



HEADWATERS

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STRATEGIC OVERVIEW 2015-2016





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Building on the success of 2014/15

2014/2015 saw the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association make significant strides in its value proposition as key partner to our industry and municipal partners across the Headwaters region.

Along with expanding core funding by approximately 40% (or \$75,000) through partnerships and funding opportunities, the Tourism Association was successful in actively engaging new partners and developing new sector initiatives as a result of our Leading With the Best program.

Marketing and consumer engagement were expanded with a comprehensive digital marketing strategy that included development of an editorial and photographic library, a digitally responsive consumer website, and the development of a new consumer brand that will be activated in 2015/16.



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Moving into 2015/2016

The Tourism Association will continue to focus its efforts on integrating tourism into the regional economic development strategies of our partner municipalities, and help build a robust and thriving tourism industry by working directly with tourism stakeholders across the Headwaters region.

2015/16 is the final year of our existing municipal partner service agreements, and it is imperative that the Association work with our municipal funding partners to understand expectations and develop an integrated strategy for achieving a shared vision and goals for tourism across the region for 2016 and beyond.



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2015/2016 Priorities

- Launch of new Headwaters consumer brand into the marketplace
- Expansion and increased engagement of tourism stakeholders in Headwaters' Leading With the Best program
- Headwaters TO2015 Pan Am Games strategy activation
- Continued development of digital consumer engagement, including expansion of editorial, photographic & rich media content
- Leverage alignment/partnership with Central Counties Tourism to support consumer marketing at DMO (destination marketing organization/Headwaters) level
- Product development in key sectors:
 - Horse & Country
 - Fresh & Local
 - Nature & Leisure
 - Fun & Festive
 - Arts & Heritage



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New Consumer Brand

Launch of new Headwaters consumer brand into the marketplace

- Design, publish & distribute Headwaters 2015 Visitor Guide into the marketplace in May 2015 – first introduction of new brand to consumers
- Identify PR and media opportunities to showcase brand
- Modify website to represent new brand identity
- Update all social media platforms to reflect new brand
- Update all organizational collateral and promotional materials to reflect new brand
- Develop a strategy for LWB partners to integrate and link to regional brand
- Work with partner municipalities to ensure integration of Headwaters Tourism brand with municipal brands (enhance and leverage efforts, rather than compete)



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Leading With The Best

Leading With the Best - expand & increase program engagement

- Retain current participation rate in program
- Increase program engagement by 50%
- Continue to modify program, as required, to meet needs of tourism operators
- Identify potential LWB customers based on established market-ready criteria
- Identify “near” market-ready customers and build a plan to assist them to achieve market-ready status
- Build targets that support product development strategies & priorities
- Work with Central Counties Tourism to identify LWB partners to work with for further experiential tourism development and marketing opportunities



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Pan Am Games

Headwaters TO2015/16 Pan Am strategy activation

- Working with the Headwaters Equine Leadership Group, launch Headwaters Horse Country signage program by June 1st, 2015
- Develop and launch the Headwaters Pan Am Taste trail (June 12th to August 15th, 2015)
- Launch regional tourism ambassador training to business and community groups (be completed by June 30th, 2015)
- Public showings of Headwaters Horse Country signature image at locations throughout the region during the Pan Am Games
- Partner with Equine Canada and the Ontario Equestrian Federation to attract international visitors to the Headwaters region and showcase our equine assets
- Utilize Headwaters Visitor Guide to showcase Headwaters' Pan Am offerings
- Create a consumer section on Headwaters.ca website to provide Pan Am focused visitor information



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Consumer Engagement

Expand digital consumer engagement

- Develop a plan to move marketing manager from part-time to full-time employment for 2015/16 to ensure continued success in digital consumer engagement
- Seek funding opportunities to expand editorial and photographic libraries, and develop rich media content options
- Research and develop meaningful reporting metrics as baseline for strategy assessment
- Review current digital platforms based on strategic goals and modify distribution channels and strategies as required
- Train equine project coordinator to assist in digital consumer engagement for Headwaters Horse Country initiative
- Leverage relationship with Central Counties Tourism to expand engagement and increase digital profile for Headwaters and our regional tourism partners



