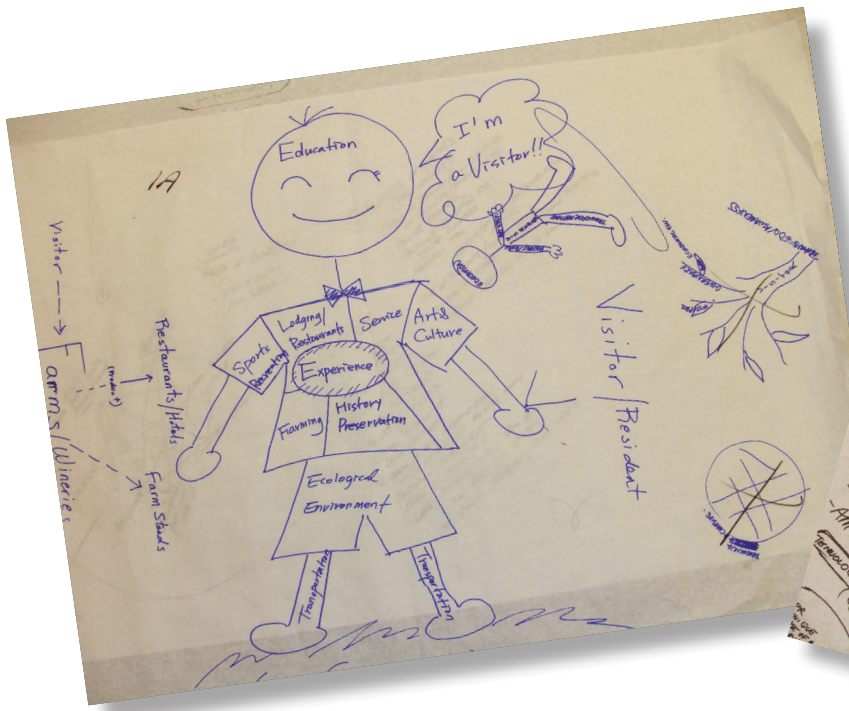# SUMMIT REPORT

**Amended**

## The Future of Sustainable Tourism in Rhode Island

**January 28, 2010**

**Sustainable Tourism Planning & Development Laboratory**

*Notes from the day*

# Partners

SOUTH COUNTY TOURISM COUNCIL

THE RHODE ISLAND FOUNDATION

Warwick RHODE ISLAND

Block Island

APA RI

Newport CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Blackstone Valley TOURISM COUNCIL RHODE ISLAND

THE Apeiron Institute FOR Sustainable LIVING

PROVIDENCE · WARWICK Convention & Visitors Bureau

RIEDC Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation

RHODE ISLAND COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

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**Summit Report**

# Summit
# The Future of Sustainable Tourism in Rhode Island

## Introduction

Tourism has emerged as one of the most remarkable economic and social drivers of the present era. It is already an integral part of the life and prosperity of Rhode Island and is one of its brightest economic prospects.  However, there are significant challenges and opportunities facing the industry that require clear strategic thinking and a shared sense of purpose.  Fully realizing tourism's opportunities and mutual benefits requires strategic commitment from the industry and its many partners.

This Summit grew out of an initial desire to develop a blueprint for sustainable tourism and to begin the process by "creating a better future through conversations".  Initial objectives were to:

- Determine how the tourism industry in Rhode Island could become more resilient and sustainable.

- Manage tourism development to keep Authenticity in all future endeavors

- Identify responsibilities for community-based tourism through improved place-making, beautification of street scapes, revitalization of industrial areas, heritage buildings, etc.

- Strengthen community and regional tourism efforts to ensure they can continue to contribute to, and benefit from, tourism growth.

- Continue the relationship and competency building efforts of regional tourism offices, and help them foster further development of their local cultural, attraction and recreation resources.

- Improve the visitor experience through sustainable destination development initiatives and improved hospitality services.

- Encourage the implementation of the GeoTourism Charter that was signed in 2007.

- Foster the development of a positive policy framework by redefining tourism's role in the State Guide Plan, and encouraging development of a strategic plan for tourism within the state.

Sustainable Tourism Planning & Development Laboratory

- Identify improvements for visitor access and tourism infrastructure.

- Encourage all sectors of the industry to introduce sustainability practices throughout their operations.

- Strengthen the profitability and professionalism of the industry.

This conference brought together over 100 participants (tourism operators and officials from state and regional tourism officers, heritage and economic planners, people from the arts, culture and recreation sectors, educators, and students).  The following people presented:

- **Dr. Robert Billington,** *Director of the Sustainable Tourism Planning and Development Laboratory and the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council* opened the day, encouraging all participants to think openly and broad about the potential that Rhode Island has in leading a national change in how tourism can be developed using the principles of whole community, responsible, sustainable and resilient tourism.  Authenticity is a an imperative in creating sustainable places.  Rhode Island has this, residents enjoy this and visitors do as well. Rhode Island has authenticity, residents enjoy this and visitors do as well.  He noted that tourism in Rhode Island needs to be develped on its terms not the visitors terms.

He thanked the Rhode Island Foundation for financially supporting the summit and the regional tourism district managers and the state tourism office for their leadership in planning and this discussion on tourism sustainability in Rhode Island.

- **Mark Brodeur,** *Director of Tourism, State of Rhode Island,* who provided salutary opening remarks ; encouraged a continuation of these conversations; and, noted their import as a prelude to the development of a strategic plan that would identify sustainable tourism an economic development priority, thereby creating more tourism-related jobs.

- **Costas Christ,** *World Travel and Tourism Council*, who presented the core sustainable tourism themes, peppered with enlightening examples and best, world-wide, sustainability practices that seeded the café conversations and helped identify numerous opportunities.

- **Kevin Flynn**, *Chief of Planning, State of Rhode Island*, whose remarks underscored the importance of tourism and sustainability as being in sync with the State Guide Plan.

- **Robert Leaver**, *New Commons*, who provided direction, clarification and facilitation for the café conversations, and got everyone's creative juices flowing. Getting tourism's "movers and shakers" all in the same room, and having them interact and contribute to the development of a vision for tourism was a major undertaking.

