



Upper Bay of Fundy Rural Region Destination Development Project

Phase 2 Final Report

December 2023

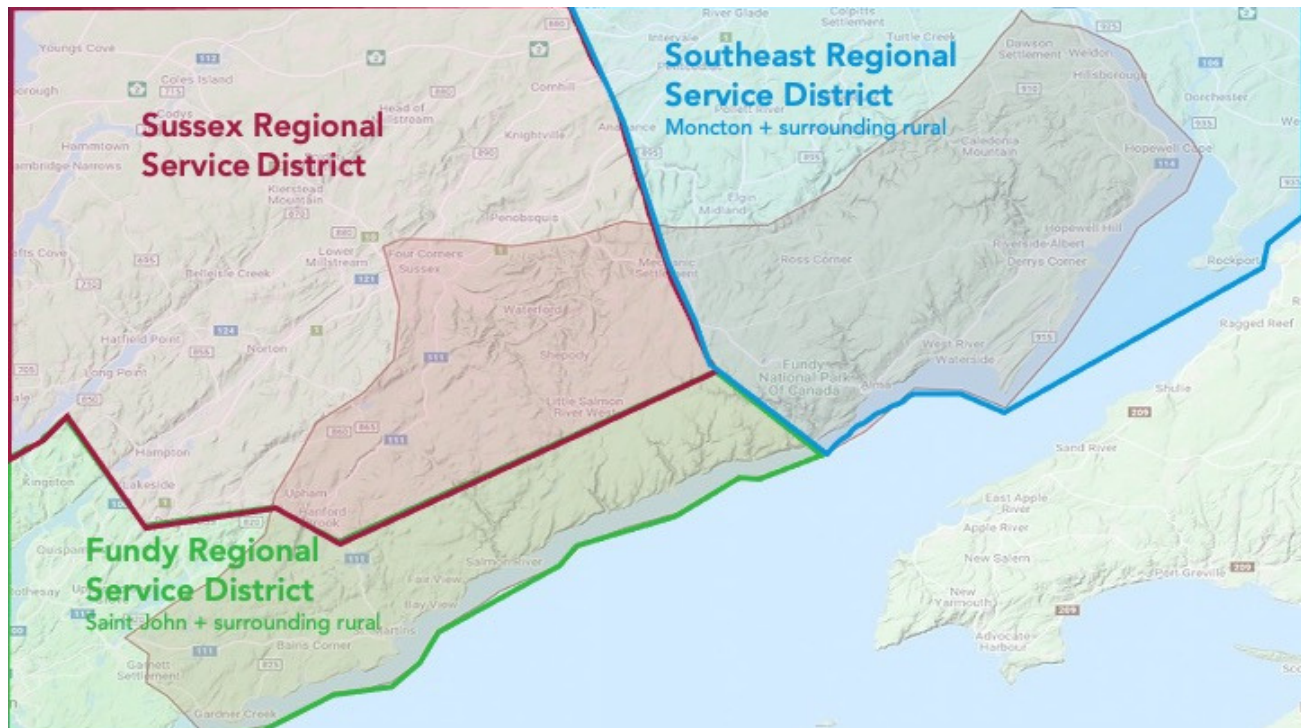


A Friends of Fundy-administered regional initiative

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PROJECT OVERVIEW



The Upper Bay of Fundy Rural Region Destination Development Project (‘the Rural Upper Fundy Development Project’) is a community-first process to bring together businesses, governments, non-profit organizations and citizens to develop a strategic development approach for the Upper Bay of Fundy area of New Brunswick. It is funded by ACOA (75 percent) and Tourism New Brunswick (25 percent).

The Upper Bay of Fundy is defined as the northeast half of the Bay of Fundy, stretching from the outskirts of St. Martins through to Cape Enrage, and includes the rural communities of Hillsborough, Riverside-Albert, Alma, Sussex and the adjacent rural areas.

Jurisdictionally, it includes the three rural municipalities of Fundy-Albert, Sussex, and Fundy-St. Martins and parts of the Southeast (Moncton) Regional Service Commission, the Kings County Regional Service Commission and the Fundy (Saint John) Regional Service Commission, 26 distinct settlements, one national park and three provincial parks over roughly 3,000 square kilometres. It is home to about 15,700 residents and 170 small businesses directly supporting the visitor economy.

Five interconnected actions inspired this project.

First, the Fundy Trail Parkway was completed, enabling people to travel through the region via a seamless and dedicated route.

Second, Fundy National Park became a year-round destination, welcoming winter activities.

Third, Poley Mountain Resort invested heavily in mountain biking trails to convert itself into a year-round destination, driven largely by a changing and warming winter climate.

Fourth, the UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Region and the Stonehammer UNESCO Global Geopark are now jointly managed, one of the few places in Canada with two overlapping designations dedicated to sustainable and regenerative development and public education.

Fifth, 25 years of failed investments in consultant-led studies and reports produced a variety of ideas and recommendations, but few were enacted, largely because of the combined lack of community capacity and financial investment.

While changes to the destination economy are welcome, it also raised concerns with residents regarding the region's capacity to address the long-standing systemic challenges related to infrastructure, environmental sustainability, housing, social inclusion, transportation, and community well-being that have slowed local prosperity.

To produce a different result, the region needed to do things differently.

Local Innovation in Action: Asset-based Community Development

The Rural Upper Fundy Development Project put into practice an asset-based community development (ABCD) model, which emphasizes a collaborative, integrated and principle-based approach to regional destination development planning.

