

Our Community Story 2024

Beaver Valley Destination Stewardship

Presentation to Town of the Blue Mountains
Committee of the Whole- Feb. 3, 2025
By Kate Russell, Community Catalyst
Beaver Valley Destination Stewardship



Our Story Summary

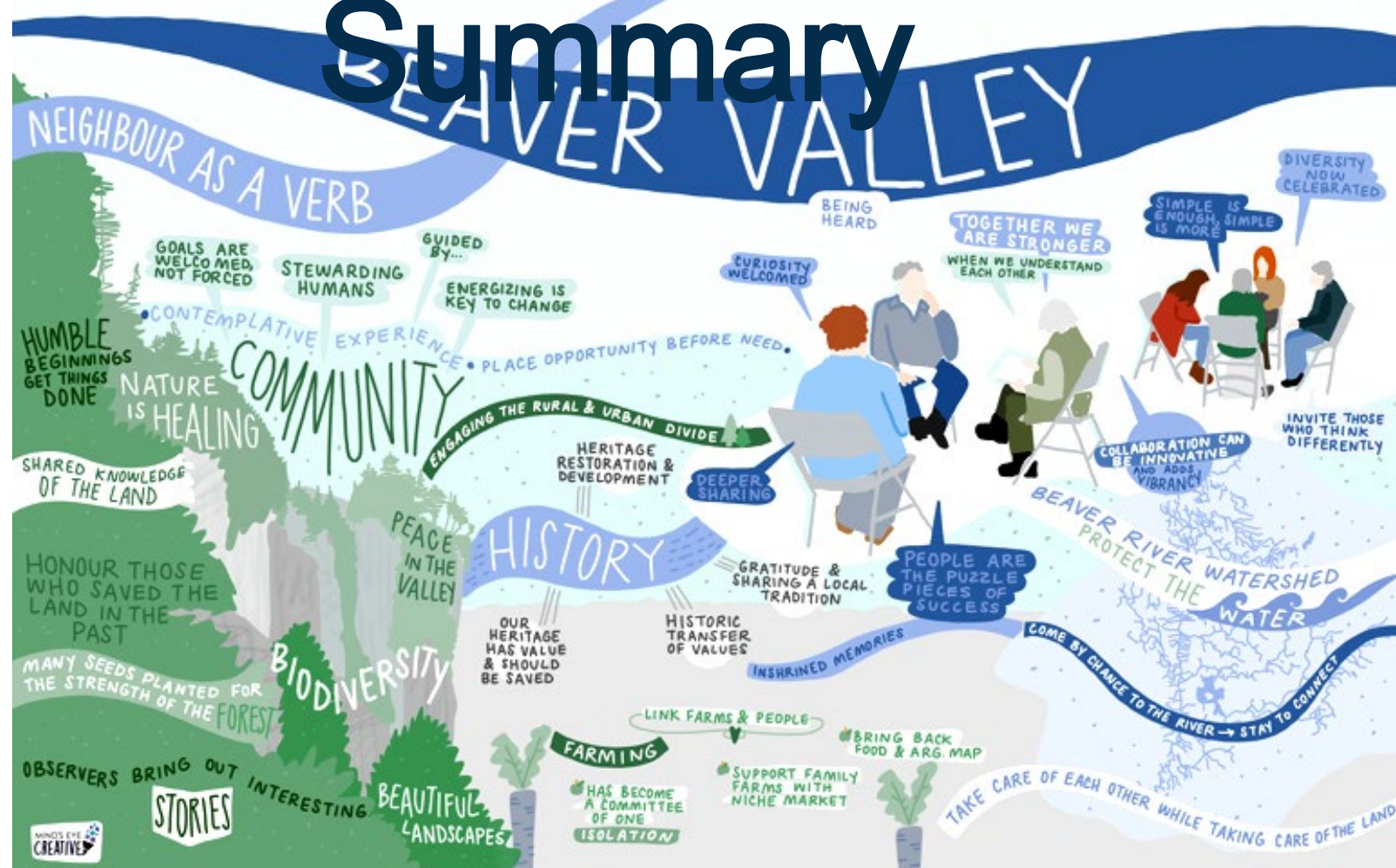


Illustration created from community appreciative interview day hosted with GMIST - Rocklyn- Feb. 2024

2024 has been an incremental year of convening community in stewardship circles, connecting to our roots and aligned groups, building relationships, and collaborating with interested and Indigenous people to bring destination stewardship to bear on our collective love of the land we call home.

We've enhanced our capacity and gathered skills and perspectives to share with our community of care.

