

VEOC Discussion Highlights

for

Newboro to Rideau Ferry

For outdoor enthusiasts, the big water experiences of the Rideau Lakes and the neighbouring Newboro Indian and Clear Lakes are spectacular experience opportunities. In combination with the Chaffeys to Jones Falls locks segment, this central portion of the Corridor affords an outstanding array of opportunities to comprehend the natural and engineering heritage of Colonel By's historic canal building achievement.

These portions of the Rideau Canal's distinctive aquatic character are set amongst a natural and cultural landscape which expresses the diversity of lifestyles and communities which contributed to the creation of the Canal and subsequently derive much of their history and current realities from the Canal's existence and use.

The recreational centre of the Corridor the lake environments of this Reach are a mecca for boaters from near and far. The surrounding landscapes afford a complementary array of land based recreational opportunities within a Canadian Shield environment, including a fringe of the distinctive Frontenac Arch geologic formation. Three major centres for outdoor recreation opportunities are provided by Foley Mountain and Mill Pond conservation areas and Murphy's Point Provincial Park.

The towns and villages which surround the lakes and those a little more distant from the shores are frequently well-known tourism destinations. Travelers are drawn by cultural experience opportunities celebrating community heritage and present lifestyles and by the offer of support services relating to their recreational pursuits. The communities of Westport, Newboro, Rideau Ferry and Portland are principal destinations of travelers from near and far and service centres for permanent and seasonal residents of this Reach and the Corridor at large.

The Newboro and Narrows Locks are perhaps two of the most critical in creating the 'slackwater' character of this Canal – a waterway which might be described as designed to float vessels over obstacles rather than through them.

Within this Reach are the headwaters of the Rideau and Cataraqui river systems – a division point for waters flowing either through the Rideau system to Ottawa or through the Cataraqui system to Kingston. These rivers have a combined watershed of over 5000 square miles.

Due to Colonel By's flooding of portions of both original waterways, some feel these are the youngest waterways in Canada; their rebirth occurring with the Canal's construction.

Exploration Themes

Participants felt that this Reach is a growing destination for outdoor recreationalists living in the surrounding region – particularly the Canal cities of Ottawa and Kingston and the regional municipalities of greater Toronto and Montreal.

Their desire is to raise awareness of the diversity of opportunities for natural and cultural heritage exploration and discovery afforded within this Reach, along with its outstanding recreational opportunities for leisure travelers of water and land based routes.

In general, participants identified a number of exploration themes which they felt would be of interest in particular to Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers. These included exploring and discovering areas which feature:

- Slackwater – its implications on navigation & natural resources
- Diverse shoreline environments and habitats of the big lakes
- Wandering Shield landscapes & biospheres
- Experiencing the Serenities of protected natural areas
- Rideau, a migration route for people and fauna
- Meeting the “people” of the lakes district of the Corridor
- Artisans and Music and Tastes of the Rideau
- Natural forces shape the Rideau’s human heritage and contemporary lifestyles ...
 - Rideau architecture & ruins
- Rideau mines, quarries, boat building and milling
- Insights into the creation and operation of Canal

They felt that this Reach could play an important role in facilitating guest connection with many of the heritage themes identified for the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor as a whole. In particular, the Reach can be a lead conveyor of experience opportunities relating to the following themes (see integrated VEOC theme outline for more details):

Canal Heritage

- Insight into design and development challenges - the ingenuity of canal builders
 - Narrows & Newboro locks
- “Slackwater canal” passing over mountain – Newboro to Jones Falls
- Human modification of watersheds - “slackwater” and what it took to make it

Community Heritage

- Westport, Newboro, Portland Rideau Ferry “canal community life”
 - evolving social & economic heritage
 - museum and living heritage
- Founders of the Rideau Corridor: settlers, canal builders, industrialists
- Rideau agricultural heritage and evolving economies - Westport area vineyard and winery
- Rideau transportation of goods and people heritage
 - barge building and sunken ships experience
- Rideau Canal, a unique, yet representative piece of Canadiana – nostalgic heritage of tourism

Connecting with People of the Rideau

- Rideau Corridor artisans - Westport and Rideau Ferry arts, food, music,
- Heritage Masonry , artifacts and artistry, quarries and transshipment
- Rideau boat builders and navigators: Portland marina and boats; barges; Rideau Queen
 - Potter’s, Ayling’s, Krausenowski
- Fishing guides and storytellers - Newboro famous guides and fishermen
- Rideau cottage & boat houses Architecture - who , why, architecture

- Heritage of Rideau tourism and recreation
 - Colonel By Island, Rideau Ferry, Portland and Newboro

Natural Resource Heritage Exploration

- Landscapes of Corridor - Canadian Shield and Frontenac Arch geology and ecology
- Natural and modified Cataraqui & Rideau river and lake systems
- Corridor's evolving terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems
 - Biodiversity of plants and explore species at risk
- Corridor forests, plants - land and water ecosystems
- Corridor wildlife - resident and migratory - bird watching and sanctuaries
- Fish hatchery – milking fish and moving them along
- Serenity of mornings and evenings - sun rise / sun set
- Night skies - stars and northern lights
- Kayaking backwaters and secluded shorelines
- Geological formations. Red Rock, Foley Mountain, Mining, Mica mines, How the geology changes, Geological zones of the Rideau.