- **Kip Bergstrom**, *Reinventing Stamford*, our luncheon provocateur who linked sustainability with the need for communities and the state to become more resilient.

- **Michael Haywood**, *The Haywood Group,* who rotated among the discussion tables, carefully listening so as to provide closing remarks and accurately portray everyone's contributions contained in this report.

The evening prior to the Summit, most of the speakers, facilitators and organizers met to discuss the overall objectives and desired outcomes.  This session, over dinner, provided a very productive start to the event by clarifying issues and concerns, and identifying common and diverse opinions.

## Partners:

- The Rhode Island Foundation
- The Rhode Island Division of Tourism
- Rhode Island Council for the Humanities
- The American Planning Association, Rhode Island Chapter
- The Apeiron Institute
- The Block Island Tourism Council
- The South County Tourism Council
- The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
- The Providence / Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau
- The Warwick Office of Arts Culture and Tourism
- Newport Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Salve Regina University Graduate Campus
- New Commons
- The Haywood Group

## Assistance from:
- Johnson and Wales University Graduate School students, Professor Thomas Rossi

## Summit Organizing staff:

- Michael Haywood
- Robert Leaver
- Natalie Carter
- Lily Kayamba
- Dr. Robert Billington
- Caitlin Luderer
- Lesley McLaughlin
- Amanda Wood
- Lorraine Provencher
- Donna Houle
- Wendy Jencks
- Mike Arcicz

## Background

*The Sustainable Tourism Destination Planning and Development Laboratory*

In establishing the Sustainable Tourism Destination Planning and Development Laboratory, the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council set out to share its knowledge, experience and wisdom in tackling the rejuvenation of polluted and scared, post-industrial landscapes. With an over-arching objective to improve the quality of natural and human life that could foster renewed economic development (centered on culture, creative, leisure, recreation and tourism endeavors) the Council felt that it was ideally qualified to assist other communities struggling to develop flourishing destinations within a framework of sustainability.

As a transformative, community-based, learning initiative intended to demonstrate how sustainability can be achieved, the Lab encourages and prepares key decision-shapers and decision-makers within communities to create and implement bold visions and plans. To date the Lab has been successful in establishing partnerships, building alliances, presenting conferences, helping develop strategies, and in promoting sustainable tourism agendas that correspond to accepted Sustainability, Green Tourism, and Geotourism Principles.

Since its recent inception the Lab has demonstrated relevance and acceptance; indeed the Tourism Council and the Lab have received several national and world titles. In June 2006, the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council won the Ulysses Prize awarded by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). In September of the same year the Council became the first U.S. institution to earn UNWTO.Sbest certification in tourism governance. In 2008 the Tourism Council and the Sustainable Tourism Laboratory won the World Travel and Tourism Council's Tourism for Tomorrow Destination Award and later that year the Council received another world title presented by the World Travel Awards.

## Summit Summary and Outcomes

The purpose of this Summit was to probe and encourage people to reflect on desirable futures for sustainable tourism in Rhode Island. The intention was never to converge toward a single outcome (e.g. a strategic plan).  On the contrary, the goal was to generate multiple ideas and options.  Over 100 people participated in the discussion while sixty people signed up to continue the  deliberations after the Summit.  It is clear that there is much more to share and think about. People became by their collective vision for sustainable tourism in Rhode Island because they sensed that it could strengthen competitiveness, while enhancing livability and reducing environmental impacts.As this document reveals, the inspiration generated by the guest speak-ers and their worldly views led to an outpouring of ideas.  Upon further elaboration, fine-tuning, integration and scrutiny – these ideas will now have to pass the test for "desirability", "viability" and "feasibility".  There will also be an urgency to "power the promise" of sustainable tourism as a responsible engine for economic growth that can benefit all communities statewide.

In the meantime, this report provides a comprehensive overview of the Summit, including a record of all the ideas generated through conversations.  As a synopsis of many divergent points of view, the following summary aggregates most of over-arching thoughts and ideas that were voiced at the Summit.

*Some of tourism's inherent problems and changing conditions:*

- Tourist activities, as traditionally defined by the tourism industry, fundamentally involve transportation and hosting of visitors in a local community, the "tourist destination", where the tourist product is consumed. No other global industry structures itself in such a way that the consumer is brought to the product, rather than the product being delivered to the consumer in his or her own community. This structural difference produces unique expectations, places extra demands on local communities, and creates social and environmental impacts.

- The primary product of tourism is not something produced by the industry. The product is the unique character, heritage, wealth, and expected legacy of the community that serves as the visitor destination. The business activity of the tourism industry is to promote the "salable" or appealing aspects of the community; provide appropriate access and transport for non-residents; manage the hospitality for and guide the activities of these visitors; and, provide them with goods and services to purchase during their stay. If these or other business activities do not meet (and exceed) visitor expectations and/or degrade the community's heritage and wealth, then the community suffers more directly than the consumer, who can return to his or her own community.

• Tourism activities, and especially the actions of tourism enterprises, can ruin the social and natural wealth of a community. The intrusion of large numbers of visitors into local social systems can add stress to pre-existing infrastructure, social relationships and values. Tourism in natural areas is even more sensitive as it can destroy local ecological, economic and social systems.

• Rhode Island recognize these issues (it is a signatory to the GeoTourism Charter) and favors the "green economy" (a RIEDC mandate).  Attempts to implement the GeoTourism have stalled; and but of more concern is the fact that tourism does not have a seat at Rhode Island's Green Economy Roundtable.

• Rhode Island's attempts to foster a sustainable tourism industry have met with pockets of success (recognition of the Blackstone Valley and creation of the National Heritage Corridor), but deliberate and full-scale attempts at creating a sustainable tourism industry have yet to occur.  This Summit was intended to jump start such initiatives.

• Prevailing economic conditions have hit Rhode Island hard.  RIEDC has set its sights on "Getting Rhode Island Working Again".  Attracting new businesses and creating jobs have top priority.  Putting the economy ahead of sustainable tourism, however, exemplifies the proverbial tension between pragmatism and principle, but the dilemma can be resolved. Economics and sustainability are mutually compatible and dependent. First-order priority is saving the 63,000 existing tourism jobs.