As a co-learning cluster we succeeded at our ABCDs in asset-based community-led development through ACTivating with Gros Morne Institute of Sustainable Tourism.

We've brought sociocratic rounds to our outreach with tourism strategy project partners to explore how stewardship might inform regional strategies.

We've established partnerships with rural heritage volunteers and invited Indigenous people with a two-eyed lens to walk and talk with the land and with us, through our Workshop Outdoors on Destination Stewardship (WOODS) project, sponsored by Community Foundation Grey Bruce though Osprey Museum.

Together with so many watershed neighbours and organizations, we've begun a journey of understanding how we all may participate in valuing and caring for this great place to live so that it can also be a great place to visit.

We welcome you to walk with us on this continuing adventure so that our vital relationships with people, place and planet continue to enhance our perspectives, possibilities and personal responsibility.

Setting our community table

We're creating a community of care for the Beaver Valley watershed through stewardship circles, special events, knowledge sharing and connecting non-profit groups to offer a voice for the natural environment



GMIST InCommunity Visit for ACTivate Program
Lunch at Euphrasia Memorial Hall
provided by Rocklyn Agricultural Society



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Destination Stewardship

beautifulbeavervalley@gmail.com







Who we are

Our core team of volunteers endeavors to bring the host community of the Beaver Valley Watershed together under a set of Guiding Principles, so through our relationships we share responsibility for the holistic care of our home.





Watershed familiarization tour with Gros Morne Institute of Sustainable Tourism- at Bowering Lodge with (left to right) BVDS volunteers Tamara Crispin, Ariana Crispin, Rob Leverty of ACTivate Cluster, GMIST Gord Cunningham, Jonathan Foster, Nora Fever and Community Cluster members Stacie Howe & Heather Reid

Our Core Team

					
Stacie Howe Community Connector - Entrepreneur Kimberley General Store & Justin's Oven	Cathy Little Governance Liaison - Educator (ret.) Sociocracy in Friends of the Kimberley Forest	Heather Reid Social Capital Coordinator - Human Capital Heritage Schoolhouse Landowner	Peter Mitchell Conservation Leader - Researcher (ret.) Environmental Sciences U of Guelph	Kate Russell Community Catalyst - Storyteller Grant Writer Girl with Carrot Marching	Rob Leverty Knowledge Bridge - Historian Organic Farm Landowner & Water Advocate

Team Support

	
Tamara Crispin Legal Counsel - Ski Instructor Financial Manager	Ariana Crispin Teacher - Yoga Teacher Philosopher

Our Guiding Principles



Leopard Frog at Grey Bruce Native Seed Bank Seed Orchard Near Pinnacle Rock, Duncan

“When one tugs at a single thing in nature,
he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”

John Muir

Holistic Perspective

See the whole picture as tourism interacts with our watershed’s ecosystems, aesthetics, natural resources, built infrastructure, cultural assets, traditions, and diverse communities.

Natural Preservation

Protect the natural and cultural distinctiveness of our watershed to retain and enhance our appeal and “integrity of place”. We encourage a host community of care and offer nature a voice.

Beneficial Placemaking

Support our human and natural ecosystem diversity, water quality, economic sustainability for small businesses and local supply chains to improve quality of life for all our local neighbours.

Principled Leadership

Value quality over quantity so we lead change based on principles of quality rather than quantity to go beyond tourism’s immediate transactions. We seek to engage our host community, include residents, inspire business and welcome visitors, including those new to recreation in nature.

Collaborative People

Share responsibility across all sectors to emphasize collaboration with non-profits, government, business, civic groups, researchers and scientists and citizens. We see knowledge sharing as essential for effective engagement attuned to the whole picture for the good of community and the environment.



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Our impact

355

Event attendees

3633

Online engagement

40+

Community connections



Community Connector Stacie Howe welcomes community to an ACTivate program day to learn Asset-based CommunityLed Development (ABCD) appreciative interviewing with GMIST in Rocklyn.

Highlights

01

5 Stewardship Circles - January & February focused on networking groups, March showcased Aspiring Georgian Bay Geopark. April was about road safety. Year end offered our Aki Guardians

02

4 WOODS sessions with Indigenous Aki Guardians & Grey Bruce Native Seed Bank partnered with Osprey Museum volunteers and funded by a Community Foundation Grey Bruce grant

03

5 core volunteers in our Community Cluster co-learned Asset-Based Community-Led Development with Gros Morne Institute of Sustainable Tourism's ACTivate program with St.FX

