the CRDC has four new billboards posted around Sault Ontario, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and Ottawa.

Directional signs: The Crown Game Preserve was signed with approximately 40 directional signs on one of the main arteries in 2004, and more than 100 others in 2005. There are more needs for signage: there are many logging road in the Preserve and tourists can possibly get lost. In addition, as more products are offered in the Preserve, the directional signs let the tourist know of upcoming interpretive areas, lakes, picnic areas, and other products.



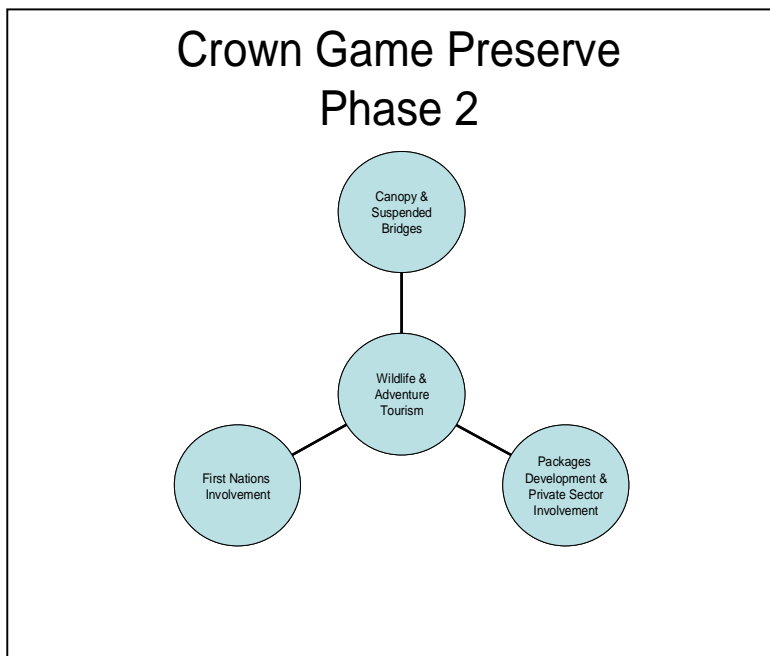
Interpretive signs: The Crown Game Preserve has a lot of history and wildlife that should be explained. Already, the CRDC develop six interpretive signs in both official languages and placed in picnic and sightseeing areas and more will added in 2005. The CRDC has also developed small paths to beaver lodges, along lakes, and in scenic areas where interpretive signs could be posted.



Viewing platforms: Three viewing platforms installed in the Crown Game Preserve, and a fourth platform is available on private land. Two of the platforms are baited to improve the possibility of viewing wildlife. The baited platforms are guided by experienced outfitters who provided a well-rounded experience to tourists. (Please note that the picture below is not on location, it represent the partially completed platforms at the construction site).



In Phase two of the Crown Game Preserve (commencing in 2006), the CRDC would like to see more private sector development including canopy tours, suspended bridges, a spa, First Nations development, and more.



The CRDC is also working with private sector for the potential development of cottages on three lakes located on private land.

Finally, Chapleau is home to a number of artists and could develop several tourism programs including festivals, studio tours, develop more themes around artists in Town, and help artists to sell their products online.

2. Energy

The current co-generation plant was having problems provisioning fibre to meet its operating requirements. It is currently supplying heat to Tembec and electricity on the grid. The co-generation could double in size but would need a substantial amount of fibre. The expansion of the co-generation may well become a substantial advantage for Chapleau in guaranteeing its long-term survival. In the last year, they utilized tree tops and found it a valuable product. The suggestion was to study the feasibility of collecting and processing tree tops for the co-generation, especially the wood fibre currently being left on the side of roads by forestry companies. In addition, recent changes to the forestry industry structure may provide new opportunities for the expansion of the cogen plant.

Bio-fuels are a new research project for Ontario and Chapleau has requested to become part of the evaluation mechanism. It has some infrastructure and resources to offer to the project and is currently discussing opportunities with MNR and other players.

3. Biomass and Value Added

Cedar: Chapleau is asking the Minister to fully support the implementation of one cedar mill in Northeastern Ontario located in Chapleau. This includes committing that the wood basket will be set aside for a viable cedar mill in Chapleau and grant the Forest Resource Processing Facility License. The community fully stands behind Chapleau Cree First Nation at this time, who are leading this project.

Value-added: Northern Ontario has suffered the downsizing of its primary industry for some time. Rationalization and technological improvements have taken jobs away that have not yet been replaced. The Province of Ontario has subsidized many reports and conferences to find ways to create new jobs and employment in value-added wood production, creating new derivatives, using under-utilized wood species, biotechnology, and innovation. Chapleau is currently studying the feasibility of using biomass and would like an opportunity to encourage smaller entrepreneurs to develop jobs in value added. If other fibre is made available, Chapleau would like an opportunity to encourage employment for small value-added producers and have some decision-making power over allocations. Chapleau would also like the opportunity to develop other non-traditional wood species, free of the onerous government system currently in place. New

industry changes is making other types of wood and wood products available and Chapleau is interested in investigating new value-added products including remanufacturing, and component production.

Non-timber forest products: Blueberries are an example of a project that Chapleau would have liked to undertake but land could not be found for the project. Biofuels, Canada Yew, and Fireweed are other projects under study. There are some changes required in current industry and government practices and policy for which Chapleau needs provincial assistance. For example, the Province owns an old tree nursery with a building that could be used for refrigeration and the municipality has asked to take over this facility. Chapleau would like the Province to transfer this asset for future development to the Town of Chapleau. In addition, Chapleau needs access to some land to encourage blueberry production. Most of the land is being used by forestry companies and the government must help Chapleau to free some small segments for this project.

4. Quality of Life

Telecommunication: Chapleau is working with Bell and Nortel to establish the first Canadian Community Demonstration of Telecommunication Technology. Project Chapleau has been equipped with broadband and is showcasing applications in health, learning, e-government, business applications, entertainment, and more.

Chapleau is also working to increase access to education and learning through a post-secondary education facility, a science laboratory, and a video production facility.

Studies

Four studies were undertaken utilizing primarily funds received from FedNor, but also some funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and the Far Northeast Training Board:

1. Forest biomass: to identify the cost of using treetops and underutilized biomass for value-added activities;
2. Non-timber forest products: to evaluate the feasibility of three products through an inventory of supply and a preliminary estimation of demand or use;
3. Cottages: to undertake a first phase feasibility study of establishing high-end cottages in partnership with private sector;
4. Skills inventory: to develop, distribute and assess the skills of current Chapleau residents to identify strengths, potential clusters, and training and development interest of residents.

Studies are available to potential investors by calling the CRDC at (705) 864-2077.