



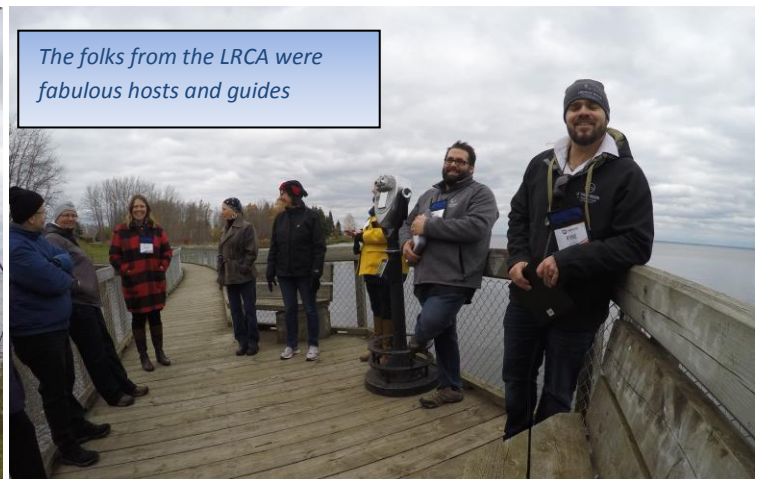
## Heart of the Continent Partnership

**ROUNDTABLE – October 13-14, 2016**

**Lakehead Region Conservation Authority - Thunder Bay**

Attendees: Trevor Gibb – Ontario Parks, Richard Periman- Deputy Forest Supervisor SNF, John Cameron- Thunder Bay Tourism, Lisa Radosevich-Craig– USDA SNF, Frank Jewell – Chair and St Louis County Lynda Horman, Ann Schwaller-Wilderness Specialist, Superior National Forest, Alana Bishop-Councilor Oliver Paippoonge, Ed Shields – Chair Path of the Paddle, Clara Butikofer- Neebing Municipality, Doug Franchot- Voyageur National Park Association, Mary Somnis-Cook County EDA, Tammy Cook, LRCA, Ryne Gilliam LRCA, Ryan Mackett-LRCA, Stephanie Reid –Thunder Bay Tourism, Giannina Veltri – Confederation College Program Director, Kerry Wirkunen Con-College, Rodrigo Sandoval –Con College, Seija McKay – Con College, Jackie Gauthier Con College, Cody Hutchinson-Con College, Linda Braun MNDM, Nicki Schiewe-Tourism Northern Ontario, Valerie Marasco Cook County emergency responses, Chris Stromberg HOCP coordinator.

### A trip to Mission Marsh



The Steering Committee was able to meet for informal talks Thursday at the 5 Forks Restaurant with a meeting prior to the afternoon field trip. We then car-pooled to Mission Island Marsh Conservation Area where Frank Jewell was able to talk to the media about the Heart of the Continent Partnership and our Roundtable talks in Thunder Bay. Paul Pepe from Thunder Bay Tourism and Tammy Cook, the Chief Executive Officer of Lakehead Region Conservation Authority also had their moments in front of the camera.

We were then taken on a walk of the trails, the boardwalk and of course view the Lake. Mission Marsh is known for one of the best places to view the Sleeping Giant, part of the large peninsula that stretches across the water out from Thunder Bay



*Frank Jewell, HOCF Chair with  
Thunder Bay media*



*Ryne Gilliam and Ryan Mackett - LRCA*



*John Cameron- Thunder Bay  
Tourism with ship and Sleeping  
Giant in the distance*



*Mission Marsh is made up of a nice mix of boardwalk  
and grass covered trails with the right amount  
interpretational signs and kiosks to keep the visitor's  
interest but not overwhelm them. It is obvious that  
there has been good thought/planning into the  
conservation areas. Ryan talked of the growing  
interest in geocaching but he said the main reason for  
visits was still the view of the lake and a place to see  
birds and wildlife. [MISSION ISLAND MARSH](#)*

Our guided tour included the history of the Mission Island Marsh, the trials and tribulations of erosion, visitor usage and trail and boardwalk upkeep.

LRCA continued with a presentation back at their administrative office and gave us an overview of the Conservation Authority in the Thunder Bay area. "Conservation Authorities undertake a broad range of programs, including: watershed management, erosion control, flood forecasting & warning, recreation, water level monitoring, plan input & review, environmental education and stewardship. We improve quality of life by actively providing Conservation Areas for semi-passive recreation and environmental

education opportunities.” They own the conservation areas that they manage and pay taxes on those lands.



Clara Butikofer- HOCPS  
Steering Committee  
Neebing Township and  
Board director of [Path of  
the Paddle Association](#)



Ryan Mackett presenting at LRCA  
Administration boardroom

Our evening presentation hosted by Thunder Bay Tourism and Wilderness Supply Company was a book launch party to celebrate Aric Fishman's "Thunder Bay Climbing" a 400 page guide book to rock climbing in and around the Thunder Bay area from Pigeon River to Sleeping Giant Provincial Parks

**Local adventurer** - Aric Fishman who also owns/operates a local guiding business called [Outdoor Skills & Thrills](#) officially released his guide book – *Thunder Bay Climbing*

The book launch event was hosted by City of Thunder Bay – Tourism to promote rock and ice climbing as a tourism destination driver. The book aims to promote responsible, safe and legal access for climbing for outdoor adventurers looking to come to the Thunder Bay, Nipigon and north of Lake Superior region here in the Heart of the Continent.

Aric spoke about his 3 year journey to produce this 400 page comprehensive resource that highlights more than 650 climbs throughout Northwestern Ontario.