Asset-based community development utilizes and enhances the inherent strengths (assets) of a community, rather than focusing on deficits. In the Upper Bay of Fundy this translated into the following approach:

- Use local stories to build pride of place and illustrate successes;
- Emphasize local-first approach to economic development – what is good for the residents of the Upper Bay of Fundy will be good for tourists too;
- Focus on a 'by us, for us', approach that emphasizes community-designed initiatives over external consultants' recommendations; and,
- Determine measurable outcomes that illustrate systems change, including strengthening of social capital, experiential products and services, and community knowledge and support for the visitor economy.

The initial proposal outlined the following guiding principles for the Rural Upper Fundy Development Project.

Collaborative and Integrated

This is a truly collaborative process to build trust and authentically engage with residents. It will harness local assets, resources and expertise to create and implement a regional strategy that thrives due to its interdependence with neighbouring communities and organizations to support each other. Ongoing, clear and consistent communication is critical for success.

Regenerative and Transformative

Beyond sustainable tourism, we need to seek ways our communities and experiences can restore and be adaptive for what is to come in regards to our changing climate. Our UNESCO designations and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals will be important as we consider opportunities and actions.

Consistency and Quality

In products, experiences, storytelling and wayfinding throughout the region. Alignment in story and experience is critical to live the brand.

Local First

Procurement policies will place an emphasis on local expertise and talent.

Circular Social Economy

The green economy is a circular economy. It seeks economic growth that does not negatively impact people or the environment. A social enterprise model includes non-profit organizations or registered charities that operate revenue-generating related businesses, as well as organizations that operate as for-profit businesses with a social purpose.

This report details Phase 2 of the Rural Upper Fundy Development Project, which included the development and launch of the Rural Upper Fundy Partnership ('the Fundy Partnership' or RUFFP), a regional network with a mission to explore and incubate community-led solutions that sustain and steward rural communities in New Brunswick's Upper Bay of Fundy ecological zone.

Local Learning in Action: Building Capacity and Knowledge

To adhere to the ABCD principles, the Project set out to not only engage with the community but also to seek to build community capacity so residents could more fully participate in the decision-making required to maintain a community-first approach to destination development.

It did this in four ways.

First, it created a project working group that included people from the for-profit, non-profit and government sectors.

The 10-member working group had membership from people who live or work in and around the three regions – Fundy-Albert, Sussex and Fundy-St. Martins.

- Mike Carpenter, Bay of Fundy Adventures, community of St. Martins
- Janet Clouston, Albert County Historical Society and Museum, community of Hopewell Cape
- Dr. Jennifer Dingman, UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Region & Stonehammer UNESCO Global Geopark
- Jamie Hare, Poley Mountain Resort, community of Waterford
- Michelle Harvey-Larsen, Studio on The Marsh, community of Harvey
- Jordan Jamison, St. Martins & District Chamber of Commerce, Village of Fundy-St. Martins
- Bob Rochon, Mayor, Village of Fundy-Albert
- Phyllis Sutherland, Ponderosa Pines Campground, community of Lower Cape
- Jason Thorne, Town of Sussex
- Micha Fardy, Project Administrator, Friends of Fundy, community of Alma

Second, the project and the new Fundy Partnership are administered by the Friends of Fundy, the original proponent of the Destination Development Project.

Friends of Fundy has a mandate to enhance public awareness and appreciation of the cultural and natural heritage of Fundy National Park and increase engagement in the surrounding area, the Rural Upper Bay of Fundy Region.

As a registered charity, Friends of Fundy provided staff time and expertise to the Project, as well as administrative and financial management support.

It will continue to play this role for the Partnership.

Third, the Project was supported by lead practitioner Lisa Hrabluk of Wicked Ideas and evaluation practitioner Jamie Gamble of Imprint Consulting.

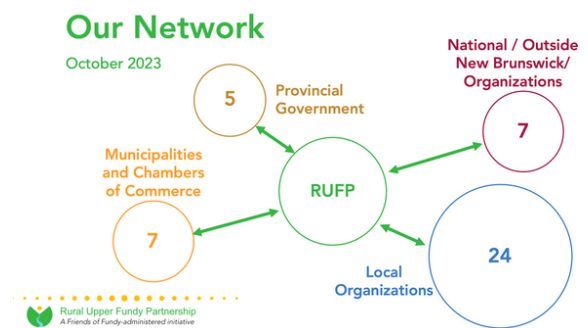
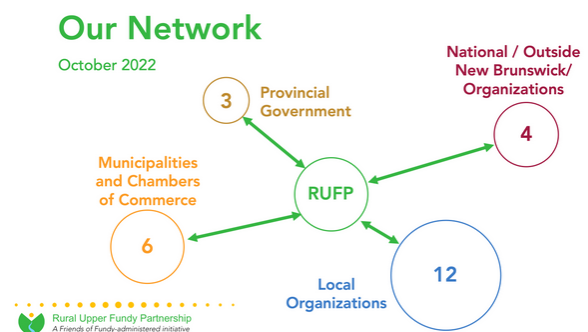
As lead practitioner, Lisa provides ongoing guidance to the working group and members of the Partnership, including facilitation, issues analysis and reporting – all to build leadership and decision-making capacity with the Partnership’s members.

Jamie’s work includes designing and assessing evaluation criteria, and advising the Partnership’s leadership team on how to measure for continuous improvement. He also presents an annual briefing to Partnership members at the Fundy Connects! Summit.