The hemorrhaging can be stopped. But, since tourism businesses in Rhode Island are predominantly small, under-funded and locally-owned they need help.  Saving these businesses and their communities is essential.  The drastic decline in tourism revenues needs to be analyzed and turned around.  As revealed at this Summit, sustainability and resilience call for investment in new capabilities, new competencies and new innovations. When the tourism infrastructure is strengthened and communities and natural areas regenerated, new tourism businesses will arise, and new jobs will be created.

• Competition for visitors, especially among the North Eastern States, is intense.  While more people are traveling closer to home these days, they want experiences that are unique, totally engaging and delightful.  Rhode Island may think it has an advantage in leisure consumption because behavior is shifting toward more outdoor and healthy pursuits, however the state's distinctiveness and differentiation has yet to resonate. Interest in communities, heritage, culture and nature is particularly strong, but what can communities do to clarify and confirm their unique identity – beyond branding?

Summit participants noted that actual and perceived barriers to visitation need to be first recognized and then broken down. Then it is necessary to enhance and more effectively communicate the charm, appeal and vibrancy of the communities.  Creating exciting visitor experiences that match the interests and exceed the expectations of particular people, especially different generations within families, is essential.  This can't be achieved simply through mass marketing.  Greater attention needs to be given to one-to-one marketing, creating an undeniable

connectivity with Rhode Island, development of stronger relationships to replace transaction-based tourism; and, better awareness of complementary activities to hold interest and maximize or create more meaningful added-value.

- In many people's minds "sustainability" has resonance, but many are totally perplexed as to its full meaning and potential, and precisely how to proceed and implement sustainable initiatives that will "make a difference".  Sustainability as innovation needs clarification, especially in reference to economic, environmental, social and community applications.

Vision for tourism in Rhode Island

- Definitely "green", "sustainable", and extremely "hospitable" and "visitor friendly

The Sustainable Tourism Summit set out to achieve ten objectives.  Invaluable contributions by the guest speakers and the participants, during the learning café conversations, resulted in a wealth of ideas that addressed each of the objectives.  The input is best summarized as follows:

**1.  Determine how the tourism industry in Rhode Island could become more sustainable and resilient.**

- Since two core components of resilience are capability and competency, then more effort must be put into the dissemination and application of sustainable tourism knowledge. Tourism is as much a knowledge intensive industry as others, but it does not get the same level of respect.

- Knowledge and information about sustainability needs to be de-mystified, clarified, and exchanged on a face-to-face basis.  Mentoring assistance can help get the message out and provide follow-through.

- Key opinion leaders "movers and shakers" within the industry need to believe, lead, and show the way.

- The power of sustainability to generate meaningful value and results for individual organizations and communities has to be demonstrated to be fully comprehended. More sustainable projects need to be identified, funded and supported.

- Genuine collaboration among the leaders of all relevant tourism/community sectors is the only way to get everyone on-board the sustainability bandwagon so that commitments can be established.  While proceeding through every stage of policy/strategy decision-making, effective collaboration is required and is most effective when it evolves into a diverse coalition committed to the community's vision and plan.

• A vision for sustainable tourism that sets forth economic, environmental and community goals can provide useful guidance.  Eventually, businesses and NGOs can mold their respective missions to make them compatible with the community's vision and plan.

• The establishment of Sustainable Tourism Networks to share knowledge, experiences, ideas and techniques can be an invaluable investment.  Such networks can educate the public and influence local government to eliminate barriers to sustainable practices.

• Creation of a Strategic Sustainable Tourism Plan, or integration of sustainability into existing plans, should be undertaken in order to build on to the vision by adopting specific objectives, policies, guidelines and projects or action items.

**2.   Identify responsibilities for community-based tourism through improved place-making, beautification of streetscapes, revitalization of industrial areas, heritage buildings, etc.**

• It is too easy to off-load this responsibility onto planners and community officials. Business improvement agencies, chambers of commerce, businesses and individual citizens must all be actively involved, take effective action, and inspire others through example.

• Breakthrough ideas and innovations must be encouraged to emerge by studying and embracing the immediate challenges that Rhode Island's communities' encounter.  Problems need to be converted into opportunities.

• Captivating visions and clearly established policies and protocols for community re-generation and re-vitalization (including incentives) set the tone and support structure necessary to spur action and engage all the players.

• Visitor experiences are enhanced, if not entranced, by communities that improve their welcome and visual appeal.  If every citizen assumed responsibilities for being a Chief Visitor Officer, visitors would arrive in flocks!

**3.   Strengthen community and regional tourism efforts to ensure they can continue to contribute to, and benefit from, tourism growth.**

• Think global, act local.  As a community- based and community-intensive industry that is fragmented and diverse, tourism can only thrive if it is well integrated and managed (not simply marketed, it must be managed).  This requires the efforts of regional   destination management organizations, as established in Rhode Island currently, that are appropriately funded, thoughtfully managed and well versed in making sure that every visitor is delighted but most of all that resident needs are met first.

• Smart Growth strategies (mixed-land uses, clustering, traditional community design, urban growth boundaries, zoning, etc.) are incomplete. Sustainable tourism reveals that local economies benefit more by investing in:

*i.  Resource productivity (energy efficiency programs, local ownership of businesses, local sourcing, water efficiencies, downtown revitalization, entrepreneurial training, community-supported farms and agriculture, business mentoring, microcredit, etc.);*

*ii.  Biologically inspired economic models (lean business practices, collaborative business initiatives, flexible business networks, industrial symbiosis); and,*

*iii.  Re-investing in natural capital (restoring natural ecosystems, creating urban ecosystems, fostering versions of eco-tourism, maintaining watersheds, reducing carbon emissions).*

The more a community and tourism businesses preserve the non-monetary aspects of a community, the more they make it livable.  Livability is a derivative of place-making, which in turn allows for the creation of beautiful Rhode Island "vacationscapes".