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Consumer Marketing

Increase CCT marketing support at DMO level

- Work with Central Counties Tourism to review and understand Headwaters' marketing strategies
- Develop an integrated plan that will encourage Central Counties support in marketing Headwaters' regional tourism operators through the Headwaters brand platform
- Recognize that CCT marketing support must align with CCT's broader strategic goals
- Ensure regional tourism operators understand the benefit of leveraging their own marketing initiatives through Headwaters Tourism, as supported by Central Counties Tourism
- Establish reporting metrics that will provide meaningful data to assess ROI (for both CCT and Headwaters) of an integrated marketing strategy



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Product Development

Horse & Country

- Work with Headwaters Equine Leadership Group to implement the Headwaters Horse Country strategic plan for 2015 and beyond
- Develop an integrated communications plans to ensure sharing of information and promotional opportunities between Headwaters Horse Country (industry focus) and Headwaters Horse & Country (tourism/visitor focus)
- Report on final outcomes of the Ontario Trillium Foundation funding (funding expires in February 2016)
- Work with HELG to develop and implement a sustainability plan that will ensure the continuation of this initiative beyond the Ontario Trillium funding
- Continue to support and promote the annual Headwaters Stable Tour as a key call-to-action to showcase the equine sector in the region



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Product Development

Fresh & Local

- Establish a chair for the Headwaters culinary tourism committee, and ensure representation at the Headwaters Board level
- Build on the success of the inaugural Taste of Maple and Taste of the Harvest programs in 2015
- Develop a Headwaters Fresh & Local Event Series for 2015; establish criteria for participation; engage partners; develop marketing strategy; goal is to have a minimum of 6 Fresh & Local signature events in 2015
- In conjunction with Central Counties Headwaters field manager, identify two potential culinary “signature experiences” and help develop an Ontario Signature Experience standard tourism experience in Headwaters
- Support the development and implementation of the Headwaters Pan Am Taste Trail
- Showcase Headwaters Fresh & Local products at annual Taste of Tourism awards



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Product Development

Nature & Leisure

- Implementation of Headwaters Tourism soft adventure strategy in partnership with the Toronto Region and Credit Valley Conservation Authorities
- Identify and recruit a committee chair for a Nature & Leisure/Outdoor Adventure committee
- Identify key demand generators for soft adventure in the region and develop a strategy to leverage these experiences to increase visitation
- Develop consistent messaging and editorial focus to support positioning the area as a soft adventure destination
- Build strong content on Headwaters.ca Nature & Leisure section
- Research and recommend public relations opportunities to support the region's positioning as a soft adventure destination



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Product Development

Fun & Festive

- Identify and create inventory of regional festivals & events
- Identify festivals and events with a tourism focus and encourage their engagement in LWB programs
- Identify festivals and events that show significant tourism potential and, in partnership with Central Counties Headwaters field manager, support their efforts to become more tourism focused
- Work with Central Counties Tourism to identify festival & event expansion and development (not marketing) as a key priority for CCT partnership funding
- Work with Central Counties Headwaters field manager to identify opportunities and facilitate engagement of more regional tourism businesses as partners/supporters/participants of key regional festivals & events



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Product Development

Arts & Heritage

- Under the leadership of the Chair of the Arts & Culture sub-committee, continue to identify opportunities to support strategies of regional arts/culture/heritage groups that provide tourism potential
- Continue to populate and link to arts content on Headwaters.ca website
- Identify potential market-ready artisans and assist them in positioning their offerings through Headwaters Tourism's Leading With the Best program
- Facilitate partnerships between arts & culture organizations and individual artisans and other sector groups to enhance their marketplace presence
- Continue to present Headwaters art at annual Taste of Tourism awards