Fourth, the Project sought action item-specific advice and analysis from 25 external consultants. These clearly defined and time-bound interactions enabled the Partnership to diversify its knowledge base in a cost-efficient manner, which supported decision-making capacity of Partnership members and the Phase 2 action item workplan.

Local Leadership in Action: Building a Diverse Community-First Network

Based on Jamie Gamble’s analysis, the Rural Upper Fundy Network has doubled the involvement of community (local) organizations and produced a 40 percent increase in the number of national organizations engaged with the Partnership.



This growth is reflected in the breadth and depth of pilot projects and prototypes undertaken during Phase 2, which built on the work of Phase One.

PHASE ONE OUTCOME: BASELINE RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT



The Rural Upper Fundy Development Project spent its first 12 months gathering and assessing qualitative and quantitative data to determine the community's readiness and interest in developing and leading a new approach to destination development.

This included conducting research and engaging with residents and operators to develop new models for capacity building and community decision-making to sustain and steward local communities and the natural environment.

Research & Evaluation

The Project conducted six studies.

1 – A digital map of tourism assets: Marcel Morin (Lost Art Cartography) created visualizations using satellite-generated imagery of the Rural Upper Bay of Fundy region and the population centres of Alma, Hillsborough, Riverside-Albert, St. Martins and Sussex.

2 – A digital footprint assessment of local tourism operators' web presence: Conducted by independent digital marketing specialist and Phase 1 working group member Kevin Berry.

3 – An inventory and assessment of built heritage and cultural assets: Conducted by Albert County Museum and working group member Janet Clouson.

4 – A review and analysis of regional development plans and reports from 1996 to 2022: Conducted by lead practitioner Lisa Hrabluk of Wicked Ideas.

5 – A community survey of residents' attitudes towards local tourism development: Conducted by project evaluation practitioner Jamie Gamble of Imprint Consulting.

6 – A review and analysis of the Rural Upper Bay of Fundy's potential as a sustainable destination as defined by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Conducted by UNESCO Fundy Biosphere team, led by executive director and working group member Dr. Jennifer Dingman.

Community Building, Facilitation and Engagement

The Upper Fundy Development Project working group members and practitioners have presented to community groups, local governments, and hosted public engagement sessions to identify core challenges across the region, facilitate ideation sessions to workshop possible solutions and gather feedback on its work.

Project representatives have also participated in the regional development strategy processes for the three new regional development corporations.

Primary Outcome

The Upper Fundy Development Project Phase 1 report's primary recommendation was the creation of a new entity, the Upper Bay of Fundy Rural Region Network, to address the challenges the community identified as the greatest barriers to prosperity and change.

PHASE TWO ACTIVITIES: PROTOTYPE A 'BY US, FOR US' MODEL AND WORK PLAN



In Phase 2, the Working Group and its practitioners executed a proof of concept workplan for its proposed network, using a variety of community-first models and processes to address community challenges and opportunities.

Organizational Structure

Design and prototype Upper Bay of Fundy Rural Region Network around the following three tenets.

Strategic Leadership

- co-create and communicate a shared vision;
- harness stakeholder energy;
- develop and map a strategic plan;
- advocate effective tourism management using the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Effective Execution

- define and assign network roles and responsibilities;

- monitor and measure our internal progress in building the network; and,
- identify key performance indicators for the major issues the Network elects to address.

Sustainable Governance

- develop operational principles anchored around the twin values of accountability and transparency; key to building community trust;
- execute a stakeholder engagement and public communications plan;
- design an adequate structure to support the long-term sustainability of the network and its work; and,
- emphasize inclusive growth.

Phase 2 Action Items

Following the completion of Phase 1, the following eight action items were identified as Phase 2 priorities.

1 – Map and integrate the Upper Fundy Region’s existing tourism value chain.

2 – Work with our provincial and federal partners on market intelligence to inform decision-making.

3 – Pursue opportunities for digitization and innovation.

4 – Develop and implement a regional job preparation platform and learning portal to support operators with hiring and training. These modules will:

- support knowledge access on tourism products and experiences, such as the UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Region and UNESCO Stonehammer Global Geopark; and,
- meet NB workplace standards.

5 – Populate and integrate Driftscape, a regional online app to share local stories, guide people to places of interest, events and tours, help visitors find and experience the ‘hidden gems’ of our region.

This will help with redirecting visitor traffic to over-visited areas at peak times, ensure visitors can experience the amazing community offerings while they come to take in our world renowned attractions.

6 – Convening and supporting Action Committees around 4 of the priority areas identified throughout the region:

- housing;
- infrastructure, such as roads, trails, signage, and internet;
- labour, including attraction, retention, and training; and
- regenerative approaches to product and experience development in our local regional context.

7 – Create a website to drive traffic to the region that is inclusive of the existing online presence of communities, operators and experiences.

8 – Create and host a Rural Region Destination Summit in autumn 2022 to convene and facilitate a conversation about how to strengthen rural destinations to ensure they are sustainable places to live, work and visit, in that order.



PHASE TWO PROJECTS

The Phase One report recommended the Working Group complete eight requirements in Phase Two. This graphic provides a high-level accounting of the work completed. The Phase One recommendations are across the top, and the Phase Two projects are listed on the left, with checkmarks to indicate how each project aligns with the recommendations. Summaries of each project are on the following pages.