**4.   Continue the relationship and competency building efforts of regional tourism districts, and help them foster further development of their local cultural, attraction and recreation resources.**

• Marketing and branding initiatives may create interest and desire to visit, but they have to be built on a well-endowed and integrated foundation of cultural and recreation resources. Having supportive and coordinating agencies to encourage and strengthen these resources is essential.  These resources represent the "tourism product"; they must be encouraged to achieve high standards if they are to generate visitation and interest in the community, define and distinguish it.

• Educational/training institutions have to be encouraged to become stronger partners in creating the new competencies required to provide enlightened hospitality and gold standard service.

**5. Improve the visitor experience through hospitality and sustainable destination development initiatives.**

• Visitor interests and expectations are definitely turning toward the "green" spectrum. Health conscious behavior is translating to different consumption behaviors and expectations regarding product and service choices.

• Tourism's success is based on enlightened hospitality.  Enlightened hospitality turns visitor transactions into relationships, thereby ensuring repeat visitation, longer stays, greater

expenditures, and positive word-of-mouth.  As the only way to build a brand and create tourism jobs, competency building efforts have to be brought to those with the greatest need.  For example, the banking community could play a more formidable role in helping small businesses improve their accounting and financial management skills.

**6. Encourage the implementation of the GeoTourism Charter signed in Rhode Island in 2007.**

• Rhode Island was very perceptive in signing the GeoTourism Charter.  The concept of Geotourism was introduced to Rhode Island at a 2006 Sustainable Tourism Laboratory with the Governor signing an agreement with the National Geographic Society's Center for Sustainable Destinations in 2007 to build our state programs using the Geotourism principles as our guide.  The concept of Geotourism dovetails perfectly with RIEDC's desire to build a sustainable "green" economy.  While implementation of the charter has stalled, it represents a golden opportunity to encourage and build a statewide sustainable tourism industry.  Imagine the goodwill this will create:  As quality-of-living indices surge, business relocation and new business development decisions would be much more favorable.  Rhode Island could establish a nation-wide base for Green Economy enterprises.

**7. Foster the development of a positive policy framework by redefining tourism's role in the State Guide Plan, and encouraging development of a strategic plan for tourism within the state.**

• The State Guide Plan's vision matches perfectly with the visions for sustainable tourism that were articulated during the Summit:

*Rhode Island of 2025 will be a unique and special place, retaining its distinctive landscape, history, traditions, and natural beauty, while growing to meet visitors' and resident needs for a thrilling experience (thriving economy) and a vibrant place to visit and live.*

• Major state industries that incorporate a cluster of complementary enterprises, especially ones that manifest a "local supply chain" deserve special consideration and recognition.  Most states have tourism strategy plans in order to ensure tourism remains a major growth industry; however, to really make these plans comprehensive and to more effectively align tourism with more mainstream industrial sectors (particularly agriculture, recreation, entertainment, sports, and the arts and culture) it is imperative that these sectors or industries become more thoroughly integrated and mutually supportive.  Tourism, after all, highlights the distinctiveness of a region that is revealed through its constellation of stars.

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**8. Identify improvements for visitor access and tourism infrastructure.**

• Sustainable tourism represents a wholesale commitment to a community's resource endowments that underwrite and make possible the development of tourism. When these resources are compromised, interest and visitation collapse; businesses fail; jobs disappear. The ability to re-build is compromised particularly when the brand becomes tarnished.

• To a large extent the volume of tourism throughout Rhode Island is domestic (within a day's drive) and is accessed by ground transportation. There is no doubt that the local communities along the major freeways need to extol their virtues so as to draw traffic onto regional roads. Tourism works best for the state, and everyone else for that matter, when it is dispersed and not centralized.

*As most participants at the Summit acknowledged, access to communities is denied when visitors fly blind and zoom past potentially interesting attractions and activities. Giving greater prominence to visitor centers, and stepping up the dispersion of information through "genius technologies" could be boom to the economy of the state. Beautification of highways and vastly improved signage are also tried and true techniques that make visitors feel as if they have arrived and are welcome.*

• Few communities consciously plan for an influx of visitors, especially during major events, etc. Again appropriate signage, directions, parking and connectivity to alternative modes of transport would be a welcome delight.

**9. Encourage all sectors of the industry to introduce sustainability practices throughout their operations.**

• Tourism sustainability for all intents and purposes is the sum of business/community sustainability – the ability for profits, people and planet to flourish in unison. As previously stated, bringing all industry partners - large and small - on board the sustainability bandwagon means helping everyone make more informed decisions, ensuring availability of information as to choices, and creating a greater awareness of how to create simultaneous value for the enterprise, visitors, employees and the community.

• With support and encouragement (endorsed and strengthened through the use of incentives) coming from the state and community levels, sustainable business operations are indeed possible. If Rhode Island's is to commit to a green economy, it will extend this vision and commitment to every sector of the economy, and make the vision come true so everyone benefits.

• Visitors today are extremely receptive to sustainability efforts. Indeed if they experience waste or inefficiencies (knowing full well that they are paying for it) they can get quite perturbed and angry. It pays, in more ways than one, when businesses invest in resource productivity (e.g. energy and water saving) and even attempt to go beyond the Reuse, Reduce, Recycle mantra and implement the "cradle to cradle" manifesto which calls for the transformation of human industry through ecologically intelligent design.

**Summit Report**

## 10. Strengthen the profitability and professionalism of the industry.

• The more Rhode Island and its tourism industry can develop a desire among visitors to visit the state and develop a receptivity that results in assessments of "indispensable and magnificent" then profitability is a given. Visitors who believe that a destination is "magnificent", and that the places to stay and vast arrays of things to see and do represent indispensable value, become loyal Rhode Island ambassadors. The difference in their "visitor lifetime value" (if they came back 20 times), compared to a single trip, could be $20,000 versus $500 - after all, visitors who return tend to stay longer and spend more.