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Ongoing activities

Municipal Partnership & Integration

- Continue to work with partner municipalities to integrate tourism development into larger economic development strategies
- Work with economic development committees and staff, as well as sector and business organizations in the Headwaters region to further support business development and capacity building within the Headwaters framework
- Over the course of the year work with partner municipalities (staff and elected officials) to determine role of Headwaters Tourism Association to continue to grow the tourism sector into 2016 and beyond
- Develop and present a framework for a 2016-2020 municipal services agreement with all partner municipalities
- Provide regular updates to all Headwaters municipalities through monthly tourism updates (including ED report and Board minutes)
- Annual delegations to all partner municipalities to provide update and seek input on tourism undertakings



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Ongoing Activities

Regional Industry Engagement

- Host annual Tourism Symposium (in partnership with Central Counties Tourism) to support education, engagement and showcase opportunities for tourism operators in Headwaters
- Host a minimum of 3 education workshops throughout the year to support workforce development and tourism training for regional operators
- Continue to expand Leading With the Best program to engage more operators and support business capacity development
- Identify and work with tourism operators that have potential to become “signature experience” status operators and assist with moving them along the continuum to achieve this status
- Continue to work with regional sector, community and business groups to identify synergies, leverage collective impact, and expand programming as appropriate
- Act as an information hub to support tourism development and serve as a liaison to the larger tourism industry (Ontario Tourism, OTMPC, TIAO, OCTA etc) as well as other government agencies and funding sources, as appropriate
- Recognize tourism industry excellence at annual Taste of Tourism awards



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Ongoing Activities

Central Counties Tourism

- Work with Central Counties staff to develop a shared vision for tourism development in the Headwaters region and strive for true alignment in shared activities
- Position and ensure Headwaters Tourism strategies and priorities are identified, recognized and considered in all Central Counties Tourism plan development
- Continue to work with Central Counties to ensure CCT Field Manager supports tourism development and the regional priorities of the Headwaters region
- Work with Central Counties Tourism to ensure support of consumer marketing at the DMO/Headwaters level, in order to engage and provide benefit to tourism operators in the Headwaters region
- Work with Central Counties to ensure that Headwaters recipients of CCT partnership funding are integrated into the regional Headwaters tourism landscape
- Continue to provide strong representation on CCT Board of Directors – 4 director positions including Headwaters Tourism Executive Director and 3 Headwaters Tourism Board members



