

RMBR Research & Science Forum – Social/Cultural areas of knowledge (local, indigenous) & research needed to ensure the health of the RMBR?

Notes from the Social and Cultural Group, Chaired by Doug Ramsey, facilitated by Sharmalene Mendis-Millard. Flip chart notes transcribed by Sharmalene Mendis-Millard. Please note: These pages are out of order, so you cannot ascertain which pages came from what group (unless specified). However, as you can see, similar issues and ideas were raised by all three groups.

RAW NOTES

Page 1 – first attempt at synthesis at forum

- First priority: **raising awareness, legitimacy, credibility, and relevance of BR organization, and sense of ownership and pride in the RMBR –the place and organization**
 - How? Small projects AND larger, long-term projects
 - Task RMBR with leading a **regional visioning processes**, which will engage people and increase their knowledge and skills by participating in the process
 - **Baseline monitoring**
 - Of Climate Change
 - Biophysical changes
 - Social impacts
 - Of Stories about the region
 - Celebrate successes
 - Help people know what is going on in the RMBR
 - How to share these stories? RMBR could spearhead an information clearinghouse (e.g., in an office, on the internet with Web 2.0 technology) and involve the schools in collecting and sharing.
 - How and who? **Citizen engagement**
 - Tapping into existing processes and organizations that fit BR mandates by inviting them to participate in working groups
 - Organizing and make connections amongst these groups
 - Involve all that relate to the BR concept and mandates
 - Have a conversation/dialogue rather than presentations
 - Recognize and respect local knowledge by providing spaces for these knowledges
 - One positive result: connections will be made and people will get to know one another
 - How? Designate a person to fundraise and coordinate working groups

Page 2 – first attempt at synthesis at the forum

- **Relevance:** How to relate BR to people's lives?
 - Need a celebration and communication of why living in a BR is valuable
 - Idea: Stories
 - Better understand people's values and how they relate to BR values. How can these values be shared?

- Examples: farm gate, hunting, environmental goods and services farmers provide
- **Capacity building needed**
 - Idea: Tap into RMs that can access good processes and expertise to aid decision-making
- **Connecting people to place** (a phrase picked up from the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust) **through tourism and recreation**
 - Through experiential learning
 - With circular trails around and through the park
 - With an inventory of services (e.g., B&Bs, local products, camping sites)
 - Understand the market and what we have to offer (e.g., recreation, quality schools)

Page 3 – first attempt at synthesis at the forum

- **Rural viability**
 - Encouraging youth to go away and then come back (when 30-something)
 - **Need to understand the impacts of outmigration**
 - **Need to understand the motivations for returning to the area**
 - Examples:
 - **High quality of life and quality experiences**
 - **Career opportunities**
 - Therefore need to identify gaps that entrepreneurs can fill
 - **Services**
 - Therefore need to identify services available or needed for all age groups (e.g., health care for seniors)
 - **What connects people to the place?** People (especially family), culture, lifestyle
 - **Need to understand the barriers to moving back**, or what is missing from the area that prevents youth from moving back later on in life
 - Need an inventory of indigenous knowledge of ecosystems

Page 4

- **Relevance to local communities**
- **Enhance livelihoods and environment**
- **Strengthen governance capacity**
- Lack:
 - Awareness and engagement (needs to be Step 1): how can we **create a network to make connections?** Empower people? Examples: through visioning that involves youth, seniors, all people
 - Conclusion:
 - RMBR can develop a model for citizen engagement AND
 - **Identify and link existing, working networks, planning processes and organizations**

Page 5

- **Raising profile and awareness – need to get buy-in**
 - This will be achieved if the BR takes on the role of tapping into and linking processes, organizations, etc.

- Draw the line between the dots by
 - Creating conversations
 - Making the BR have legitimacy, relevance
 - Asking land/resource managers to identify issues and interests
 - Getting to know one another
 - Encouraging dialogue with a common purpose
 - Fostering ownership and pride in being part of the BR

Page 6

- **How to Raising Awareness and Citizen Engagement? NEEDS:**
 - **Champions**
 - **Structure for engagement**
 - **Vision**
 - **Communications** (especially to raise awareness of the BR concept – the terminology gets in the way)
 - New game plan to be **more inclusive**
 - E.g., could change the structure of the RMBR by creating a membership pool and different ways/processes of having citizens become involved
 - The goal should be to foster pride and ownership of the BR

Page 7

- **Need employment options and longer-term career options**
 - How can the BR help? Tap into and raise awareness of existing processes and programs.
 - Example: Winkler Council is helping people to start businesses
 - If people are passionate about living here, they will try to make it work. Therefore – at the end of the day, emphasize **‘What is great about this place?’**
 - What is unique about the RMBR region, RMNPC?
 - Help people develop/reinforce **a sense of place, home, belonging, and community** that is culturally and spiritually based

Page 8

- **‘Sell’ – why living here is special**
 - Think about **what lifestyle and quality of life will attract people?** Examples:
 - How to provide quality education for kids
 - How to keep and strengthen existing, quality schools?
 - How to counter decline
 - How to provide services (e.g., for retirees)?
 - How to provide inspirational experiences through recreation?