• Tourism marketing requires a huge investment of dollars, simply to encourage visitors to come to Rhode Island. The key task, however, is getting them to come back, time and time again. Getting Rhode Island's tourism industry to the stage when advertising is simply a nudge or a reminder is possible when the professionalism in regard to services provision and hospitality is strengthened. In today's highly competitive system, especially when operating standards are constantly improving, investment in people by improving their service and managerial skills is more essential than ever.

• Sustainability initiatives, therefore, have to incorporate the needs of people who actually deliver services and extend the level of required hospitality. More attention needs to be paid to engaging and involving employees. They are on the frontlines; they need to be given the knowledge and the responsibility to ensure that visitors' experiences are extraordinary.

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## *PRESENTATION*
### *Sustainable Tourism – Pathways to the Future*
### *Costas Christ – World Travel and Tourism Council*

Costas Christ's remarks were framed around the issue of sustainable tourism as being a search for balance and integration between economic and environmental concerns. It is well known that many, if not all, economic activities have an impact on the environment and that this has a feedback effect on the economy itself. This is especially so in the case of tourism which utilizes the environment as a resource. Tourism depends to a very large extent on a milieu which is pleasant and attractive to tourists.  Negative environmental impacts caused by tourism itself may, therefore, have the effect of "soiling one's own nest" in the long run.

While Costas did not offer a specific definition of tourism, it was definitely implied throughout his talk. In other words, sustainable tourism represents tourism which is developed and maintained in such a manner and scale that it remains viable in the long run.  While the ideal for sustainability initially was not to degrade the environment in which it exists, that ideal has shifted.  Instead the ideal for sustainability is to encourage the environment to flourish which means that tourism activities should provide a net gain for the environment wherever possible.

In giving praise to the Blackstone Valley for living up to this ideal, and winning coveted awards and world recognition for their efforts exemplifying sustainability, he graciously acknowledged the fact that Rhode Island was already setting a great example, but that there was a long journey ahead.  The remainder of his talk was an inspirational and spirited wake-up call and a prod for purposeful action.

In providing a historical backdrop to the urgency for purposeful action and the need to establish a tourism sustainability agenda, he identified decade-defining moments:

  • 1970s – During this time period many countries were coveting large scale tourism developments to take advantage of the economic benefits to be derived from mass tourism. The development of Cancun, Mexico, for example, resulted in a massive dislocation of people and tremendous environmental degradation.  World attention became riveted on the destruction of rural areas and natural environments.  Unfortunately, such problems continued to persist throughout the next two decades, despite cries of concern from critics, scientists and "environmentalists".

  • 1980s- Development of prototypical, 'Small is Beautiful", eco-tourism projects began and stirred tremendous interest in responsible development of rural areas.  The intent was to

benefit local communities and provide exemplary notions of how communities could flourish through (small scale) tourism.  These developments also helped identify new tourism markets that spurred interest in nature-based and indigenous tourism opportunities.  Countries such as Costa Rica developed their tourism industry around this model.

• 1990s – This decade gave rise to a tremendous growth in tourism and continued concern for environmental degradation and social exclusion (e.g. further expansion of all-inclusive resorts).  With many developers and resort operators wanting to ride the eco-tourism bandwagon, allegations of "green washing" became common.  Tourism's "eco" boom was turning into a branding bonanza bolstered by extravagant and untrue marketing claims.  To address and counter this disgrace, organizations such as the Eco-Tourism Society, decided to take action.  The Society clarified its definition of eco-tourism.

*Ecotourism is: "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people." (TIES, 1990)*

Ecotourism is about uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel. This means that those who implement and participate in ecotourism activities should follow the following ecotourism principles:

- Minimize impact.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people.
- Raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climate.
- More significantly, during this time, the whole world started to take notice of the importance of the environment.  One of the defining documents was the 1987 Brundtland Report, also known as Our Common Future, which alerted the world to the urgency of making progress toward economic development which could be sustained without depleting natural resources or harming the environment.
- 2000s – Tremendous activity in the development of sustainability and sustainable tourism has occurred during the past ten years.  Some defining truths that Costas Christ, through his examples, alluded to include:

**"Sustainability" entered the lexicon of the business and community terminology. It represents a mainstream, top-of-mind issue and opportunity:**

• Business models and strategies, state and municipal plans, etc., are being transformed in order to incorporate sustainability.

• Communities recognize that their economic and social well-being (quality-of-life) is dependent on protecting their life-sustaining environments.

• Environmental clean-ups lie at the core of infrastructure improvement and are an essential, first-order priority before development can occur.

• Tourism can't exist, or won't grow, in regions or areas that are not pristine, safe, or beautiful and that neglect their environment.

• Many companies realize that they need to determine or measure their impact on communities and the environmental, so Balanced Scorecard, Triple Bottom Line or similar assessments are being adopted.

• Destinations and some businesses are incorporating sustainability into descriptions of their marketing.  For example, the Rhode Island web site highlights the importance of sustainability.  Hotels, such as The Willard Continental Hotel, have incorporated sustainability into their websites.

• Transportation companies have come under attack for being unsustainable so they too are trying to demonstrate their support of the environment - Cruise Line companies, for example, support the Save the Wave program.  Tour Operators have also stepped up to the plate through ratification of The Tour Operators Initiative – a commitment to sustainable tourism development (see appendix)

**Climate change is an incontrovertible problem and is an issue driving wholesale change in the way we operate and conduct business.**

• Al Gore's "Inconvenient truth" unhinged complacency.

• Many mountainous and coastal communities are bearing the brunt of some dramatic change and are becoming extra-vigilant.

• Travel behavior is shifting and will continue to shift in response to changes in climatic conditions, and in reaction to regions that are undergoing significant environmental stress.

• Sustainable tourism criteria and sustainability standards have been developed and more destinations and organizations have adopted them.

- Rhode Island is a signatory, for example, of the GeoTourism Charter (see appendix).

- The Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance, which the Sustainable Tourism Laboratory is a member, created the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (see appendix).

**Consumers are becoming ever greener and want businesses to provide eco-friendly products. This has become increasingly evident by the fact that a huge information industry has developed around this theme:**

- Lonely Planet Guidebooks were among the first to cater to the interest in sustainable tourism.