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Ongoing Activities

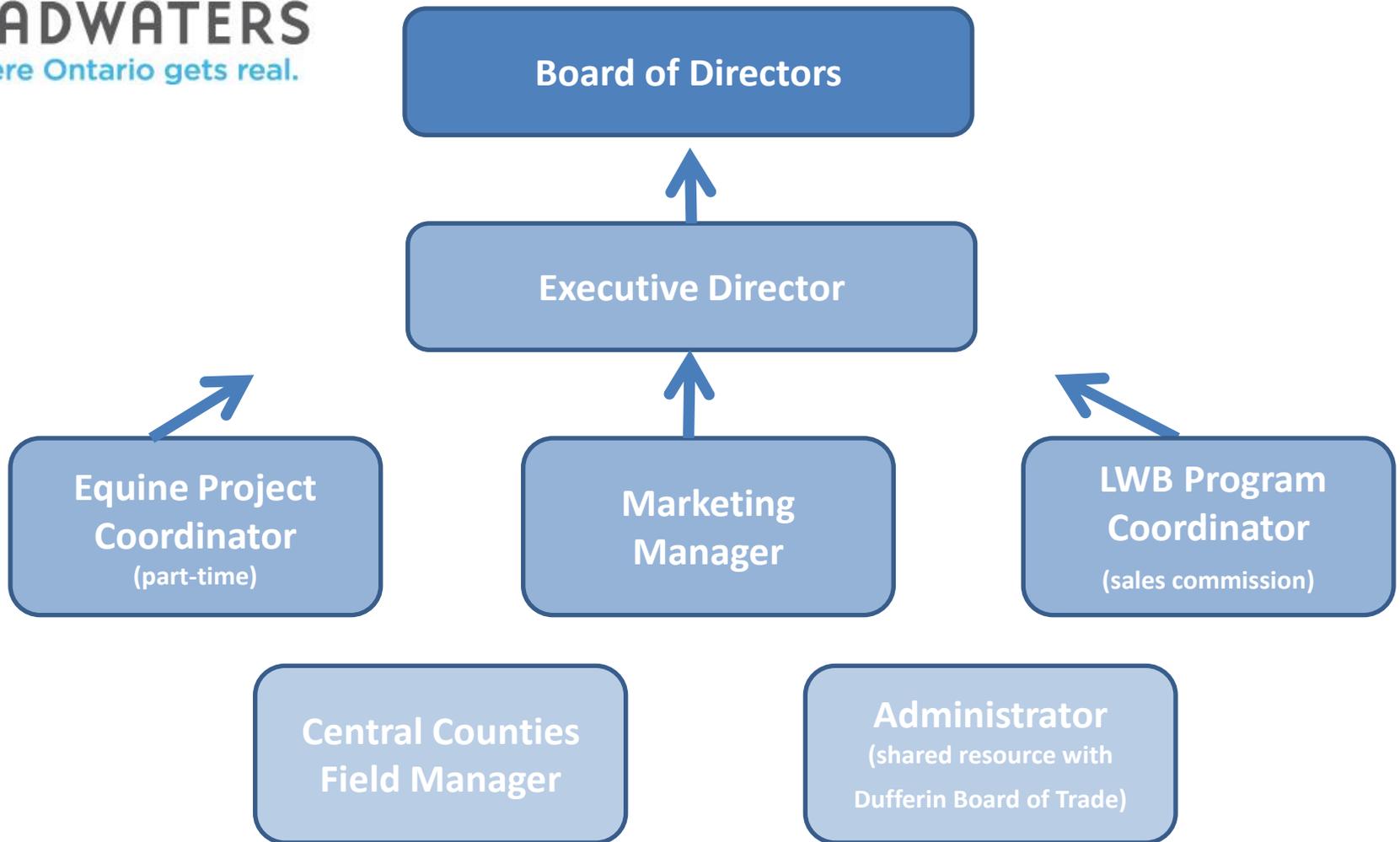
Long-Term Funding & Sustainability

- Continue to co-locate office and share resources, where appropriate, with Dufferin Board of Trade to take advantage of cost and resource synergies
- Leverage core organizational revenue to access funding & grant opportunities, where feasible
- Seek out partnership opportunities with non-traditional tourism partners, as appropriate, to expand program reach
- Continue to work with regional community and business organizations and sector groups to take extend program reach and leverage collective impact
- Produce annual report outlining value proposition of partner investment in tourism development (as contracted to Headwaters Tourism)
- Finalize recommendations and framework for 2016-2020 municipal services agreement



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Organizational Structure





Board of Directors

as of April 2015

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MUNICIPAL REPS

Laura Ryan
(Dufferin)

Rob Mezzapelli
(Caledon)

John Brennan
(Erin)

Sharon Martin
(Mono)

John Telfer
(Shelburne)

INDUSTRY REPS

Ross Millar (Equine)

Harvey Kolodny
(Arts/culture)

Bill Lidster (CVC)
(Outdoor Adventure)

Vacant
(Festivals/Events)

Vacant
(Food/culinary)

INDUSTRY AT LARGE

Maria Britto
(Maria Britto Real Estate)

Elaine Capes
(Little Creek Ranch)

Stacey Coupland
(Best Western Orangeville)

Lisa Johnson
(BDO)

Kelly Myles
(Caledon Country Club)

Nanci Malek
(Dufferin County Museum)

Ron Munro
(Munro's Country Gardens)

Sigrid Wolm
(From the Kitchen to the Table)

EX-OFFICIO

Michele Harris
(HHTA ED)

Sandra Dolson
(Caledon)

Bob Cheetham
(Erin)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Stacey Coupland
(Chair)

Elaine Capes
(Vice-Chair)

Lisa Johnson
(Secretary/ Treasurer)

Ron Munro
(Past Chair)

Michele Harris
(Executive Director)