Community Engagement



Community gathered at Kimberley Hall for inaugural Stewardship Circle

JANUARY



Simona Frieberg



Bruce King



Andy McKee

8th – Inaugural Stewardship Circle

Land Acknowledgement (Ariana), Sociocracy intro (Cathy), Guiding Principles overview (Paul), Using Hylo (Heather)– **groups presenting:** Aspiring Georgian Bay Geopark (Tamara); Grey Bruce Native Seed Bank (Charly); Kolapore Wilderness Trails Association (Bruce); The Sustainability Project (Simona); Climate Action Now Network (Kay)



Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism (GMIST)

successful application (1 of 5 of 45)- ACTivate session online
community cluster: Stacie Howe, Heather Reid, Peter Mitchell, Rob Leverty, Kate Russell

Established Hylo platform

we invited participants & Heather provided training to volunteers

FEBRUARY

Met Alessia Farris at **Craigleith Heritage Depot**

re: cultural asset mapping/Biblio board



Bob Hann



Joan Nufield



Betty Muise



GMIST community visiting Craigleith Depot to hear about local heritage online resource model

12th - Stewardship Circle #2

Land Acknowledgement (Jade); GMIST ACTivate ABCD program overview (Kate); Hogg's Falls and Role of Volunteers (Bob) - **Groups presenting:** Friends of the Kimberley Forest (Cathy); Escarpment Corridor Alliance (Jarvis); Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club (Joan); Blue Mountain Tree Trust (Betty); Niagara Escarpment Foundation (Rob); Thornbury Lions Club (Tom)



14th - Happy Valentine's Day!

Opened our **Bank account** with GMIST cheque



Beaver Valley Destination Stewardship volunteers on the road with Gros Morne Institute of Sustainable Tourism

20th - GMIST in-community

familiarization tour to various watershed locations
Starting and ending at the top of Beaver Valley Ski Club



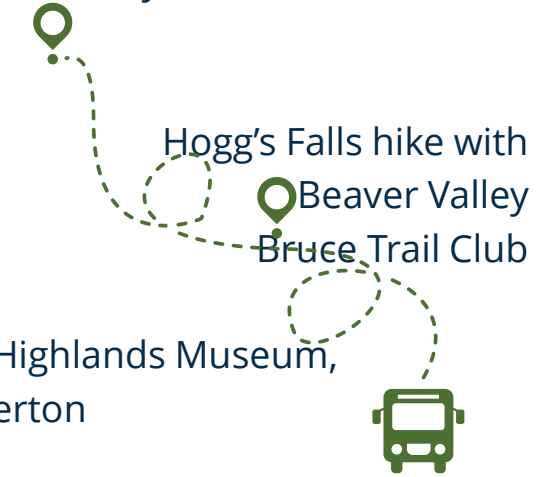
Grey Highlands Museum,
Flesherton



Blackbird Pie Company
Hindle's Hardware visit



Bowering Lodge, Red Wing
Osprey Museum, Feversham



Garage 13,
Eugenia
Lake Eugenia



The Clark,
Clarksburg
Craigleith Heritage Depot



Community members practice appreciative interviewing through deep listening

21st – GMIST in-community

“Our Watershed Stories” at Euphrasia Memorial Community Centre, Rocklyn
for ABCD TOOL intro to Appreciative Interviewing
morning training session - lunch by Rocklyn Agricultural Society - afternoon practice



28th – Grey Sauble Conservation Authority

offered by former GSCA Chair Cathy Little at Inglis Falls HQ, Owen Sound
seeking alignment and potential collaborative opportunities

Sociocracy training undertaken (Cathy)
to inform **BVDS governance**



Community gathers at the Flesherton Kinplex to hear about the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network and, the Aspiring Georgian Bay Geopark idea as well as a look at local Indigenous history

MARCH



*Norman
Regallie*



*Mike
Robbins*



*Robert
Burcher*

11th – Stewardship Circle #3

Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network (Norman) and featuring the Aspiring Georgian Bay Geopark (Mike) with brief Indigenous history by local author Robert Burcher



14th & 15th – Attend **Two-Eyed Seeing & Ethical Space** conference presented by NEBN & Plenty Canada meet Indigenous group representatives

21st – First meeting with **Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Project Partners**

APRIL

8th – Stewardship Circle # 4

BVDS background slide show (Heather & Tamara); Vision Zero presentation by **Kimberley Safety Group** (Martha)



Community Cluster (Peter, Heather, Stacie, Rob, Kate) travel to

Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism (GMIST)

ACTivate training in

Asset-Based Community-Led Development (ABCD)

Rocky Harbour, Newfoundland

with four other Atlantic Canada communities we learned ABCD tools we are calling “conversation starters” including appreciative interviewing (again); associations and institutions; leaky bucket; community mapping and skills inventory