- Tripadvisor has undertaken an interesting survey on sustainable tourism.

- Zagat Guides has done a green survey.

- Travelocity has just launched a sustainable tourism on-line booking site.

- AAA is defining its classification system to incorporate sustainability.

**Consumer lifestyles are becoming more health conscious:**

- People want to engage in healthier and more active pursuits

- They prefer to go to, and patronize, those places that endorse an active and healthy lifestyle

- Places where families can be safe and shielded from the

**Tourism businesses treat the need to become sustainable as more than a corporate social responsibility, but as an essential way of doing business:**

- Airports such as Indianapolis and Boston's Logan are committed to going sustainable.

- Golf courses are awakening to the fact that they need to conserve water, switch to natural fertilizers and pesticides. Australia is even developing organic golf courses.

- The City Center in Las Vegas has become one of the world's most sustainable developments; it has six LEED certified buildings.

- Chicago has one of the largest green roofs in the world.

- Some hotels such as The Grand Hyatt are employing Environmental Managers to oversee development of their green or environmental initiatives; minimize their environmental impact on the environment; improve energy and water consumption; encourage waste reduction and recycling, sustainable purchasing, green communication and education of employees and guests.

- Legitimate certifications for different types of businesses are becoming readily available, for example:
  - Green Globe
  - The International Ecotourism Society
  - Rainforest Alliance
  - Rhode Island Hospitality Association has a self-assessment certification program for hotel and restaurants to test their "green practices"

These and similar certifications are becoming the rage throughout the industry as businesses seek certification not only as a form of endorsement for being green, but as a means of making substantial improvements in the ways they operate: For example, The Hay Adam Hotel has just received a Luxury Eco Certification.

**As organizations learn to keep pace with regulation, they become more proactive about environmental issues. In fact some are developing new business models around sustainability:**

- The Punta Cana Resort development in the Dominican Republic is a full-scale community initiative dedicated to sustainability, involving and giving back to the community (education, health care, recreation facilities). The Punta Cana Ecological Foundation is responsible for the protection and restoration of natural resources including a 1500 acre ecological park and reserve.

- The Marriott Hotel chain is re-defining itself as "green" and has committed to undertake numerous sustainable projects, including the building new LEED certified properties.

**However, a serious "caveat emptor" issue needs to be mentioned at this point. Business Week ran a story called "Little Green Lies" in which Aspen's claims of being green were exposed. Humiliated they responded by cleaning up their act, and then published a book, "Getting Green Done" on their subsequent accomplishments. With the subsequent rise of social media, lack of due diligence and indiscretions go viral in a matter of seconds.**

- Working in partnerships with suppliers to develop eco-friendly products, components, and reduce waste, is becoming an effective strategy. These efforts lead to making supply chains more environmentally conscious, and have been essential in helping organizations identify operational improvements (e.g. energy and water efficiencies).

- Fairmont Hotels has been an industry leader in commitment to, and implementation of, a full-scale environmental program and is working with suppliers to achieve their goals.

- Boeing has committed to building aircraft that will run on bio-fuels by 2015.

- While not a tourism enterprise, per se, Walmart is reinterpreting itself as a sustainable company. They recently held a corporate summit in China and asked suppliers to sign agreements to commit to sustainability initiatives.

As Costas Christ reminded us, we are past the point where we wonder if sustainability is just a trend, or wonder whether sustainable tourism works. Tourism cannot exist or function responsibly without sustainability. It definitely has become more than a quality indicator. As we move into the future, however, questions are being asked as to how far we can take sustainable tourism to reduce poverty, and safeguard natural areas. We have to convince businesses as well as governments, that sustainability not only delivers top-line and bottom-line results, but that it is an essential to improving quality-of-life for people as well as the planet.

In today's extreme economic conditions, however, states such as Rhode Island can't help but fret over jobs and incomes. So Costas Christ reminded everyone of tourism's economic impact. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, tourism accounts for 10% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP), of which 65+ percent represents domestic revenues It is one of the top three economic engines in the world, and has proven to be one of the most resilient, despite recessions. Its growth potential is tremendous, especially with the economic explosion taking place in the Brazil, Russia, India, China (BRIC) economies that are part of the G20. With one out of every twelve people working in tourism now, the job creation possibilities are immense. This led Costas to ask:

*Where will Rhode Island be in terms of this growth?*

Rhode Island's tourism potential is vast, as are its opportunities to create new jobs through tourism (the goal of RIEDC). The answer to the question will depend whether the state and the industry:

1. Truly understand the paradigm shift that is taking place in tourism today, and

2. Truly understand the changes that are occurring with customers as to their expectations, interests and behavior?

Local understanding of tourism and sustainability, and developing a long-term vision for tourism is essential. A recent Time magazine article, for example, ran a lead article on the importance of tourism, and that good stewardship of local resources is not only good business, but will allow businesses to outperform. Neither has this topic escaped the attention of Fortune magazine as well. They are about to launch a Brainstorm Green conference shortly.

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*As Christ pointed out:*
Rhode Island can be part of the further growth of tourism if it:

- Recognizes and embraces tourism's Responsibility Revolution

- Creates an urgent call to action to address tourism's sustainability issues

- Develops a sustainable tourism strategy to deliver a triple bottom line return – People, Profits, Planet

- Recognizes the importance of enhancing and protecting its local cultural, natural and environ-mental resources

*Where are we today?*  Costas Christ noted that green technologies are experiencing a massive explosion. Indeed the opportunities offered by the New Green Economy have been recognized by RIEDC (see appendix, "Sustainable Tourism and the Future of Rhode Island").  As Costas claims, Rhode Island has no choice but to engage in sustainability if it wants to compete in tourism. Indeed sustainable tourism represents a strategic business opportunity for which collectively we must take responsibility.

But, as Costas warned: The highway of sustainability is littered with wreckages.  So, there is need to approach it with the right business (industry) model, one that incorporates People, Profit and Planet.  He likened "progress" towards this goal as a journey in which people do not necessarily take trips, "trips take people".