Human Heritage in Natural Environments

- Water is the life blood of Rideau - its lifestyles, communities, economies,
- Experiencing the solitude of remote lakes and streams
- Sport fishing heritage of Rideau and Cataraqui watersheds
- Wandering the trails and waterways through a diversity of natural environments
- Urban escape to Rideau Corridor's natural serenity
- Rideau is a natural and popular migration route for fauna and human
- Maple trees and maple syrup - fall colours

Existing Experience Resources & Opportunities

- People - who can relay heritage: fishing guides, locks people, artisans, performers
- Places - historic, natural and cultural landscapes, communities
- Special places - community festivals, seasonal celebrations “sugaring off” harvest festivals
- Places to overnight in authentic environments - lock stations, parks
- Parks and conservation areas - link the opportunities, programs and services
- Wild lands and remote reaches of the waterway
- Existing trails - water routes - abandon transportation routes - wharves - buildings
- Underwater natural and cultural resources - flooded forests - ships, ruins, mines
- Multi-modal land based trails - integrate existing networks - Cataraqui trail
- Fishing guides, boat builders and navigators, locks keeper, farmers and foresters
- Community events and lifestyles - markets, walks, vantage points,

Desired Images for this Reach and Corridor

Discussion participants felt that at this time, this specific Reach of the Rideau Canal has little or no general image in the minds of potential Canadians and international guests.

In the minds of regional and Corridor residents the images relate to “big lake” recreation – boating and fishing and to shopping for travelers (Kilborn’s) and cottage service centres.

They felt that an image associated with the City of Ottawa portion of the Canal – one of “Boats and Skaters” is the most prevalent image associated with the Rideau Canal. They desire to adjust both of these image situations.

Corridor Image

In regards to the Corridor as a whole, participants felt it is and should be positioned as “a heritage district like no other in Canada”.

The images of the Corridor should convey:

- Cradle of Canada – a Canadiana treasure – living history
- Two Capitals in building our Nation
- Rideau Canal – a Canadian achievement recognized world-wide
- A transect of Canada’s core landscape features in 200 kilometers
- Vibrant waterfront communities and shoreline activities
- Differences in nature and culture around every bend
- Multi-modal WHS exploration opportunities
- Year round ‘recreational and exploration opportunities’
- Safe and accessible waters and landscapes
- Multi day destination or multiple one day trips
- Leisure travel at heart of Rideau’s current identity

In regards to this specific Reach, the participants felt the future tourism image should incorporate the following elements:

- Safe and accessible waters – top of Rideau Canal’s watersheds
- Surrounding landscapes are spectacular natural settings in all seasons
- Vibrant waterfront communities and shoreline activities – yet small, intimate and authentic
- Home of diversity of artistic talents and artisans – expressed in our communities and lifestyles
- Music centre of Rideau ... numerous festivals and special events ...vibrant culturally
- Weekend getaway, relaxing and fun
- Destination, worth the drive. Compelling, a must-see - sensory rich
- Recognized as part of Canadiana
- A great place to live

Desired Outcomes of Contributing to the VEOC Discussions

Discussion participants expressed the following desired outcomes and/or opportunities for change:

Economic vibrancy

One focus of the discussions was on enhancing the economic vibrancy of tourism throughout the Corridor and within the tourism communities which serve as hosts of guests from near and far. A concern was expressed that the perceived seasonality of tourism opportunities within this Reach, in particular, and to other non-urban portions of the Corridor, was too strongly tied to the boating season and boaters.

The desired was that in future land based travelers and experience opportunities in all seasons would be complementary images and realities of the tourism district and in particular the host communities of this Reach.

Diversify and grow markets by providing service offers and experience opportunities are the desired outcomes.

Greater draw on local talent & resources ... grow Small and Medium Size Entrepreneurs

It was recognized that growing the experience opportunities afforded to guests and assisting them in connecting with the nature, culture and lifestyles of the Reach will require growth and diversity in the service offer supporting guests. Participants saw opportunity for local people possessing knowledge and insight into the heritages of the Reach to come to the fore in assisting guest explorations and discoveries. They saw greater call upon local artisans and performing artists – and related venues for these people – to bring vibrancy to community experience opportunities.

Host and be fabulous at it

The desire to move beyond travel service centres to becoming experiential travel destinations and exploration launch points was seen to be in part founded upon adopting the role of hosts and seeing guests as much more than customers. Participants felt the need to invest in and 'walk the talk' of being hosts; and seek recognition for being much more than service providers and sales outlets. They looked to converting the culture of community and Corridor tourism interests to adopting the host culture.

Get the word out

Building upon desired change and growth in experience opportunities and the hosting culture, participants felt that word of this change needed to be strategically and consistently communicated within regional and more distant markets.

Effective communications were said to require a clarified and well-managed branding and images of the Reach and the Corridor as a whole. The profile of leisure travel and experiential tourism within this Reach and the Corridor needed to be strategically raised and diversified.

The focus of messaging must be upon responding to and motivating travel by selected traveler types through enhancements and innovations of experience opportunities and leisure recreation and travel opportunities.

Enhance awareness of our opportunities

Enhance awareness of our resources and opportunities by guests, hosts and residents. It was recognized that few amongst us knew the scope of current and potential experience opportunities for our guests. It was felt that all hosts needed a more full and first-hand knowledge of Reach and related Reach resources and opportunities to properly advise and motivate guests. Sharing knowledge was seen to be essential.

As an extension of growing host knowledge, it was recognized that ways and means must be put in place to grow guest awareness and interests in our natural and cultural heritage and leisure recreation opportunities. New and enhanced techniques will be required to inform, influence and involve guests.

Understanding and responding to guest values, interests and travel traits was a key to building awareness and engagement.

In simplistic terms it was suggested, our messages need to motivate boaters to explore the surrounding landscapes and communities; and in turn motivate land based travelers to explore the lakes, rivers and wetlands of the Reach and Corridor.

Sustainable tourism must be our ethic

While economic vibrancy of communities is a goal and recognized as a critical element in being a sustainable tourism destination, it was further recognized that complementary attention must be paid by hosts and guests to environmentally sound and culturally acceptable appreciation of our natural and cultural heritage and contemporary living realities. This balance is the foundation of sustainability. Hosts and guests must be continually aware of this goal and its requirements.

Have a shared direction

In order to harness our collective capacities and achieve more than we can individually achieve, the participants recognized the need for a “shared direction and set of achievable goals”. This was deemed applicable to the Reach and as well to the Corridor, as a whole.

Participants recognized the need to build a strategic course of action to capitalize upon our strengths in responding to the values and interests of priority guests. This direction was seen to guide product development and subsequently its marketing and promotion.