A typical busy weekend of visiting crowds and residential traffic in Kimberley



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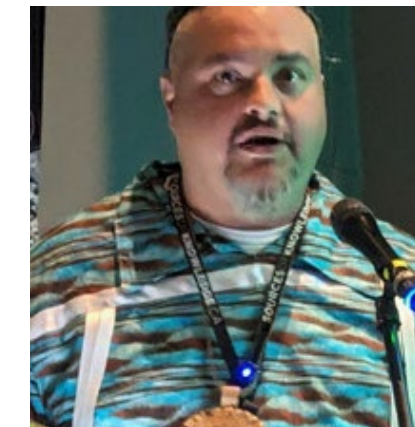
MAY

1st & 2nd - GMIST ACTivate ABCD

training in Rocky Harbour, Newfoundland
Familiarization tour and in-community practice in Cow Head



Michael Halle



Caley Doran



William Hogg

4th – Sources of Knowledge Forum – Tobermory

Cathy attended and Kate presented to group, where we learned about Niagara Escarpment Sustainable Tourism -NEST (Michael); Sustainable Tourism Action Group (Peggy); Anishinaabe World View on Tourism (Caley); Parks Canada Visitor Sustainable Tourism Initiatives (Ethan); Building Sustainable Links between Destination and Business with Greenstep Solutions (William); Imagining and Preparing for a Low-Carbon Future (Megan); E-bikes & Social Enterprise (Noreen)

7th – Present to CCUNESCO at Grey County

hosted by NEBN, with multiple presenters and information tables to inform Canadian Commission United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Kate presented, while Stacie, Heather and Cathy manned info table



Illustration tracking four days of intensive and immersive ACTivate training with GMIST in Newfoundland

JUNE

7th – Meet with **Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Project Partners**

Grey County (Savanna); Municipality of Grey Highlands (Michelle); Town of the Blue Mountains (Tim), Regional Tourism Organization 7 (Alex)



Stalwart volunteers gathered in the rain to pick up litter at Hogg's Falls



Grabbing trash along the trail

9th – Helped with river cleanup at Hogg's Falls

with Bagida'waad Alliance's Aki Guardians (Peter, Stacie, Kate) in the rain

21st – Submit **TWO-EYEDS** grant with collaborative partners

(Tour Workshops of Ecological Youth Energize Destination Stewardship)

application included a negotiated 19-page collaborative agreement between Osprey Museum, Bagida'waad Alliance and Beaver Valley Destination Stewardship which includes OCAP and UNDRIP guidelines for knowledge sharing



WOODS participants gather to “walk & talk” at Madeleine Graydon Memorial Conservation Area (Feversham Gorge)

JULY

17th – Cultural Assets request to Grey Highlands council

receive approval to license use of data previously collected by former staff



Into the WOODS



Fun community mapping



Community conversation at Osprey Museum



Museum volunteers serve lunch

21st – WOODS “walk & talk” with Aki Guardians

Indigenous youth of Bagida’waad Alliance at Madeleine Graydon Conservation Area (Feversham Gorge) with luncheon at Feversham site of Osprey Museum followed by first community mapping conversation starter ABCD tools at museum



Beaver Valley Destination Stewardship Community Cluster huddle to ACTivate our watershed neighbourhood

AUGUST

1st – **Networking Niagara Escarpment Sustainable Tourism (NEST)**

call Michael re: local tour events – potential to collaborate trails & tour development

14th – GMIST ACTivate **Community Cluster strategy huddle**



Discussing opportunities with Aki Guardians to conduct ecological land classifications

19th – **Networking with environmental youth**

re: ecological ideas, collaboration and youth projects
developed a resource list of contacts for follow-up

SEPTEMBER



Avid hikers pose before the WOODS “walk & talk” into Kolapore Wilderness Trails



Lunch and community mapping at Osprey Museum - Rob Roy

8th - WOODS “walk & talk” of Kolapore Wilderness Trails
with luncheon at Osprey Museum (Rob Roy) followed by community mapping



Feversham Fair attendees enjoy playing at community mapping

14th – Outreach booth at Feversham Fall Fair
beside Osprey Museum as our partner for community mapping

16th – Attend **Watershed Summit concept meeting**

(Kate, Rob) at Marsh Street Centre, Clarksburg

invited by Paul & Tom of Thornbury Beaver Valley Lions Club

18th - **WOODS planting with Grey Bruce Native Seed Bank**

at Pinnacle Rock seed orchard on Bruce Trail Conservancy land



Grey Bruce Native Seed Bank volunteers lead a planting event at the group's seed orchard near Duncan