	Integrate tourism value chain	Market intel and sharing with government funders	Pursue opportunity for digitization and innovation	Regional job prep platform	Prototype Driftscape	Action committees to prototype community solutions	Website to drive traffic that is exclusive of existing partner sites	Create and host Rural Regional Development Summit
Sustainability Assessment and Diagnostic Report	✓	✓	✓			✓		
Flourishing Business Canvas	✓	✓	✓			✓		
Fundy Connects! Summit	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Regional Trail Solutions Prototyping	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
Staff Housing Solutions Prototyping	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
JPrep Online Staff Training	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Driftscape Self-Guided Tours	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Sessions			✓			✓		✓

Sustainability Assessment and Diagnostic Report

The Project conducted a baseline measurement of the Upper Bay of Fundy's sustainability performance and climate action. The output was an action plan that seeks to maximize the positive benefits of tourism while minimizing negative impacts to people, culture and environment. The assessment was based on the Global Sustainable Tourism Council criteria and the UN World Tourism Organization Indicators for Sustainable Tourism. It included 117 questions that measured sustainability performance in four categories: management, social and economic, natural and cultural, and environmental.

This action plan is one of two foundational documents that will inform the Partnership's work moving forward.

It is available to all partners to help inform local decision-making and to provide insights for how to develop regenerative tourism products and services, and public and private infrastructure that is financially and environmentally sustainable.

External Resource: The Partnership worked with Green Step Solutions, a B.C.-based B Corporation with expertise in sustainable and regenerative destination development.

Flourishing Canvas Business Strategy Pilot Project

The Partnership was one of four organizations selected to participate in a Tourism Association of Canada sustainable tourism strategic planning pilot project to create destination stewardship organizations focused on regenerative development practices that align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

This project was initiated to explore how to bring Canadian destinations into alignment with global best practices of the United Nations' World Tourism Organization.

The two-month process utilized an innovative business strategy tool, the Flourishing Business Canvas, which integrates external social, economic

and environmental issues into organizational strategic planning

The result was a 20-year vision and strategy for the Partnership's organizational and governance structure.

The Flourishing Business Canvas is the second of two foundational documents for the Partnership moving forward.

It is available for partners to provide insight for further development and strategies, and to provide a model to them for how to shift operations towards the consideration of sustainable and regenerative principles.

External Resource: The pilot project was led by Bannikin Travel and Tourism, an Ottawa-based consultancy that specializes in experiential and regenerative destination development. Bannikin partners with the Toronto-based non-profit Flourishing Enterprise Co-lab, which developed the Flourishing Business Canvas.

Fundy Connects! Summit

The Partnership created this annual three-day in-person event to facilitate and accelerate the development of community-led solutions to systemic challenges.

It has now been held twice, in 2022 and 2023, the first week of November at Poley Mountain Resort. Its purpose is to bring together area operators, non-profit leaders, government officials, residents and investors to address systemic challenges and develop community-based regenerative approaches to development.

The 2022 inaugural Summit introduced the network concept to participants and reported on our Phase One findings, including identifying four priority issues: labour and training, infrastructure, housing and regenerative tourism development.

The outcome of the 2022 Summit was an action agenda for the newly-created Rural Upper Fundy Partnership that focused on addressing systemic housing, labour and infrastructure challenges, and designing a governance model and scope of work for the Partnership.

External Resources: The 2022 Summit featured presentations from the following experts.

- Dor Assia, project manager, Shorefast
- Cecelia Brooks, Wabanaki Tree Spirits Tour, Canadian Rivers Institute and Mi'kmaw Wolastoqey Centre, University of New Brunswick
- Emilie Comeau-Sinclair, executive director, Destination Canada
- Jonathan Foster, executive director Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism
- Rob Holmes, founder, GLP Films (Maine)
- Jane McCulloch, principal, Terminus Consulting
- Mike Overend, director of destination development and stewardship, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA)
- Ellen Walker-Matthews, CEO, TOTA

Lead practitioner Lisa Hrabluk facilitated the three-day Summit, with support from Evaluation practitioner Jamie Gamble.

The 2023 Summit reported on the results of our Phase Two activities by emphasizing the work and expertise being developed in the region to develop community-led solutions that sustain and steward communities.

The three-day Summit was co-facilitated by Lisa Hrabluk, Jamie Gamble and Micha Fardy.

Community Expertise: The 2023 Summit featured presentations from the following local practitioners.

- Javid Brown, manager, Hopewell Rocks
- Joanne Butland, member, Chepody Community Revitalization Committee (CCRC)
- Mike Carpenter, co-owner, Bay of Fundy Adventures/ Old Molly's Bar
- Janet Clouston, executive director, Albert County Historical Society and Museum
- Micha Fardy, executive director, Friends of Fundy
- Jamie Hare, general manager, Poley Mountain
- Patrick Kemp, executive director, Forest Dale Home
- Audra Jacombs, member, CCRC
- David Jacombs, member, CCRC
- Aubrey Smith, Sussex Valley All-Terrain Club
- Phyllis Sutherland, Ponderosa Pines Campground,
- Jason Thorne, Community Services Director, Town of Sussex

External Resources: The 2023 Summit utilized the following subject-specific experts.

- Celes Davar, Earth Rhythms
- Jonathan Foster, executive director Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism
- Vanessa Paesani, Pond-Deshpande Centre

Regional Trails Solutions Prototype

The Partnership worked with local and national organizations to facilitate planning for a region-wide multi-purpose trail system. Through this work, the Upper Bay of Fundy has established itself as a national leader in community-first trail development.