Borrowing a line from the prestigious travel organization, Virtuoso, he suggested we need to embrace sustainability as a "return on life", which begs the question:

Can we re-build our tourism economies in such a way that "doing well, by doing good" becomes the norm?

At the end of Costas Christ's presentation he encouraged participant questions. His replies follow:

1.  Can you promote sustainable tourism without having sustainable communities?  NO.  The two are mutually supportive.  Communities must try to improve the "authenticity of place" and this is difficult today because vigilance is required to stop bad things from happening.  There is a need for preferential incentives; zoning ordinances; and the need to respect the vernacular.  Economic blackmail by companies that do not want to conform has to be halted; a design ethic in keeping with the community must exist; and, websites and social media need to play a role by providing information on sustainability.

2.  What communities act as good role models for sustainable development?

- Half Moon Bay in California.

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- State of Vermont and their Vermont Downtown initiative which endorses the importance of "sense of place" and the integrity of communities.

- The country of Belize where towns are banding together with the support of government and NGOs to develop sustainable development programs.

- Destinations that have received awards for Destination Stewardship (part of the World Travel and Tourism Council's Tourism for Tomorrow Awards.)

- Ken Burns' documentary on National Parks is enlightening and revealing. Niagara Falls that was once disgraced is now becoming a worthy contender for sustainability.

- Lake Tahoe.

- Acadia National Park in Maine, which has done a superb job in managing two million visitors.

- The East Coast Greenway and the Appalachian Trail.

3. Which destinations have gone the furthest in poverty alleviation?

- Many eco-tourism destinations; however, the increasing popularity in parts of Central and South America has attracted excessive development and is creating inflationary pressures in some regions.

- Punta Islita, Costa Rica, where women in particular have benefited

- Parts of Southern India

- Communities in which rural and agro-tourism can create income earning opportunities for farmers and local businesses. The whole "slow food" movement, and encouragement to "buy local" and/or pursue organic farming, can do wonders in keeping tourism dollars within communities, as well as provide more authentic experiences. Interestingly the Food Network is intensifying interest in these areas and encouraging tourism around culinary arts, viticulture, etc.

- The Greek island of Mila

- There are also a host of urban areas that are attracting visitors and even using tourism to foster re-development. The 4th ward in Los Angeles is a case in point; they have cleaned up the river and are now encouraging kayaking throughout the city. Toronto even has a Green Tourism program. Cultural revival of certain down-and-out areas of cities is also taking place.

4. Can sustainable development act as a means of resilience, especially in regard to climate change?  Yes.

- The World Travel and Tourism Council is leading change in regard to climate change.
- Marriott as part of their commitment to sustainability are leading the charge against deforestation

5. How do you change islands already ruined by tourism?

- Cruise destinations are developing programs and initiatives encouraging the cruise industry to clean-up, and act more responsibly.
- Reclamation of natural and eco-sensitive areas.
- Passing of sustainability/environmental legislation, enforcing compliance.
- Education of the industry.

6. What can sustainable tourism do for Main Street?

- First planners need to become "unafraid of tourism".  Understandably some communities that are over-run or have been unable to control their popularity create concern.  But careful and collaborative approaches to planning are effective in overcoming these problems

- Sustainability is part of the process of "place-making" or creating a sense of place which attracts people; it endorses the importance of design, beautification and authenticity, as well as adherence to building codes, ordinances, etc.  Planners and Main Street advocates need to understand that sustainable tourism is an important adjunct to commercial activity, but it must be planned with care.
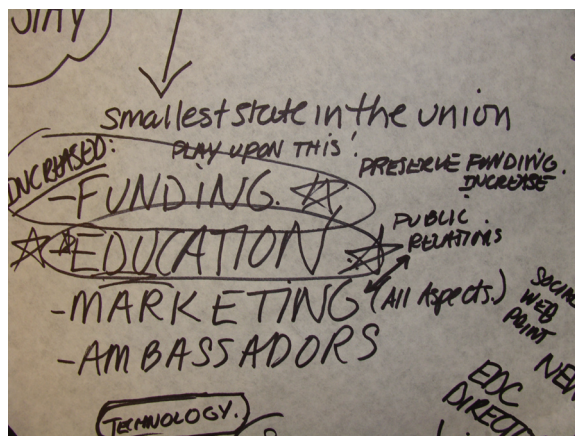


*Notes from the day*

## *PRESENTATION*
*Tourism and Land Use 2025*

## Kevin Flynn
*Director of Planning*
*State of Rhode Island*

Sustainable tourism is Rhode Island's future.  Much of the groundwork and foundation building has already taken place.  Rhode Island has taken an early lead in endorsing sustainable tourism. The plan envisions Rhode Island as a constellation of community centers connected by infrastructure corridors and framed by green space.

The vision:  Rhode Island of 2025 will be a unique and special place, retaining its distinctive landscape, history, traditions, and natural beauty, while growing to meet resident's needs for a thriving economy and a vibrant place to live.

The state will contain sprawl; housing, commerce and social interaction will be concentrated in dense areas of varying scales, marked by design quality. A thinly settled, forested band in the western third of the state will conserve essential resources and support resource based economies. Farmlands and forests will surround centers that are infused with greenways and green space. Narragansett Bay will be healthy and productive.  The waterfront edge will remain the state's trademark, carefully managed to sustain its uses while preserving it natural qualities.
Rhode Island will balance the needs of its people with the protection of it environmental resources. It will be a place where all generations will enjoy natural beauty, a productive economy, a connection with the past, and a prosperous future.

For further information, the first three goals in the Land Use 2025 plan that pertain to this vision for Rhode Island and tourism are:

GOAL 1: BUILD THE GREENSPACE AND GREENWAYS SYSTEM
 • Protect critical natural resources
 • Improve urban and community greenspace
 • Provide diverse public outdoor recreation facility
 • Use greenspace to shape urban development patterns
 • Protect shoreline areas

**GOAL 2: ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY DESIGN**
- Focus growth in a variety of centers
- Promote traditional neighborhoods
- Preserve special places
- Protect rural character
- Promote diverse, affordable housing

**GOAL 3: DEVELOP FIRST-CLASS SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE**
- Maintain public water and sewer systems and focus development around them
- Protect drinking water
- Avoid negative environmental impacts from development
- Map areas where services will be expanded
- Promote intermodal centers and transit
- Provide pedestrian connections
- Maintain functionality of roadways

Kevin Flynn noted a differentiation between urban and rural/natural areas, especially because in Rhode Island they are in close proximity to each other compared to other states. He emphasized the importance of preserving and enhancing the character and charm of Rhode Island's wooden buildings and interesting towns and villages, the network of parks and local food ways, though he did offer concern as to how infrequently most of the state's 100 beaches were used.