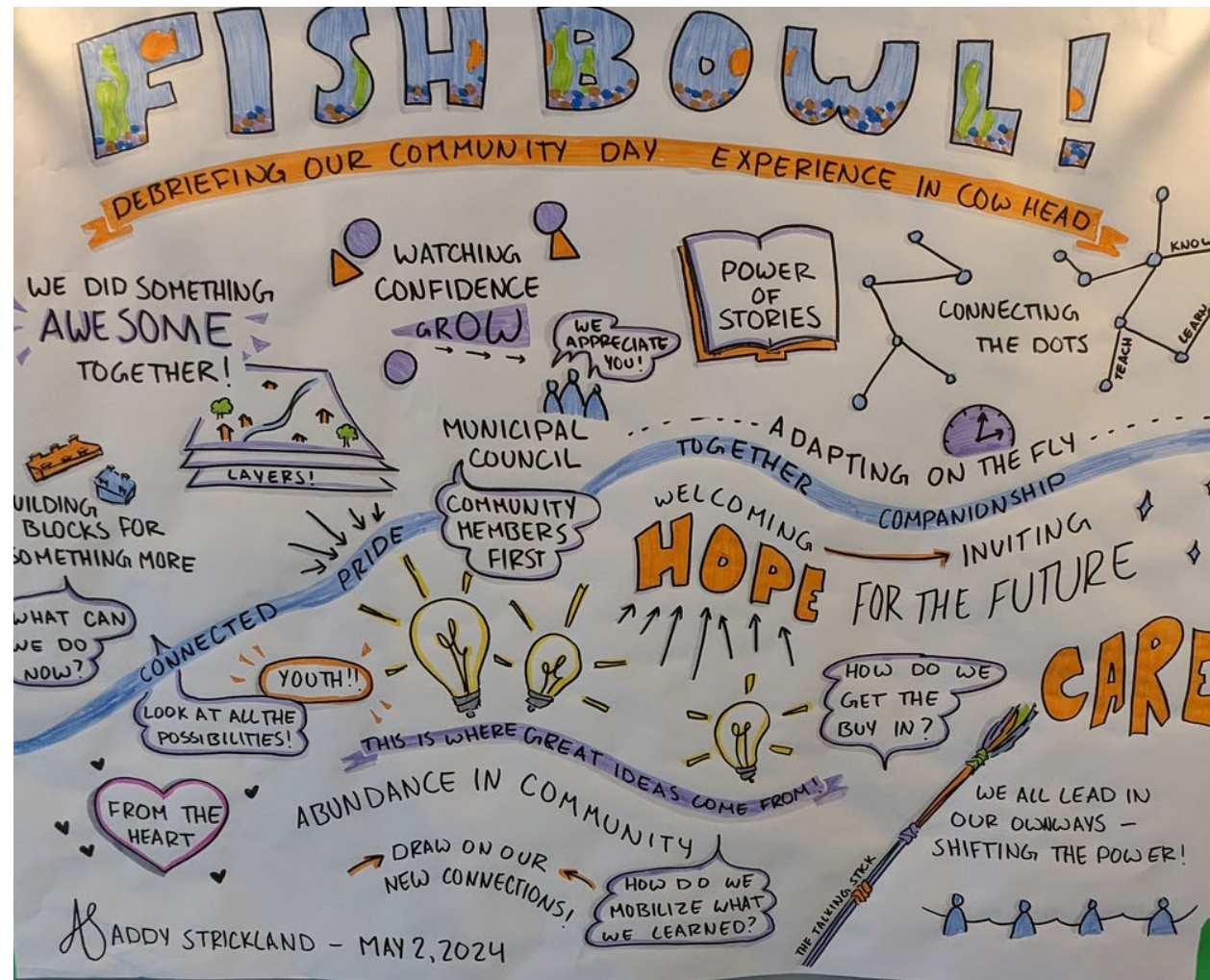


BVDS Core team members Rob & Heather using their heads, hearts & hands to help

23rd – Attend **Bagida'waad Alliance "tiny forest" planting event** at Neyaashinigmiig

30th - GMIST ACTivate - Rethinking Community-Based Tourism

assignment submitted for ACTivate concept sharing from our ABCD training



Visual tracking of ABCD learnings in Cow Head, Newfoundland

inspires BVDS to ACTivate our own community of care

Welcome to the Beaver Valley

Stories are quietly told that, in the geologic deep time of Georgian Bay, whales swam through the flooded fords and came to what is now the Beaver Valley to die. The Valley is a special place where generations of Indigenous people cared for the land for thousands of years. Now it is our turn - as residents, neighbours, visitors and friends.