We are in it together – collaborate and complement

Both having a shared direction and realizing the plan in collaboration with others, through actions which complement those of others are essential in the Reach and throughout the Corridor. Cross-selling, packaging, referral and other techniques to unify or at least integrate the hosts in supporting guests was a desired outcome.

Paradigm Shifters

With these outcomes and objectives in mind, participants shared some fundamental changes in how guests could be hosted and the tourism industry enhanced with consequent benefits to local communities and residents.

Lock station lands become “gathering points”

Lock stations will become for land based guests and as well “epicentres” for boaters and land based travelers exploring the communities, nearby natural and cultural landscapes and attractions. It was envisioned that new and existing multi-modal trail networks would link these gathering points to communities and other attractions. The multi-use lock station lands would be a stage for disseminating information and launching explorers with land and water based rental equipment, guides and guidance.

Floating stage moving along corridor

To enhance the vibrancy of communities and their waterfronts and perhaps in proximity to gathering points, such as locks, it was suggested a floating stage could be used to support performances by local talent and support special events and festivals. It was identified that such a barge exists and might be brought to the Corridor in support of Corridor-long series of events. It could be a stage for a moving performance relating to the heritage of the Corridor and / or a stage for communities to bring to life their specific stories.

Rideau resort and conference centre

It was suggested that the lack of a major accommodation facility sufficient to accommodate large group tours and conference like gatherings was a limitation on realizing the potential of this Reach and the Corridor. It was envisioned such a facility would be an attraction in itself, with associated culinary and leisure recreational experiences. Development of such a facility was seen to radically alter the hosting capacity of the Corridor and nearby Reaches.

Expand the focus of hosts and guests to include land based experiences

The participants felt the current image and in fact experience opportunities were too focused upon water based experiences and boaters. The proposal was to develop complementary compelling opportunities for land based experiences throughout the four seasons. The locks were seen as a four season experience opportunity; as were festivals, trails, and heritage accommodations.

It was felt this would reduce the reliance upon boaters in the future of the Reach’s and Corridor’s tourism industry.

Municipalities adopt / support portions of canal

Building on a discussion of the Town of Perth’s support of Tay Canal operations, it was seen that municipalities have potential to support in part the cost of operations and maintenance of the Canal and locks which bring them guests. It was recognized that tourism operators derive considerable revenues from canal users and observers – boaters and land use travelers. Without the locks and canal use, considerable loss of revenue and viability of tourism businesses would be encountered. It was therefore, suggested that ways and means might be investigated to derive revenue from guests and hosts to support enhanced canal operations and experiences for corridor guests.

Simplify lockage fees

In relation to augmenting direct and indirect revenues to support lock operations, it was suggested that ways and means needed to be found to simplify or perhaps reduce and remove lockage fees.

Rideau heritage district RTO and tourism industry leadership body

Building upon the desired outcome of a shared sense of direction and collaborative commitment to the growth of tourism throughout the Corridor and within this Reach, it was suggested that a single body comprising members of the private, public and non-profits sectors of the tourism industry be established to lead and manage the enhancement and innovation of tourism products and services and their marketing and promotion. The concept envisioned a new RTO emerging from parts of the three existing RTO's responsible for respective portions of the Corridor. Parks Canada would be an active contributor to the direction setting and realization.

Rejuvenate Opinicon Lodge for Canada's youth organizations

While perhaps in the past, the Corridor's premier resort and meeting facility; the Opinicon was seen as a potential youth training centre for growing the hospitality industry within the Corridor. The school would be a potential source of **Rideau Ambassadors** – trained to host guests through informing and influencing their explorations.

Oz bus (Australian concept)

Create opportunity for young adults to get together and explore and have different experiences in packages - Iconic trips offered to colleges. Create opportunities for youth to come for overnights. Make the Corridor more fun and up to date.

Some Compelling Opportunities within Reach

- Colonel By Island and Cow Island events
- Lost Lake, Turtle Island, Clear Lake rocks, Rocky Narrows, Bellows Bay
- Boating on our lakes and exploring their coves and islands
- Spy Rock - Macro views of our lands and waters from high vantage points
- Narrows Lock – great opportunity for children and passive observers
- Silver Queen Mine - Interpretive walk and exploration of mine
- Mill Pond and Foley Mountain Conservation Areas
- Bedford Mills, old mill, rock outcrops, waterway
- Ruins, old buildings, boathouses, cottages, wharfs
- Westport museum,
- Lally homestead - Archeology site
- Sounds of the Rideau water lapping, loons and herons.
- Boat access camping opportunities - solitude and exclusivity of place
- Dog sleigh in Newboro, snowshoeing, skiing Foley Mountain, Portland skating
- Kilborn's and Westport
- Farmer's market.
- Trans Canada Trail (Rideau) and Cataraqui Trail
- Rideau Ferry Beach and conservation areas

Enhancement & Innovations For Reach Specific Experience Opportunities

Improving Experience Opportunities

Having identified the potential exploration themes and subjects of interest for the explorers and having assessed the desired exploration opportunities and their current quality and availability, the VEOC discussion participants

- First turned their attention to enhancing existing opportunities, programs, services and infrastructure provided by host communities and tourism attractions and services;
- Then focused their attention on identifying innovative experience opportunities and related support programs and services.

Each of the nine explorer types was considered separately, although it was recognized and noted that many of the suggested improvements would be valued by a number of the explorer types. Tweaking an idea or improvement had the potential to make it of value to more than the explorer types it was identified to facilitate.

It is anticipated that the following “enhancements and innovations” will be approached in a collaborative manner involving complementary action and investment by all sectors of the tourism industry.