This project was identified as a priority at the 2022 Fundy Connects! Summit. In this first year, the Partnership worked to build greater understanding and trust between non-motorized and motorized trail proponents. Participants identified the Partnership's approach as a first-of-its-kind in Atlantic Canada, both for the breadth of participation and its community-first approach.

As one participant reported: "It's opened the eyes of a lot of people. The communications between various groups and communities has helped in educating people on the language needed to make these things happen. How important collaboration is. How we're all trying to do sort of the same thing, that we're not competing with each other. If we can actually make it a regional thing, there's a pretty good chance we'll all be successful."

Lisa Hrabluk conducted one-on-one interviews with local participants in order to analyze the effectiveness of the Partnership's first year. With this information, Jamie Gamble provided a year one evaluation report at the 2023 Summit.

External Resources: The Partnership worked with TransCanada Trail and Mountain Bike Atlantic, with the former committing to consider innovative funding models and approaches to further the Partnership's work moving forward.

Staff Housing Solutions Prototype

Staff housing was identified as the number one barrier to growth by local operators during the Project's initial public engagement activities, and following the results of a facilitated session on the topic at the 2022 Fundy Connects! Summit.

To begin the process of developing community-first solutions, the Partnership organized a Community Innovation Day in February 2024. It brought about 40 people together in Sussex for a day-long facilitated hackathon. The event was a short, focused ideation session that brought together people with the problem (lived experience, i.e. operators, residents, staff and local government officials) with people with technical expertise (i.e. builders, service providers, investors and regulators) to develop potential prototypes.

The session was co-facilitated by Lisa Hrabluk and Dan Doiron, professor of business innovation at the University of New Brunswick Saint John, and co-founder of New Brunswick's Venture Validation Program for early-stage entrepreneurs.

Following the results of the Innovation Day, the Partnership connected with Mylene Vincent, the newly appointed executive director of New Brunswick's Housing Hub. The Partnership arranged for a guided tour of housing challenges and opportunities in Fundy-Albert, including underutilized housing stock owned by Parks Canada, available municipal land, and local proponents actively involved in seeking innovative approaches to the region's housing crisis.

This included meeting with Patrick Kemp, executive director of Forest Dale, a nursing home in Riverside-Albert, who intended to build non-profit housing for nursing staff. This work led to the creation of the Fundy Albert Housing Association to further develop non-profit housing options.

JPrep Online Staff Training Prototype

Local operators also listed staff training as a challenge because most lack the capacity to provide staff with the time and attention required to properly brief them on the region and its attributes, as well as complete government training courses.

Poley Mountain executive director and working group member Jamie Hare suggested the Partnership consider developing online training, using the platform Poley Mountain used to train its 200+ staff quickly and efficiently.

Jamie facilitated the introduction with Collingwood, ON-based JPrep, an online learning management system.

The Partnership created and launched a small-scale prototype with a select group of operators, in time for the 2023 summer season. It included government-mandated safety training, and a destination onboarding training module, called the 'Ambassador Module', which provided employers and employees with the language and stories to enhance visitors' experiences and direct them to explore the region beyond the popular Provincial and Federal Park attractions.

In its post-pilot survey, over half of staff surveyed said they used the information daily, and the majority of employers said they would likely use it next season and wanted the Partnership to expand the number of modules offered.

Driftscape Self-Guided Tour Prototype

As the Partnership's network grew, members began to see the value of thinking and acting as one region. This led a number of participants to ask the Partnership to develop a simple tool to introduce visitors to the Upper Fundy region and encourage exploration.

Town of Sussex community services director and working group member Jason Thorne, asked if the Partnership would be interested in building off its established relationship with Driftscape a Waterloo, ON-based developer of a place-based discovery and travel app, which provides geo-fencing to capture data on how users travel through the region.

Jamie facilitated the introduction and the Partnership created and launched a small-scale prototype during the 2023 summer season, with marketing participation from a select group of operators.

During its short, eight-week pilot period, the app reported 1,418 total views (89 unique visits), with 92 percent of users located in New Brunswick, and 8 percent visitors from elsewhere.

The Driftscape content was adapted to create the JPrep Ambassador Module, which enabled the Partnership to leverage finite contractor resources.

The Partnership will expand the self-guided tour offerings as it moves forward with its work.

Community Building, Facilitation and Engagement

During Phase Two, the Partnership continued to meet and present to local groups and governments. Its emphasis is on facilitating exchanges of information, ideas and expertise to develop community-led solutions that sustain and steward rural communities and ecological zones.

To date, that has included the following.

- Identify and leverage capital to address systemic challenges.
- Identify and convene community, municipal, provincial and national stakeholders/partners to work on shared projects to produce shared benefits.
- Local data gathering and analysis.
- Work with local stakeholders to align local projects with provincial and national funding and program opportunities.

In September 2023, the volunteer Chipoudy Communities Revitalization Committee (CCRC) asked the Partnership to facilitate a community conversation about the development potential for the corner where Hwys. 915 and 114 meet.

The CCRC had recently agreed to purchase the Anderson Hollow Lighthouse and the Old Bank of New Brunswick building and its contents, formerly a museum and café, from the Albert County Heritage Trust.

The CCRC and the Partnership (RUFF) co-hosted a community event, facilitated by Lisa Hrabluk, in early October to start a conversation about encouraging development that makes the Old Bank corner the centre of a bustling local scene.