Carved by glaciers that cut through the Niagara Escarpment, the Valley boasts a vast array of waterfalls, flooded forests, ancient cliffs and starry nights.

Home to turtles, bears, egrets and salamanders; captured by painters, craftspeople, chefs and musicians; explored by hikers, cyclists, cross-country skiers and kayakers... the Beaver Valley resists those who encounter it with their place in a natural ecological culture that pre-dates them.

Take your time on the trails; the river rushes enough. Take your time on the water, there are things to see: dragonflies, muskrats and bats. Download iNaturalist to know the plants and animals around you.

The Valley is famous for its biodiversity - the sheer number of distinct species - including those of special concern - call this watershed Home. Half a decade ago, you could have taken a hot-air balloon down the valley and seen the bird's eye view: a vast forested landscape dotted with human inhabitants.

As a visitor, curate your experience in the Valley. Find museums, festivals, restaurants, wine and cider tastings, farm tours, art galleries, craft studio and old general stores.

Take a step back to when people settled on mail routes and near water sources, when barbers and the gossip column had the news that mattered, when you knew who grew the food you made for dinner.

Find ways of travelling across the landscape that inspire you. Trails criss-cross the valley, with views on each side from dolostone outcrops. Draw yourself downriver to the expanse of Georgian Bay, explore the shore, find fossils and fireflies.

Or follow the flyfishers upriver to the cool forested headwaters of the Cuckoo Valley, where making maple syrup means spring, and cicadas mean summer.

For more information on how the people of the Beaver Valley are protecting the very qualities that make the Valley a unique destination, and how you can participate as a visitor, follow The Beautiful Beaver Valley on Instagram.

Beaver Valley
Destination Stewardship

A TOURISM APPROACH FOR THE BEAUTIFUL *Beaver Valley*

info@thebeautifulbeavervalley.ca

Stacie's Version

Is Beaver Valley on your bucket list?

Come visit and join us as we dig into our fertile soil to plant for the future of our watershed.

We may not all be green thumbs, but we're growing our awareness about the habitat in our backyard.

Our Indigenous friends are guiding our steps as they share their path to land-based learning with interpretive "walk and talk" experiences.

Community stories are surfacing as we collaborate with our neighbours to fill our bucket with the wealth of our watershed.

Beaver Valley
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A TOURISM APPROACH FOR THE BEAUTIFUL *Beaver Valley*

info@thebeautifulbeavervalley.ca

Heather's Version

Beaver Valley
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Welcome to our Home

The Beaver Valley watershed has been welcoming people from time immemorial. Our First Peoples came to hunt, fish and live with the land as the glaciers receded thousands of years ago. Today they offer Indigenous-led tours. Our early pioneers sought a new life in the woods, clearing the land to settle in a generational rural lifestyle. Descendants still till the soil. We have evolved but still hold fast to heritage. Traditional ways survive in our community, where volunteers host authentic culture - from dinners & concerts to fall fairs. Slow down and visit our quaint villages, meet owners behind the counters and in their kitchens, shop at a farmers market or farm gate for a truly "field to fork" experience.

We are all Stewards

We endeavor to bring the host community of the Beaver Valley watershed together under a set of Guiding Principles, so through our relationships we share responsibility for the holistic care of our home.

1. See the whole picture
2. Protect the natural and cultural distinctiveness of the Beaver River watershed
3. Benefit our local communities, both people and the natural environment
4. Value quality over quantity
5. Share responsibility across all sectors

Take a Hike!

Follow our braided trails to enjoy the scenic views & waterfall tours as you visit outdoor attractions to enjoy your recreational lifestyle.

Remember to treat the trail with respect so take only pictures and leave only footprints.

ACTivating ABCD
Asset Based Community-led Development

A Assets exist in our community - we should appreciate and feature what we have, including our people, heritage, stories and organizations alongside attractions

B Based in simple, rural lifestyles with recreational amenities, authentic experiences with unique guidance from residents welcome visiting friends, relatives & tourists

C Community leads the storytelling, cultural mapping, heritage experiences with input from businesses and visitor attractions to collaborate and benefit the watershed

D Development aligns with sustainable tourism that considers the host community, seeking to benefit people, business and the natural environment for our future

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Kate's Version

30th - GMIST ACTivate Rethinking Community-Based Tourism

assignment submitted for ACTivate concept sharing from our ABCD training



Our Community Cluster learning together with
Gros Morne Institute of Sustainable Tourism in Rocky Harbour, NL



Living with All Our Relations



In Beaver Valley
we believe
in webs and roots.