An Integrated Set of Enhancements and Innovations

A review of the enhancements and innovations identified for this Reach reveals the following framework of ideas for improving guest experience opportunities and the service offered by their hosts. These enhancements and innovations are gathered under a framework of improvements respecting:

- Guest Information, Welcome and Sense of Arrival
- Cultural Heritage Connection Opportunities
- Natural Heritage Connection Opportunities
- Augmented Appreciation / Passive Observation Opportunities
- Recreation / Relaxation Opportunities
- Accommodation Services and Related Experience Opportunities
- Transportation Services

Guest information, welcome and sense of arrival

The participants of this Reach felt Westport tourism was a leading innovator in the realm establishing a sense of arrival and providing guest information services on demand with their “**Geo-fence**” information system. Web based, this system is activated by guests penetrating an invisible information fence at the boundary; and is then prepared to share information regarding experience opportunities and support services available to guests of the community and surrounding area.

It was recognized that a Corridor-long standard of service and inter-linked set of guest services would be required for efficiency and effectiveness. Thus many ideas listed below were recommended by participants to be Corridor-long concepts.

Discussion participants recognized the importance of communicating a clear sense of welcome and arrival - a welcome which would communicate the diverse array of natural and cultural heritage experiences opportunities afforded throughout the Reach.

Enhanced hosting capacities

In order to meet “locals know” advice expectations of guests, participants were enthusiastic that “front line” members of the tourism community needed to have a comprehensive knowledge of the Reach’s diverse experience opportunities and effective means to share this information with guests.

To this end, they suggested the following investments in **staff knowledge development**:

- Provide staff with opportunities to acquire first-hand knowledge of the experience opportunities and knowledge of the tourism services afforded throughout the Reach
- Provide special training for staff to enhance hosting capacities and to enhance their awareness and understanding of how to support various types of guests (EQ based)
- Building upon the Westport experience, establish a web-based network of information with front-line terminals throughout the Reach to support the dissemination of accurate and up to date travel and experience opportunity information
- Equip front-line staff with the information and capacities to create travel experience packages and to cross-sell, refer guests to other experience opportunities and service providers.

In a similar vein, assisting staff in adopting a “**host / guest**” culture was a priority and to this end provision of information and training was a priority. The concept of developing concierge-like capacities was seen as a measure of success.

Developing “**menus of experience opportunities**” for different EQ types of guests was identified as an early opportunity to enhance hosting capacities throughout the Reach. Similar action at the Corridor level was anticipated supporting Corridor-long guidance and support.

Contemporary Communications

It was recognized that the Reach and Corridor will require a contemporary set of communication capabilities to inform and influence guests in their exploration and appreciation of this Reach and its many experience opportunities.

Website

The Reach’s attractions and service providers, collectively the hosting team, wish to be a part of a Corridor-long website to communicate their service offer and unique experience opportunities. This website will support networking amongst hosts to better welcome and support guests travelling throughout the Corridor.

QR code post network

Within communities, at major attractions and along popular travel routes by foot, bicycle and water craft, it was envisioned that QR coded information posts could be established to assist guests in connecting with the natural and cultural significance of their location.

Rideau “App”

An extension of the Website would be an “app” which guests could use throughout their travels to connect with the Corridor website or to connect with a specific Reach attraction, service provider or experience opportunity. These are desired by Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers, No Hassle Travelers and Free Sprits.

Information distribution terminals

A selected Network of terminals at locks, heritage attractions, recreation areas and gathering places in communities and throughout the Reach could be developed to provide information on demand to guests. These are essential for No Hassle Travelers and Gentle Explorers.

Web-cam network

For trip planning within the Reach and Corridor-long, it was suggested that a strategic network of web-cams could be established to support guests in their decision-making and to support hosts in advising guests of the places they might choose to explore.

Sense of Arrival

Discussions focussed upon the guests need to have a sense of arrival and a sense of orientation to the attractions, services and opportunities throughout the Reach.

Signage

The participants suggested that signage throughout the Reach and Corridor is at times confusing and inconsistent. The existence of a collage of signing at the Corridor, county, municipality and attraction / service level adds to guest confusion. They recommended a common-look and messaging be used throughout the Reach and the Corridor. They felt a Corridor-long shared branding and marketing strategy would assist in this regard.

Network of information outlets

Contributors discussed the establishment of staffed and automated information distribution outlets for travelers. These would have a common look and capacity, the automated versions being possibly “smart-boards” with 24-7 capacities to disseminate and print out information to guests. This would build upon and complement the Westport Geo-fence service.

Vested ambassadors

It was discussed that a common or integrated look to information providers working from guest information centres throughout the Corridor and Reach and roaming in communities and popular gathering places would be welcomed by first time guests.

Please note – Following the title of an enhancement or innovation, there is a forecasted indication of which explorer types may be attracted to this type of opportunity or service. The types in bold are likely most attracted, and others are identified as having some interest.

Enhancement and Innovations of Reach’s Cultural Heritage Experience Opportunities

Discussion participants identified the following innovations and enhancements to support guests in connecting with the authentic character of this Reach’s people, places, communities, history and heritage.

Rejuvenation of Colonel By Island (CE, AE, B, FS, NHT, PHT, R,)

Perhaps one of the most infamous places within the Corridor, it was suggested that guests and hosts could initially combine their efforts to rejuvenate the heritage resources on the Island.

The restoration might be oriented to making this special place an opportunity for special “social” events celebrating its previous colorful residents and their social gatherings.

An annual series of social events could be hosted by private sector facilitators. These might include costumed parties and events, celebrations of specific residents, such as Al Capone, seasonal celebration dances in Spring, Summer and Fall.

The Island could also be established as a special opportunity for “overnight experiences”. Guests could arrive by their own boats or be conveyed to the Island as a part of an outfitted experience.

Celebration of boat builders and heritage boats (CE, B, AE, PHT, NHT, GE, R,)

The design of boats and the rationale behind these designs intrigues both boaters and boat observers. Learning from notable boat designers of the Rideau Lakes and the Canal as a whole would be a valued opportunity for both Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers – to say nothing of boat buffs. Access to boat design and maintenance facilities along the shores of the Rideau Lakes for non-boaters would be a privileged opportunity. Combine this with taking the boat onto the water with its designer or a knowledgeable navigator would add to the understanding of the design and its rationale.