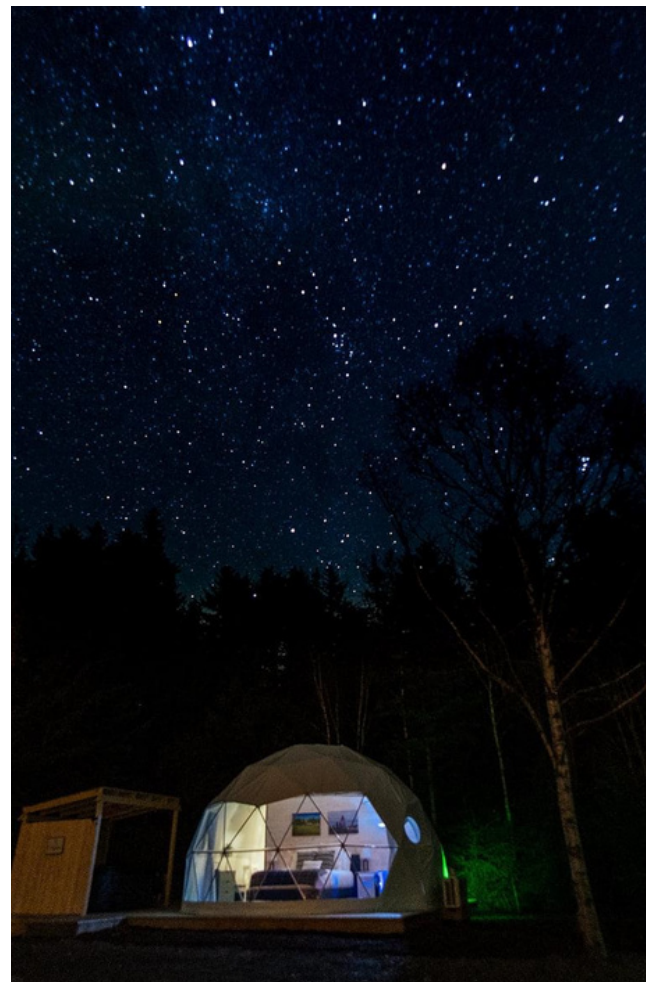
Participants agreed the corner should be developed in a way that honours and supports community values of sustainability and safety (watch those highway speeds).

Outdoor adventure (biking, hiking, kayaking, birding, etc) combined with local culture (food, heritage, arts and craft) could convert the corner into a bustling centre for Riverside-Albert, including providing shuttles and other modes of transportation to other scenic places in the area.

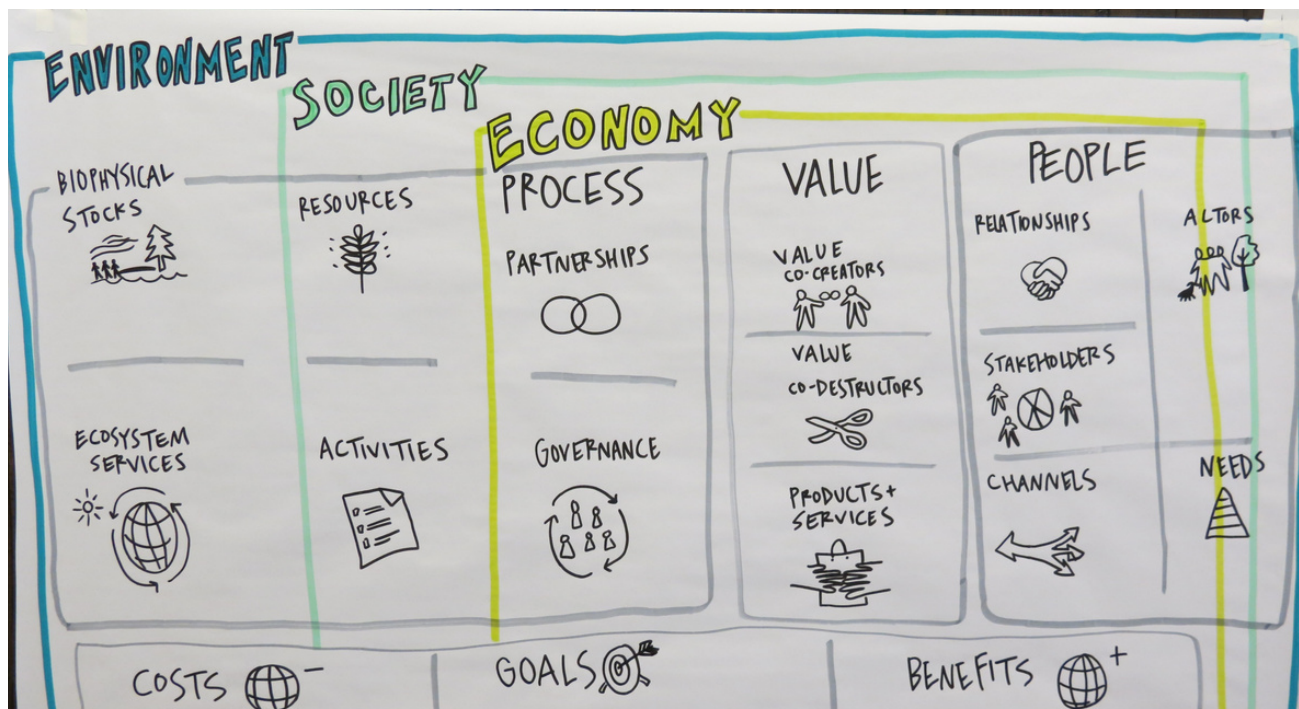
The Partnership will continue its work with the CCRC moving forward.