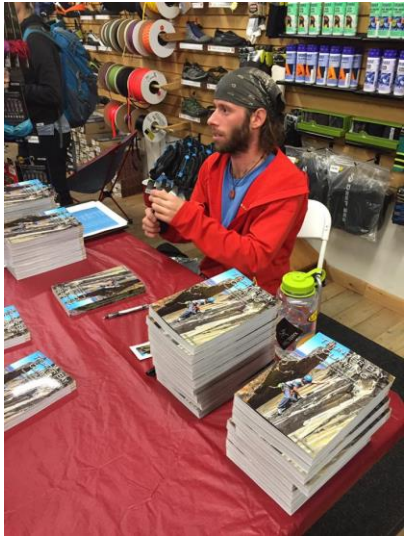
A few words from Frank Jewell, Chair of the Steering Committee of [Heart of the Continent](#), spoke about our bi-national organization committed to the health of nature and communities along the Ontario / Minnesota border. Frank was able to connect with the group from the climbing community on the importance of partnerships and promoting the entire area, regardless of the border. He invited them to visit and enjoy what both sides of the border had to offer.



*Chair of the Heart of the Continent Partnership Frank Jewell addresses the crowd of over 75 people that came for the book launch Thursday night*

Aric's venture has been enthusiastically supported by prominent industry leaders such as [Gripped Magazine](#), [Thunder Bay Tourism](#), [Tourism Northwestern Ontario](#) and many more local regional businesses and organizations.

Books were available for sale before and during the event.



*Hey look... Chris, Lynda, and Doug! Wilderness Supply Company was a great facility for the book launch; lots of great outdoor gear*

**Friday morning** started with a welcoming from Frank Jewell and introductions



*John Cameron does a great presentation on geo-tourism – Exploring Heart of the Continent through the eyes and voices of the people who live there*

John Cameron with Thunder Bay Tourism and one of our portal managers for Travel the Heart geotourism website, presented on what geotourism is, our affiliation with National Geographic, and our connection with other geotourism sites. He talked of our accomplishments and our continued goals.

Speakers from Tourism and public lands did short talks on managing recreation and tourism.



*Giannina Veltri – Program Coordinator for Confederation College Tourism Travel and Eco-adventure Program, speaks on the College's program, the student's participation, the College's connection to the area and the opportunity to work with HOCP on this initiative.*



*Paul Pepe – Thunder Bay Tourism, speaks on Thunder Bay's commitment to being Canada's premiere adventure city.*



*Richard Perriman- Deputy Forest Supervisor, Superior National Forest USFS.*



*Clara Butikofer speaking on behalf of Path of the Paddle Association*

## **Recreation and Tourism Summit**

The goal of the workshop was to share ideas and expand recreation and tourism partnerships and we did this in a number of ways:

1. For those already involved we wanted to re-engage to ensure we capture the special values, places and stories of our region.
2. We also strived to identify ways to work together across boundaries to provide sustainable recreation and tourism now and into the future.
3. We also wanted to create more listings from tourism businesses and organizations on the [Heart of the Continent Geotourism website](#) created with National Geographic. Students from the second year Tourism Program at Confederation College were engaged to create listings as part of their marketing classes. A number of the listings posted for submission were reviewed by the group in the room that included five students from the college program. Two listing were given by the nod to go live, with suggestions on how some of the other listings submitted could be improved.
4. The group while reviewing nominations also discussed how to further market the [TravelTheHeart](#) website with insight given by Tourism Thunder Bay's digital media coordinator, Stephanie Reid on using a modest marketing budget for Facebook and Instagram. Facebook advertising and Facebook

post boosts were the two marketing channels presented with John Cameron from Tourism Thunder Bay suggesting that more details on budget to secure funds and roll out be developed in a plan.

### **Land Manager's Meeting**

In Attendance – Lori Dowling-Hanson (via phone)-MN DNR, Trevor Gibb- Quetico Provincial Park, Valerie Marasco-Cook County, Richard Periman-Superior National Forest, Ann Schwaller – Superior National Forest, Chris Stromberg – HOCP Coordinator/Quetico Provincial Park. (State and Cook County new members of this group)

Ann gave quick history of how the group got together and the types of topics shared/discussed in the past, and asked the group's opinion on the future group objectives.

Topics discussed included:

- Science and research Committee and science symposium,
- Volunteer Initiative and interagency cooperation to help support Sister Sites Arrangement
- Health and safety Act considerations for Ontario Parks operations
- Non-native/invasive species
- Cross border cooperation with wild and prescribed fire and SAR.
- A continued cooperation and communication with cross border projects, success stories and law enforcement.
- Continuing to invite and foster First Nation interests in HOCP business and management discussions.
- Tow-boat operations/ opportunities in SNF/VNP/QPP, general mining in the Heart, and heritage river assessment
- Sister Sites Arrangement updated and signed.



**NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC**

The Tourism and Recreation Workshop wrapped up with Frank Biasi from National Geographic giving an update on the Geotourism project with a web presentation. Biasi's presentation showed how the Heart of the Continent Map Guide project is performing compared to other 20 international destinations being promoted by National Geographic.

The numbers showed the \$40,000 four-month marketing campaign completed by W.A. Fisher at the end of July generated web traffic ranking Heart of the Continent in the middle of the pack just behind the Crown of the Continent.

The presentation also provided ideas on ways to promote the [TravelTheHeart](#) site. The use of Link Badges and Embeddable Widgets by those already listed on the site should be encouraged and the idea of generating funds through advertising and sponsorship was put forth.



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