Rejuvenation of “regattas” (NHT, GE, B, CE, AE, FS, R)

The Rideau Ferry “regatta” rejuvenation may be a model to learn from. It was suggested that rejuvenating the “parade of boats” events at a series of vantage points along the Corridor and recommending special vantage points with presentation programs would be a season long opportunities to celebrate this aspect of the Rideau’ heritage. Venues such as Newboro, Chaffeys, Merrickville and Smith Falls might be excellent stages for these heritage boat celebrations.

Collectable pennants (GE, B, NHT, FS)

It was suggested that the opportunity to purchase a pennant to fly from a ship’s mast indicating the ship and its captain had navigate a particular Reach of the Corridor might prove a source of pride and indirectly an awareness building opportunity. For those travelling the length of the Corridor and gathering a collection of these pennants, there might be an added indication of the voyage for the ship’s captain and his vessel.

Uniquely position individual locks (CE, AE, B, PHT, NHT, GE,)

It was suggested during this Reach's discussions, that it might be strategic to uniquely position the cultural heritage of selected locks within the series of forty-nine locks making up the Canal system. This would recognize and present, that while the engineering of the lock and its design to overcome physical challenges may be address similar ways, there are also many unique human heritage stories associated with individual locks. These might include the relationship between locks and nearby mills drawing power and water from the same source, the lock masters and members of the nearby communities who built and operated the locks, the stories behind the development and operation of the locks from both a social and economic perspective.

Narrows Lock experiences for children (NHT, CE, AE, GE, PHT,)

It was suggested that the 'boat busy' Narrows Lock may possess unique qualities due to its setting on the causeway in the middle of the Rideau Lakes. The experience opportunity could be designed for young families with opportunities for parents and children to gain an understanding of the lock operation through a child size model of the lock and a model demonstrating the purpose of damming this water to raise water levels sufficiently to 'create the slackwater' condition essential to passing over the Newboro lands.

This same location was considered ideal for Gentle Explorers and Rejuvenators to quietly observe the operations for passage of vessels through this lock in a setting of serenity in the middle of the Lakes.

Newboro Lock experiences (CE, AE, B, NHT, GE,)

Readily accessible to land based travelers, this modernized operation presents an innovative perspective on locking operations. The natural setting of the Lock is an excellent opportunity to convey the natural challenges over with engineering ingenuity.

Locking through Newboro Lock (All)

The opportunity to lock through a lock was thought to be an iconic opportunity for land based travelers. While some locking through experiences of multi-lock descents might be an all-day adventure, the single lock at Newboro may provide leisure travelers and learners seeking to understand the challenges of lock designers and their ingenuities with a brief experience opportunity. This might be a special opportunity at the opening and closing of the operating season.

Newboro waterfront (GE, R, NHT, PHT, CE, AE, R,)

This busy waterfront presents a special opportunity to observe the sport fishing heritage of the Newboro and lower lakes. Perhaps opportunities to speak with and observe fishing guides; or to be taken to a shore dining experience of local fish and farm products.

Murphy's Point, Silver Queen mine site (AE, CE, B, NHT, PHT)

It was suggested that this cultural heritage site could become flag ship destination for interpreting both the geologic and industrial heritage of the Reach and Corridor. This would require and enhancement in the quality of interpretation, improvement in interactive activities and perhaps, more interpretive staff.

Artisan network (All)

Throughout this Reach and the Corridor in general there is a growing diversity of artisans celebrating heritage techniques or employing contemporary media and focused upon an array of artistic themes. Studio tours and on-site experiences are especially important to Buffs and Cultural Explorers and Authentic Experiencers. However, markets and other gathering displays of artisan skills and products will

meet the desires of Gentle Explorers and No Hassle Travelers. Heritage products festival celebrating tinsmiths, blacksmith, cooper, village concept, roots, traditions, link communities, distiller, etc. could be a year-long set of compelling experiences for special interest travelers.

Artist in residence – artistic retreats to special places (CE, B, R, AE,)

It was suggested that some Cultural Explorers, Rejuvenators and art Buffs would relish opportunities to learn from an artist and travel to special places within the Reach or Corridor to capture the natural or cultural heritage of the setting. An array of artistic mediums provides a foundation for a complementary array of artistic retreats and learning experiences.

Tastes of the Rideau (All)

Themed adventures in foraging forests and wetlands or harvesting crops from farms could be combined with culinary learning and dining experiences in heritage places to reveal the food heritage of the Reach and the Corridor. In a similar vein, the culinary artisans of today, including the wine makers newly established in proximity to Westport offer a contemporary look at the tastes of the Rideau. This type of experience opportunity might be taken into the lakes and rivers of the reach to experience the catching of fish and other aquatic resources, their local preparation and dining in unique shore locations.

These culinary adventures could be complemented by opportunities to dine at the water's edge or on the water.

Founding families (CE, PHT, B,)

Personal History Travelers and Cultural Explorers will welcome lists of founding families, genealogical records, school, birth and death records, which could be gathered from municipal sources and families who might volunteer to be available expertise to explorers.

Enhancement and Innovations of Natural Heritage Experience Opportunities

As was the case in all of the more rural Reaches of the Corridor, getting onto the water was judged a high priority amongst most types of land and water based explorers.

Inventory of special places (All)

Given the breadth of water bodies in this Reach and the length of shorelines, it was suggested that guests exploring these waters would benefit from an inventory of special places to experience. This guidance might suggest the best times of day, season or year to experience these special places. The inventory could have a framework of natural heritage themes and as appropriate cultural heritage themes of places above and below shorelines, best seen from the water.

Water based exploration routes (AE, CE, NHT, B, NHT, FS),

Building upon this inventory, it was suggested that themed maps and guidance could be developed for explorers of the Rideau Lakes, and linked with similar guidance suggested for neighbouring reaches. These guides would be of value to both boaters and land based travelers renting equipment to explore this and other reaches.