In addition to its local presentations, the Partnership was also a featured presenter at three major conferences in November 2023.

- Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick
- Tourism Industry Association of Canada
- Union of New Brunswick Municipalities



PHASE TWO OUTCOME: IMPACT ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MODEL



The Upper Bay of Fundy Rural Region Destination Development Project has produced the following nine outcomes.

- Conducted baseline research and analysis.
- Developed a shared vision, principles of engagement, and priorities that unite three regions to create the Rural Upper Fundy Partnership.
- Piloted ambitious, achievable and measurable initiatives, and based on results determined how to scale results over the next three to five years.
- Prototyped five innovative approaches to complex systemic challenges that are barriers to destination development.
- Increased knowledge of regenerative tourism and the UN SDGs among operators, industry associations and governments.
- Doubled the Partnership's committed stakeholders in 12 months, increasing local leadership capacity for moving destination development forward.
- Gained regional and national attention as a leader in community-led innovation.
- Created an annual summit to accelerate community learning and innovation.
- Co-created performance indicators with Partnership members to enable community monitoring and measurement of Partnership's work.

Thanks to the work of its members, and the ongoing support of ACOA and the Government of New Brunswick, the Rural Upper Fundy Partnership is ready to scale, according to the following strategy and plan.

Organizational Mission and Structure

The Rural Upper Fundy Partnership is a region-wide network with a mission to explore and incubate community-led solutions that sustain and steward rural communities in New Brunswick's Upper Bay of Fundy ecological zone.

The Partnership will continue to be administered by the Friends of Fundy, which has a mandate to enhance public awareness and appreciation of the cultural and natural heritage of Fundy National Park and increase engagement in the surrounding area, the Rural Upper Bay of Fundy Region.

The Partnership's mission and work are informed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and regenerative development practices because in the Upper Bay of Fundy the environment is the economy.

Shared Purpose and Values

The purpose of the Rural Upper Fundy Network is to bring people together to share expertise, knowledge, resources and information to co-create community-led solutions and maximize opportunities for the people who call the Upper Bay of Fundy home.

Local Economies First

Local residents, operators and investors want to work together to coordinate, collaborate and co-create how they want to develop their home region for the enjoyment of residents and guests alike.

Shared Regional Benefits

The region will develop, promote and invest in uniquely rural experiences that create shared regional benefits that deepen connections and understanding between rural and urban communities.

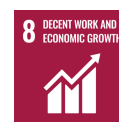
Regenerative Year-round Destination Development

The completion of the connection road between the Fundy Trail Parkway and Fundy National Park changes everything. Through destination development & stewardship, tourism can contribute to the wealth and well-being of the communities that make up the Rural Upper Bay of Fundy.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Partnership's mission and work is informed by the UN SDGs and regenerative development practices, including work on systemic challenges such as infrastructure, housing, social inclusion, transportation, and community well-being.

The Partnership's work focuses on five SDGs.



Decent Work and Economic Growth

Tourism, as services trade, is one of the top four export earners globally, currently providing one in ten jobs worldwide. Decent work opportunities in tourism, particularly for youth and women, and policies that favour better diversification through tourism value chains can enhance tourism positive socio-economic impacts.



Sustainable Cities and Communities

Tourism can advance urban infrastructure and accessibility, promote regeneration and preserve cultural and natural heritage, assets on which tourism depends. Investment in green infrastructure (efficient transportation, potable water) should result in smarter and greener communities for not only residents but also tourists.



Responsible Consumption and Production

The tourism sector needs to adopt sustainable consumption and production (SCP) modes, accelerating the shift towards sustainability. Tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for tourism including for energy, water, waste, biodiversity and job creation will result in enhanced economic, social and environmental outcomes.



Life Below Water

Coastal and maritime tourism rely on healthy marine ecosystems. Tourism development must be a part of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in order to help conserve and preserve fragile marine ecosystems and serve as a vehicle to promote a blue economy, contributing to the sustainable use of marine resources.



Life on Land

Rich biodiversity and natural heritage are often the main reasons why tourists visit a destination. Tourism can play a major role if sustainably managed in fragile zones, not only in conserving and preserving biodiversity, but also in generating revenue as an alternative livelihood to local communities.



Shared Principles of Engagement

Change happens at the speed of trust. We build trust through how we act and model behaviour towards others. That's why the Partnership has established principles of engagement – our ground rules – for creating safe, welcoming and inclusive spaces and experiences for everyone regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, visible or hidden ability, physical appearance, race, religion, or creed.

These principles are based on principles practised by the North American B Corp professional development series, BLD.



Lead with Empathy

Appreciate others as people with abundant experiences & perspectives.



Value Diverse Perspectives

Honour the unique experiences each of us brings to our conversations.



Move Up, Move Back

Move up to share your perspective and move back to listen to others' contributions.



Stay Judgement Free

Of others and of yourself.



Practice Radical Inclusion

Make sure everyone, especially those historically at the margins, feels truly included.



Advocate for your Emotional Wellbeing

Take care of yourself & your team; speak up when you feel overwhelmed.



Get Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable

Stretch yourself to consider new ways of looking at how we work, interact and support each other, and how we can collaborate to address shared challenges and opportunities.

Community-First Strategic Focus

The Partnership will use a four-pronged strategic focus to design and iterate a three-year workplan. The strategy adheres to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) guidelines of strategic leadership, effective execution and sustainable governance.