Nature's interconnectedness
surrounds us

Our community is a
team of people.

We live together where
'neighbour' is a verb.

We give and receive
at deep levels
in a symbiotic relationship
with each other and the land.

Visitors are welcome
to contribute to the health
and growth of our
watershed ecology.

With heads, hearts
and hands,
we inspire
a caring connection
to all living beings.



Welcome! Come join us!



A TOURISM APPROACH FOR
THE BEAUTIFUL
Beaver Valley



info@thebeautifulbeavervalley.ca

Peter's Version



Come here once & you'll be back...

Visit and learn about the beautiful Beaver Valley,
where Nature says 'welcome home'...

Explore
the Beaver Valley,
a UNESCO designated
world biosphere,
part of Ontario's
Greenbelt.
A clean watershed,
a life support system
for our communities.
The rich bio-diversity
found here in the
Niagara Escarpment
offers pristine forests
where streams bubble
from underground to
feed streams, rivers,
lakes and wetlands.



Our scenic landscape includes cliffs and caves, plants and wildlife,
farms and families (and of course beavers) thriving together in one of
the most beautiful places to be wrapped up in wild in province.



Come here!
Visit us to
hike
cycle
canoe
fish
birdwatch
paint
photograph
snowshoe
wine, dine and shop
in our unique vibrant setting.



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Rob's Version

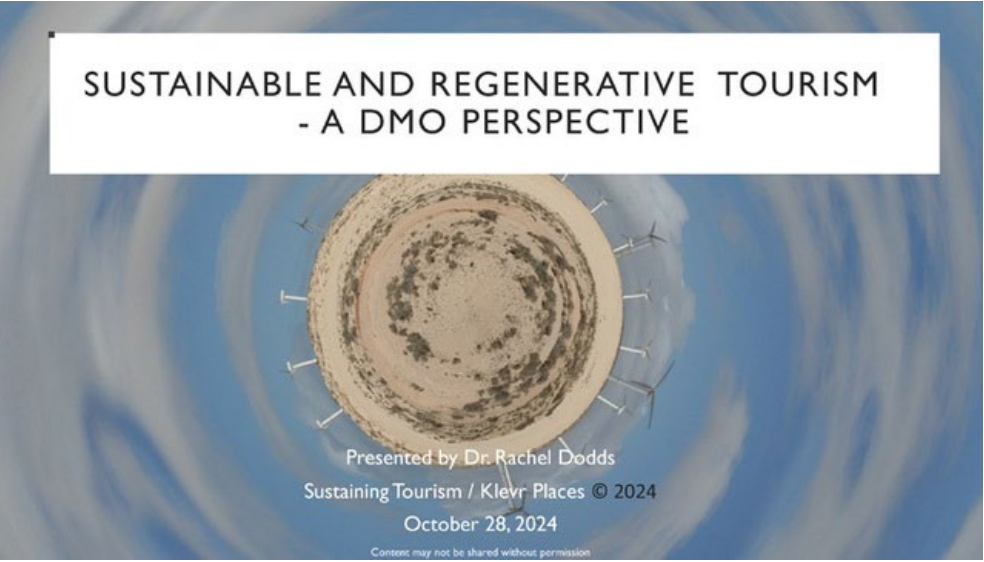
OCTOBER

3rd to 5th – GMIST ACTivate gathering, St. John, NB

a progressive tasting and cultural experience - Sharing our Stories



Breaking bread together in New Brunswick with GMIST ACTivate communities for some heads, hearts and hands work



28th- GMIST Sustainable Tourism for DMOs



30th - ACTivate Connects Session – Grants panel

with Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (Darren & Community Business Development Corporation (Alana) & Beaver Valley Destination Stewardship (Kate)