Floating QR code buoys network (AE, CE, NHT, B, NHT, and FS)

Throughout the Lakes, and Corridor as a whole, a network of information buoys could be established at special experience locations to aid guests in understanding the significance of the places and resources – an particularly to aspects and resources less visible to the untrained eye.

Floating platform network (All)

It was suggested that a network of platforms be established along the lake shores and in more remote locations to be used in a number of ways: as night observation points for star gazing; as wildlife and wetland observation points; as swimming platforms for day users.

A network of “shorefast” platforms (All)

It was also suggested that land based travelers, particularly gentle Explorers, Rejuvenators and Authentic Experiencers would value special vantage points from which to observe the lakes and aquatic environments. These two might be equipped with QR coded information posts.

Floating yurts and moored boats for overnight experiences on the water (AE, CE, NHT, R)

These accommodation innovations were seen as ways to bring evening experiences on the water to land based travelers or perhaps to kayakers and canoeists seeking primitive camping opportunities.

Attaching kayaks to pontoon boats for rent (AE, CE, NHT, R,)

It was suggested that Authentic experiencers and Cultural Explorers might appreciate the added dimension of having a kayak to explore with from their mother ship base. This would also apply to house boat rentals. Bicycles might also be added to the boat rental packages to support complementary land based explorations.

Getting guests on to lakes and rivers (All)

Perhaps as many, or more, explorers travel the roads, bike ways and trails of this Reach as do boaters travel the waterways; yet the water is the magnet for all explorers. Participants suggested that finding ways and means to get land based travelers onto the lakes and rivers of the Reach would be highly valued and a revenue generator for those hosts that make this feasible. It was suggested that increasing opportunities for guests to **rent** powered and non-power water crafts would be an important enhancement of guest opportunities. Similarly offering **touring opportunities** for guests would provide the added benefit of informed presentations and local knowledge of the best experience opportunities under a number of natural heritage themes.

Pick up & drop off service for kayakers & canoeists (AE, CE, NHT, B, FS,)

It was suggested that arrangements might be made to assist boaters in launching their crafts at one location and be able to be picked up at another location – the same day or after multiple days. For example, renting or launching owned or rented kayaks at Westport and being picked up at Rideau Ferry, Newboro or Portland or farther down or upstream in another Reach.

This service might be linked with a Corridor-long land based shuttle service noted later in the “transportation” innovations.

Expanded network of water access points for boats (AE, CE, B, NHT, FS, PHT, R,)

It was suggested that an expanded network of water access facilities for boaters, canoeists and kayakers could be created; with associated parking and launch facilities at locks or communities. Perhaps, each of the launch points could be associated with a set of aquatic environment exploration themes and guidance.

Expanded guidance & outfitting services (NHT, B, AE, CE)

Well known already for its fishing guides, it was suggested that an expanded network of outfitting services be supported for Newboro and lower lakes. These outfitters and guides could aid guests in exploring the backwaters and less populated stretches of the lakes and rivers. Their knowledge of the waters and shore environments could assist guests in experiencing the less readily visible; and acquiring an accurate understanding of what they have discovered. The guides and outfitters might also support activities such as shore dinners and exploration of nearby shoreline environments.

Underwater viewing devices (NHT, GE, AE, CE)

An extension of the web cam concept, it was suggested that in special habitats, motion activated cameras might be used to reveal aquatic environments and species. As feasible these devices might be attached to touring boats to augment the onboard experience. The Kawartha Voyageur has this capacity for its guests – an extension of its navigation system.

Network of Reach vantage points (All)

Spy Rock a cornerstone of the Reach's network of natural vantage points, provides breathtaking views of the surrounding lakes and woodlands. This type of vantage point accessible by vehicle, foot or water is a prized location of all types of explorers and leisure travelers. Drawing upon 'local knowledge' of valued sites, developing guidance and routes to these points of interest and augmenting some of the experience opportunities with QR coded information posts will motivated wider exploration of the Reach and longer stays.

Network of Rideau chairs (All)

It takes time to connect with the beauty and serenity of special places; to contemplate the natural or cultural landscapes which existed years ago and the evolution which is occurring before one's eyes. A comfortable chair from which to gaze forward across the viewscape or upwards into night skies will be appreciated by all types of guests. It was suggested that a network of chairs and contemplation points be developed throughout the reach and Corridor. These sites might include, for example: at the Reach's two locks, unique or spectacular natural settings such as atop Spy Rock, Mill Pond and Foley Mountain conservation areas, Rideau Ferry wetlands, wildlife areas, and a host of water's edge vantage points; or within towns and villages such as Westport and Newboro waterfronts Rideau Ferry and Portland marinas heritage places, markets and gardens.

Sky chairs (All)

In some locations, special reclining chairs have been developed to assist guests in star gazing and observing night skies and environments. For group guided programs, the chairs are arranged in a circle; and a knowledgeable speaker assist guests in exploring the night skies and appreciating the less readily apparent.

It was suggested that this type of programming or simply the provision of night observation support could be provided at a network of locations within the Reach on land and water for example at selected lock stations, museum lands, municipal and provincial parks and day use areas.

Augmented Appreciation / Passive Observation Opportunities

Animation of heritage settings (NHT, GE, CE, AE, PHT)

Participants felt that animation of community history and cultural heritage themes in places such as Westport, Portland, Rideau Ferry, and Newboro and in heritage places such as Canal locks, museums

and countryside marketplaces would add to the connection with the people of the Rideau – past and present.

Given the growing demand for heritage experience opportunities, particularly for Gentle Explorers and No Hassle Travelers, who prefer to observe rather than explore and discover, it was suggested that there is opportunity for small and medium size enterprise to populate lock station lands and bring history to life through their animation of events and activities. These performances could be revenue sources for the presenters and the land owners.