Research and Evaluation

Gather baseline data and conduct gap analyses to determine how to align the Partnership and region with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and regenerative development practices.

Community Building, Facilitation and Engagement

Continue to meet and present to local groups and government officials while also developing new partnerships, building the regional network and exploring opportunities for further community-led collaboration.

Partnership Learning Events

Design and host in-person events to facilitate and accelerate the development of community-led solutions to systemic challenges.

Prototype Community Solutions

Solving complex systemic challenges comes with a common problem: who is responsible for incubating innovative solutions?

The Partnership's research, engagement and study of best practices found that while local people and organizations are supportive of change initiatives, no one organization has the capacity to initiate and support projects, particularly ones that support the whole region.

The Partnership fills this gap by coordinating community-designed prototypes and processes that:

- support operators and organizations that want to co-design and test regenerative development practices; and,
- facilitate collaborative approaches that bring together local and external stakeholders to solve systemic challenges.

A Three-year Work Plan – 2024-2026

Design thinking goes hand-in-hand with asset-based community development, which means the Partnership's work plan is solutions-based and highly iterative, employing prototyping and testing of innovative ideas before committing to scaling region-wide.

This work plan reflects the key priorities identified through the Partnership's work to date. As has been its practice, the Partnership will evaluate results and publicly report its findings to members annually at the Fundy Connects! Summit. Based on the feedback it receives, the Partnership will adjust and revise the work plan to maximize chances of success.

Management Team Development

The working group will transition into a management team, to ensure proper governance and oversight of the Partnership. This will include:

- recruit new members of management team
- create terms of reference
- implement Flourishing Business Canvas recommendations
- establish and manage annual budget
- determine sustainable funding/revenue model
- establish information sharing/communications channels for Partnership members
- determine issue-specific action teams to advance community-led innovation and prototyping
- Design Partnership website and accompanying social media channels

Activate GreenStep Sustainability Plan

This includes:

- incorporate regenerative tourism learning into sub-sectors of visitor economy beginning with:
 - outdoor adventure experiences
 - culinary/agri-food experiences
 - astronomy/dark sky experiences and accreditation
- continue to practise and expand reach of asset-based community development methodologies
- Support municipal and regional government learning and integration into planning and development practises

- Integrate work with the provincial Climate Change Action Plan to activate sustainable planning and operational changes by operators, local industry associations and governments

UN SDGs Workforce Attraction and Retention

For local operators, organizations and governments to fully capitalize and scale regenerative practices, they will need an informed and available workforce. The Partnership will assist with this in the following ways:

- Co-design a specialized workforce attraction and retention strategy with regenerative and sustainable experts, including the UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Region and Stonehammer UNESCO Global Geopark.
- Prototype activities created in the strategy
- Support work of the Fundy Albert Housing Association to apply regenerative and sustainable principles to non-profit housing design and builds
- Develop Community Economic Investment Profiles that emphasize community-first regenerative and sustainable principles, beginning with Chepody Community Revitalization Committee's work to develop the Hwys. 915 and 114 intersection.

Iterate and Scale JPrep and Driftscape

The Partnership will build off the learnings from the initial pilots in the following ways:

- Co-develop next iterations with lead community partners, including local chambers and tourism associations
- Incorporate Phase One asset inventory and digital assessment results into project design and rollout
- Expand use by onboarding additional businesses
- Revise web-based interface, based on user feedback

Multi-Stakeholder Regional Trail Development

The Partnership will continue the work it began in Phase Two including:

- Develop shared purpose, priorities and principles of engagement for non-motorized and motorized proponents and associations of regional trail development
- Advance a 'Trails Town' model that encourages regional planning and development that connects trails to community commercial districts to welcome trail users to local restaurants, accommodations and additional activities
- Work with national partner TransCanada Trails to accelerate trail classifications

Fundy Connects! Summit

The Partnership will continue to hold an annual summit to:

- report on progress
- provide continuous learning opportunities to attendees
- facilitate community conversations about issues important to network
- connect local members with subject matter experts
- promote and advance regenerative business and municipal planning practices

What follows over the next two pages is a graphic representation of the sum total of activities, categorized by the Partnership's four-pronged strategic focus.



ACTIVITIES BY STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

	Research and Evaluation	Community Building, Facilitation and Engagement	Learning Events	Prototype Community Solutions
Phase One				
Digital asset map	✓	✓		
Digital footprint assessment	✓			
Heritage and cultural inventory	✓	✓		
Regional development plans review, 1996-2022	✓	✓		
Community tourism attitudes survey	✓	✓		
UN SDGs regional readiness assessment	✓			
Phase Two				
GreenStep Sustainability Assessment	✓	✓	✓	
Flourishing Business Canvas Pilot	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fundy Connects! Summit	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional Trails Solutions Prototype	✓	✓		✓
Staff Housing Solutions Prototype		✓	✓	✓
JPrep Online Staff Training	✓		✓	✓

ACTIVITIES BY STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

	Research and Evaluation	Community Building, Facilitation and Engagement	Learning Events	Prototype Community Solutions
Driftscape Self-Guided Tours	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Sessions		✓	✓	
2024-2026 Strategic Priorities & Work Plan				
Management Team Development	✓	✓		✓
Activate GreenStep Sustainability Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓
UN SDGs Workforce Attraction and Retention	✓	✓	✓	✓
Iterate and Scale JPrep and Driftscape	✓	✓		✓
Multi-Stakeholder Regional Trail Development	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fundy Connects! Summit	✓	✓	✓	✓