Page 9

- **To address youth out-migration and rural decline issues**
 - Need a **survey of people who have come back to reside in the RMBR region**

- What were their motivations? (Was the natural area important to them and a major factor? What was their connection to place? What amenities, culture and lifestyle attracted them to the area?)
- How were they able to make the move?
- What, if anything, do they find missing now that they have moved here?
- Need ways to **engage youth**
 - Ensure that they have **memorable experiences of loving this place**

Page 10

- **Does the BR Vision resonate** with the vision of people in the region?
 - Need – To engage citizens re: issues of importance to them
 - Need to understand people’s sense of powerlessness
 - What to do to increase people’s confidence, and empower them to take ownership of problems and solutions?
 - Need to **identify barriers and baggage** that inhibit success. Then – work on removing those barriers
 - One barrier – some see BR as a threat

Page 11

- The RMBR could **facilitate**
 - **An inventory of indigenous knowledge of ecosystems** (e.g., their value) and **communities**
 - Caution should be taken here – what is being sought and exactly for what purpose? Do the local Aboriginal peoples want to participate – and if so, how?
 - Would be an opportunity to engage a broader population
 - **A survey of community values**
 - Example: about lifestyle, the environment, desired future for people’s children, cultural attributes, history
 - **A visioning process**
 - Where do we want to be in 20 years?
- The RMBR could provide the forums to **share the results of the above to identify common ground and establish baseline data**
 - Could be an opportunity for dialogue (not just education) with non-Aboriginal communities and BR Committee

Page 12 – from Group 1

- **Need baseline monitoring of**
 - **Impact of climate change**
 - Do we feel it here, and how?
 - Indicators? Monitor these and share
 - Take advantage of the Prairie Innovations Forum (green corridor)
 - From website “will focus on the practical implications and innovations that will affect us all and help us, our communities, and our businesses reduce our footprint

and respond to climate change” (Online:
<http://experienceridingmountain.com/2009/03/17/prairie-innovation-forum-march-1819-brandon-manitoba/>)

- We have MET tower data (wind, weather) here, we just need to make it publically accessible (I believe Celes is the one who knows about this)
- **Stories - collect and share**
 - Use Web 2.0 technology
 - Celebrate successes
- **Need an information clearinghouse**
 - Important that this be accessible
 - How? Involve schools, create blogs on different topics...

Page 13 – Group 1

- **Issue: Who is the BR?**
- **Issue: How to provide or / access resources AND empower people to get things done?**
 - Visioning process
 - Would engage people
 - Would increase their engagement skills
 - Need to tap into funding sources (e.g., that pertain to sustainable tourism, agricultural, rural revitalization)
 - How? Need to advertise and make provisions for a professional job to do this work in the region?
 - **Need someone who could devote 100% of their time to pursue funds, manage projects and processes that engage citizens**
 - Outline criteria/clear job description and pay a fair wage – you get what you hire.

Page 14 - Research/Knowledge needs and how to meet those needs?

- **Need small projects AND larger-scale planning**
 - Will build the credibility and relevance of the BR
 - Think about
 - What are we doing?
 - What are the results?
 - How can we best share those results?
 - How?
 - Through **working groups** – action oriented with a short-term mandate
 - **Tap into existing processes and funds** (e.g., MHHC, Conservation District)
 - **RMBR role: to coordinate, ask groups/individuals to contribute, facilitate**
- **Need research on livelihoods**

Page 15

- **Relevance of the BR**
 - **Why is living in a BR of value?**
 - One idea: **relate the BR designation to a family’s wellbeing**
- **What do people value about the region?**

- How do these values relate to BR values?
- Idea: find landowners interested in being involved in such a survey, or can map farm gate
- **Need: Identify and Assess the benefits of ecological goods and services that landowners provide**
 - Example: assess the cost of natural capital
 - Problem – translating these results and value to locals
- **BR can play a capacity-building role**
 - Example: **could assist RMs** with their decision-making by finding good processes and expertise, and accessing information
 - **GAP: connecting knowledge and expertise (local, Aboriginal, scientific) to decision-making**
- **Gap: understanding social issues** such as
 - **Youth out-migration**
 - **Community viability**
 - **Knowing the region**
 - Through tourism and recreation. Examples: bike tours, walking tours, SDIF will fund ideas, a circle trail, MAFRI – clusters (unsure what this means)

Page 16 – Tourism and Recreation needs

- Need to encourage more **experiential learning**
 - Example: Celes' business that offers customized packages
- Need an **inventory of tourism services** offered
 - Example: list of B&Bs
 - Potential benefits:
 - Could be better equipped to offer cultural, active, educational, experiential tourism
 - Link operators
 - Link to local food systems
- Need a trail design for RMNPC with cabins/camping sites

Page 17

- Need to know – **where are people spending their leisure dollars**
- Need research on /understanding of **human rights**
- Need more research on **youth out-migration and its impacts on communities** (e.g., rural decline)
 - Need to know **what would encourage them to come back** (e.g., quality of life) when they are 30 something
 - **Identify gaps that entrepreneurs can fill AND provide the conditions for themn to succeed (what would those conditions be?)**