Festivals (GE, NHT, CE, PHT, FS)

Interest was expressed in expanding and diversifying festivals within the Reach and linked to Corridor-long cultural heritage themes such as boat building, agriculture, multi-cultural and settlement history and community history and heritage lifestyle events. Building on the festivals hosted by communities, it might be compelling to convene new festivals celebrating natural heritage events or historic events associated with the canal, lakes and rivers in locations associated with the theme, such as at lock stations or in natural settings.

Celebrating founding peoples (CE, PHT, NHT, GE, AE)

Cultural Explorers and Personal History Travelers are drawn to opportunities to connect with and/or experience the heritage lifestyles of the array of peoples who launched the communities and cultural heritage of this Reach and the Corridor in general. Celebrations of millers and their achievements, navigators and boat builders, canal builders and operators, founding community families or landowners might be unique events – the themes of which could vary from year to year, with the celebration location remaining constant.

Rideau stories and storytellers (NHT, GE, PHT, AE, CE, R)

It was suggested in these discussions, that people who have been long-time residents of the Reach and Corridor, or those who can relay in detail their family heritage might be willing to contribute to a “human library” or “speakers bureau”. These knowledgeable and quality speakers could be hired by individual guests or by gatherings of special interests to convey their heritage or that of the Reach and Corridor. They could use special heritage places such as Canal lock stations, heritage museums and other special places as stages and backdrops for their stories.

Web cam network (NHT, GE, AE, CE,)

It has been suggested that a network of web cams could be developed throughout the Corridor to provide remote experience opportunities for guests; who might view the results in guest information centres, on close circuit transmissions to resorts and other accommodation bases or popular gather places.

The web cam network would be designed to facilitate exposure to remote locations, not accessible to most guests – backwaters and inaccessible shorelines of this Reach. To bring the guest indirectly into sensitive habitats not available for direct experiences – wetlands and/or to aid guests in experiencing indirectly underwater environments and submerged heritage resources.

Aerial touring (NHT, AE, FS, GE, PHT)

Complementing guide on water tours and guided land based programs and walks, it was suggested that an aerial view might be best to capture and understanding of the scope of natural challenges that were addressed by canal builders; and similarly the scope of their impact upon the natural drainage systems and forested landscapes which were flooded as a result of Canal modifications of water flow and lake and river levels.

Winter experiences (AE, NHT, FS,)

The frozen surfaces of the Rideau Lakes can host a number of winter-only experience opportunities. For example, dog sledding and skating events are well established at some of this Reach's community waterfronts.

It was suggested that Free Spirits and other outdoor enthusiasts might be compelled by opportunities to ice boat, ice kiting, skating with a sail.

Outfitted winter explorations - In a similar vein, many potential winter guests do not have the experience or equipment to explore the Corridor. Support services and packages could assist.

Enhancement and Innovations of Recreation / Relaxation Opportunities

Water is at the core of the Canal's history and the heritage lifestyles of its peoples and communities and it is the anchor attractions for the largest percentage of Corridor guests. With this in mind, participants suggested a number of enhancements and innovations designed to "get guests onto the water".

Reach specific water tours (NHT, GE, PHT, AE, CE,)

It is anticipated that within this Reach, like most reaches of the Corridor, a compelling water tour could be designed to take land based travellers to water only accessible experience opportunities.

Shore dinners and dining on the water (FS, NHT, GE, AE, CE, PHT)

These outfitted opportunities would offer Free Spirits, Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers unique opportunities to connect with the natural and cultural heritage of the Reach, its guides and fishermen.

Outfitted charters and day adventures (FS, NHT, AE)

Free Spirits and No Hassle escapists spending a vacation in this Reach, perhaps in the communities of Westport, Portland, Rideau Ferry or Newboro may revel in the opportunity to explore the waters of this Reach with the support of captain and crew to navigate them to the most attractive components of the reach and facilitate their exploration and dining experiences.

Guided outings (NHT, GE, PHT, CE, AE)

The growth in use of small non-powered boats will have the potential to bring a growing market of experience seekers to this most spectacular Reach. No Hassle Travellers and to a lesser extent Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers will look to guided tours of rivers and lakes and ventures into wetland environments. The guidance is more for understanding the habitats being traversed rather than for security, yet some will rely upon the leader for orientation and direction.

Inventory of climbing opportunities (FS, B, AE,)

A guide to recommended cliff walls, waterfalls and ice climbing and associated training and skill enhancements programs could be developed.

"Geo-caching" (NHT, FS)

Geo-caching routes and free roaming based geo-cache programs could be developed with support guidance and facilities. These activities could be linked to resource and Corridor exploration and discovery programs

Enhancement and Innovation of Accommodation & Experience Opportunities

Overnighting on the water or remote islands (AE, CE, NHT, PHT, FS)

It would be a valued opportunity within this Reach for land based travelers and self-powered water-based travellers to have opportunities to overnight on the water in moored boats or perhaps in floating yurts or to have designated areas on remote shorelines or islands to overnight in huts or camp in primitive sites.

Networks of inns (CE, NHT, GE, AE, R)

For those exploring the Corridor and Reach, as a part of multi-day trips, being presented with the services of booking multiple nights of accommodations through a network of quality heritage inns and bed and breakfast would be of assistance. If these bookings were linked to a Corridor – long shuttle service of goods, boats, bicycles and people, multi-day adventures would be even easier to plan.

Enhancement and Innovations of Transportation Services

Rideau experiential touring support network (All)

It was suggested that an integrated network of water to land based shuttles to connect visitors to different stops and experiences would support more in depth and convenient exploration of the Reach (and the Corridor) by all types of guests. The network would be operated by well-informed drivers who would cross-promote communities, attractions and services, by serving as ambassadors and story tellers.

Shuttle service (All)

In many discussions, reference was made to the Cinque Terra – like shuttle services moving passengers and goods throughout the Corridor and specific Reaches.

Secure mooring points (NHT, FS, B, AE, and CE)

It was suggested that a network of mooring points in more secluded portions of the Reach become a part of a Corridor-long network of remote and isolated moorings.