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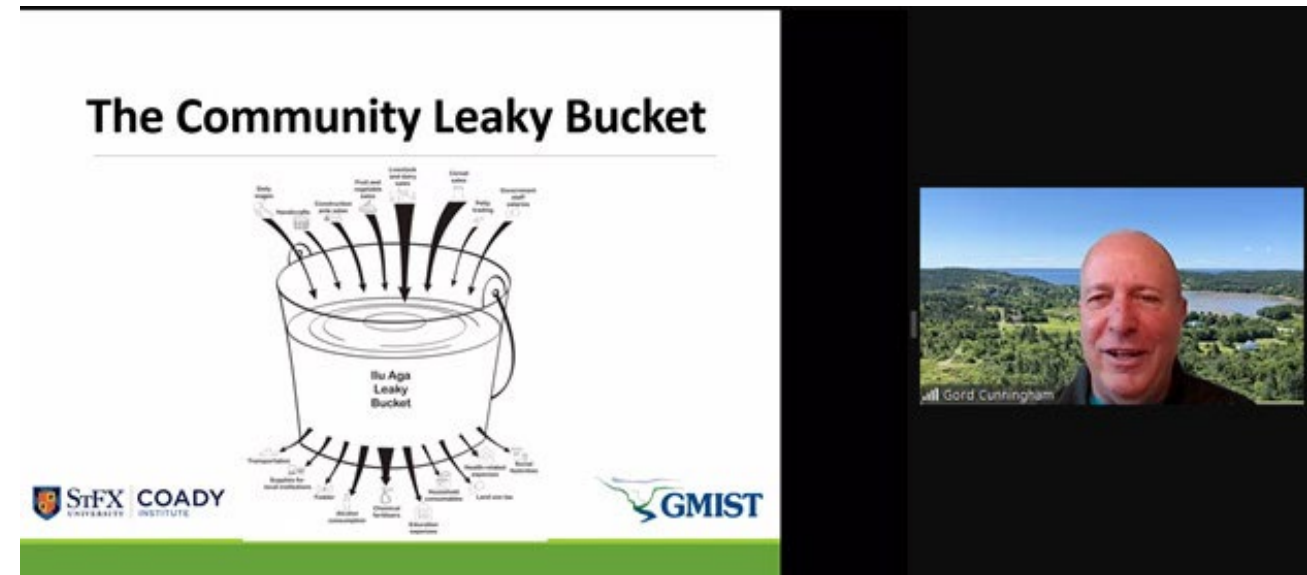


Kate, Stacie and Peter review the story map from GMIST's icommunity visit earlier in the year

NOVEMBER

GMIST Story Mapping Course

Learn online story map development and WeVideo production for storytelling (Kate)



20th - GMIST Connects Session - The Leaky Bucket

Online expansion of community economic assessment tool with Coady Institute

21st - Watershed event steering committee meeting

begin strategizing with collaborative partners for June 2025 event

26th - GMIST ACTivate Touchpoint

online check-in before final assignment and graduation

DECEMBER

8TH – WOODS Landowner Event

Bagida'waad Alliance's Aki Guardians will present on the Ecological Land Assessment completed on private land in Beaver Valley for landowners to understand the process and work toward Stewardship Plans for their own property



Aki Guardian Christopher leads a WOODS “walk & talk”
in Kolopore Wilderness Trails

8th – Stewardship Circle #5 – What we did this year!

Aki Guardians presented on their activities this year, including their Bruce Trail hike across SON territory, visits to Algonquin & Churchill, WOODS walk & talks, ecological land assessment and stewardship planning and teaching BEAHR training in the north Beaver Valley Destination Stewardship presents annual report to community



The Aki Guardians Indigenous youth hiked the Bruce Trail
across Saugeen Ojibway Nation territory this summer

OUR ASK TODAY:

We **INVITE YOU** and your staff to our “Watershed Matters” Stewardship Circle Series - beginning on Feb. 16th in Markdale where we are collaborating with the Happy Trout Chapter of Freshwater Conservation Canada (formerly Trout Unlimited Canada) and the Ontario Headwaters Institute to hear about stormwater management to protect the cold water streams of the Rocky Saugeen River. Further series dates in March and April will follow.

We hope you will **SAVE THE DATE** for a Watershed Event at Marsh Street Centre on June 13, 14 & 15th.

A TOURISM APPROACH FOR

THE BEAUTIFUL
Beaver Valley

FIND US ONLINE

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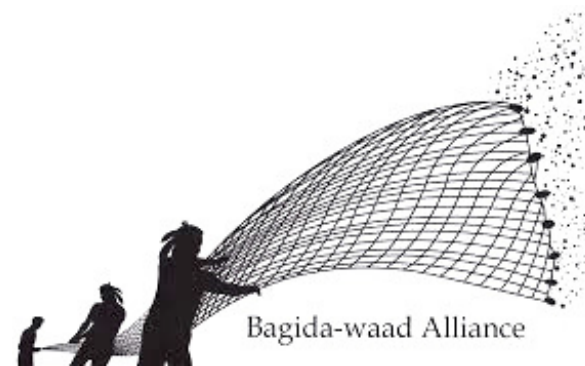
[hylo.com/groups/beaver-valley-destination-stewardship](https://www.hylo.com/groups/beaver-valley-destination-stewardship)

THANKS TO OUR 2024 COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
GREY BRUCE

We're here for good.



Beaver Valley
Destination Stewardship

beautifulbeavervalley@gmail.com