Short Term and Medium Term “Doables”

During the Reach discussions, participants were asked to identify actions which they felt might be undertaken to realize the enhancements and innovations they had put forward. The following highlights those “doables” related to Reach-specific doables”

Top Priority EQ Types

Current Guests

The participants were asked to speculate in EQ type terms, who were their current guests and who in the foreseeable future were their desired guests. This was intended to provide a part of the foundation for moving forward.

It was speculated that attractions such as the Cove Hotel and entertainment centre might be currently drawing a high percentage of No Hassle Travelers, Rejuvenators and music Buffs. Whereas, Spy Rock, Foley Mountain and Murphy’s Point with their orientation to outdoor challenges and appreciation of spectacular views might be drawing Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers, No Hassle Travelers and Free Spirits. It was further speculated that long distance boaters might be more commonly Gentle Explorers, No Hassle Travelers and Free Spirits.

It might be speculated that a majority of current guests are regionally high repeat guests, who may, owing to their familiarity with the Reach and perhaps owning cottages or homes within the Reach act as they are Gentle Explorers and Rejuvenators.

In sum, the current guests may be best hosted by responding to the values and traits of Gentle Explorers, No Hassle Travelers, Free Spirits, Authentic Experiencers and Cultural explorers – a pretty even distribution.

Future Guests

The participants believe that this Reach has a rich array of natural and cultural heritage experience opportunities, which are capable of attracting guests from afar and new guests from within Eastern Ontario and Neighbouring Quebec and New England states. They also believe that the waters and landscape are capable of affording safe and accessible escapes for urban dwellers within the region.

With this in mind, the participants indicated an interest in growing the number of guests from both near and far, who are Authentic Experiencers (nature experience biased), Cultural Explorers (culture experience biased); and for those escaping to outdoor activities and serenity, Gentle Explorers and Free Spirits.

The focus of enhancements and innovations relating to exploring and discovering the natural heritage resources and cultural lifestyles of the Reach are prominently a response to Authentic Experiencer and Cultural Explorer values and interests. Pursued with less intensity and in family or larger groups, these same experience opportunities will attract and motivate No Hassle Travelers. Bringing the communities to life through animation, festivals and events will meet the needs of Gentle Explorers and No Hassle Travelers. Enhancing the vibrancy of communities and in particular their waterfronts, will respond to the interests of all priority explorer types, with Gentle Explorers and Rejuvenators being very appreciative of enhancements.

Participants were asked to identify enhancements and innovations, which they thought could be accomplished within one year and within the next three years.

Actions by 2014

Building on earlier suggestions of enhancements and innovations, participants suggested that the following ideas could be pursued in whole or in part in the next year:

- Begin to increase the number of docks and welcoming chairs to view and connect with water throughout the Reach – make simple improvements to our waterfronts, benches, signage,
- Begin to grow rental equipment services: kayaks, canoes, boats, and outfitting support services.
- Inventory and develop “locals know” best fishing spots guidance for online and print sharing.
- Inventory Reach’s special places and vantage points and use this in strategic guidance information, view plane enhancement, and setting out of Rideau chairs.
- Develop self-guidance information and additional guided walks and hikes based upon themes and special places inventory – tell more of our stories and guide guests in exploring the places.
- Acquire the “performance barge” and grow our array of special events on land and water.
- Enhance the story telling component of voyageur canoe experiences.
- Continue to improve website – make it EQ type responsive - add “locals know” advice segment
- Provide more information at the lock stations to draw people to communities - fact sheet community association helps put together.
- Read the other Reaches VEOC’s to know what your neighbours are - be aware of what’s happening in the Corridor, and let others know what we are doing.

It is also suggested that the following general areas of progress be given attention:

- Begin to confirm through testing and surveys, the types of explorers who are currently guests in this Reach, travelling by boat and by land - collaborate in similar Corridor-long research.
- Assess current tourism communications of marketing organizations and individual attraction hosts to determine the types of guests they are motivating with their messaging and images.
- Begin to develop initial menus of experience opportunities for each priority EQ type within each Reach - integrate Reach menus into overarching Corridor menus.
- Assist frontline staff to taking EQ Quiz and discuss all nine types with them
 - Invest in staff awareness of EQ guest types and experiential tourism
 - Expand staff awareness of Reach experience opportunities
- Begin to adopt a “Host / Guest” culture amongst frontline staff and amongst owner / operators
 - Invest in Super-Host like training
- Establish a “leadership group” to begin to guide and motivate implementation of VEOC in this Reach - link this leadership with the Corridor-long leadership team.
- Investigate opportunities to establish:
 - Vested ambassador programs and services
 - Network of “gathering places”
 - Expansion of festivals network within Reach
 - Networking of similar hosts: inns, marinas

Actions by 2017

- Develop a Reach wide strategic plan for experience opportunity growth and diversification, in order to be ready when opportunity knocks.
- Put into operation the “theater / performance barge” and launch network of performance places in natural and cultural settings. Festivals might all have the word ‘Canada’ or Rideau Canadiana.
- Strategically contribute to establishment and growth of Rideau Experiential Touring Network and the Reach and Corridor-long shuttle service.
- Grow the network of outfitters interpreters and guides and the provision of self-guidance information for explorers on water, along roads and multi-use trails – and contribute to the expansion and quality of the exploration routes and their experience opportunities.
- Encourage and contribute to the growth and diversification of lock station animation, events & services provided by through private and public sector collaboration.
- Bonfires and caged fire pits at conservation area, lock stations and other gathering points could be established as evening attractions.
- Inventory public and private lands available for guests and support guest use of these places with signage, information and print and GPS maps and guidance systems.
- Build critical acclaim as to what the Rideau has to offer - share Canadian kayaking champion Adam van Koeverden’s perspective “this is the best place to kayak.
- Come to the Rideau to learn to be a Canadian. Skate the lake, a Canadian icon.
- Establish a network of floating platforms for night paddlers, which can also be used during day for swimming and quiet retreats
- Contribute to establishment of Rideau Heritage Tourism District Strategic Direction Board.