Commenting on revisions to the state's economic strategy, he reiterated the importance of job creation and the need to identify future initiatives that could boost new job creation. His warning, however, was "not jobs at any cost". Rhode Island cannot afford to risk the quality of the state as a place to live and visit.

In further identification of Rhode Island's merits he went on to say:
- The state was poised to be a leader in wind energy;
- The arts and cultural community was phenomenal;
- There was a need to celebrate and enhance many of the state's natural assets – distinctive in many ways when compared to other states;
- The Land Use was designed to protect these natural gifts; and
- Tourism should not be allowed to overrun the state; the right balance has to be struck.

## PRESENTATION
*Sustainable Tourism and Resilience*

### Kip Bergstrom
*Reinventing Stamford CT*

Kip challenged the audience to change their way of thinking about achieving the laudable goal of sustainability. While sustainability informs us of the importance of living within our means, whether economic, ecological, or political, it's insufficient for uncertain times. How can we live within our means when those very means can change, swiftly and unexpectedly, beneath us? We need a new paradigm. As we look ahead (be proactive ahead of change), we need to strive for an environment, and a civilization, able to handle unexpected changes without threatening collapse. Such a world would be more than simply sustainable; it would be regenerative and diverse, relying on the capacity not only to absorb shocks, such as rising sea levels, but to evolve with them. In a word, it would be resilient.

Sustainability is inherently static. It presumes there's a point at which we can maintain ourselves and the world, and once we find the right combination of behavior and technology that allows us some measure of stability, we have to stay there. A sustainable world can avoid imminent disaster, but it will remain on the precipice until the next shock.

Resilience, conversely, accepts that change is inevitable and in many cases is out of our hands. It focuses instead on the need to be able to withstand the unexpected. Greed, accident, or malice may have harmful results, but, barring something truly apocalyptic, a resilient system can absorb such results without its overall health being threatened.

Like sustainability, resilience encompasses both strategy and design, guiding how choices are made and how systems are created. Stripped to its essence, it comes down to avoiding being trapped -- or trapping oneself -- on a losing path. Kip Bergstrom elaborated on three "dance steps" that Rhode Island's tourism industry needs to master in order to be sustainable, that is:

1. Conditions: Understand the emerging conditions and the opportunities in them.
2. Capabilities: Identify the capabilities needed to exploit the opportunities
3. Catalytic Projects: Align existing projects to the capabilities and conditions, launching new projects to connect the dots and filling in the gaps to build the required capabilities, in a network with partners.

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Kip went on to describe his work with the Resilient Futures Network on an initiative called the Northeast Corridor Connects (NECC), and his work with Stamford, Connecticut on a project called Reinventing Stamford – a civic conversation and a strategy in action that enables Stamford citizens to take a role in their destiny:

The goal of Reinventing Stamford is:  To create a resilient thriving city that pulses as a magnet for talent, a center of innovation and a model of green values where both families and single people want to live and work.

Since, Kip's view on sustainability is that it is fundamentally about innovation, he emphasized the need for people to:
- Define their own work and contributions they can make;
- Search for people with skills and knowledge to compliment their own capabilities;
- Develop and be involved in extended networks;
- Develop effective pattern recognition skills;
- Reinvent tourism from the point of view of sustainability and resiliency;
- Learn through problem solving and experiential approaches; and
- Be adaptable.

He ended his remarks by saying that innovation in the most progressive organizations should be pushed to the front line workers who define the customer or guest experience. Consequently, the industry needs to develop this kind of talent (mentored internship and apprenticeship) because if the industry is not developing talent it cannot be sustainable.

*We can hear future's footsteps approaching.*
*We must think and prepare.*

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## *The Learning Tourism Café*

Tourism is a very diverse and fragmented industry, consisting of numerous small to medium sized companies, supported by a myriad of municipal, state and non-governmental agencies that play very significant roles in affecting, controlling or directing the industry's future. Bringing representatives of these organizations together in ways that allows them to effectively interact, listen, and hold back judgment in regard to each other's points of view is an essential, first step ingredient in getting conversations started, and assuring that the industry can effectively position itself for success.

During the morning session the 100+ participants were asked to form groups of approximately 8 people in accordance with their specialty or major interest:
- Arts and culture
- History and preservation
- Ecology/environment
- Transportation
- Recreation
- Education/training
- Governance
- Farming
- Farming
- Visitor experience
- Sports
- Any other interest (Wild Card)
- Character of place/geography

*Round 1: Conversations were guided by the following pre-defined questions:*

1.  Changing conditions analysis:  State each of the conditions, immediate and emergent, and either the adverse or affirming impact on the visitor experiencing the element.

2.  With this sustainable tourism element, what are the visitors requiring from their experience?  Think about basic expectations as well as new requests that may become a trend.

3.  Given changing conditions and visitor expectations, what actions must tourism purveyors of this element take – keep doing, stop doing, do differently, start doing?

Roundtable discussions are an effective way to intensify face-to-face interaction.  Paper tablecloths (large sheets of flip chart paper) allowed participants to write, draw, map and cluster their thoughts/ideas.  As at a dinner party everyone is expected to participate and take a lead – even side conversations are encouraged.  The intent is to take pleasure in ideas, building on them, making them concrete, debating for clarification, and integrating and synthesizing them.

The morning session lasted just over an hour, and then every table was asked to summarize the essence of their conversations during a wrap-up plenary session, which took 40 minutes. During the afternoon session, round 2, which focused on a visioning exercise, participants were asked to mix up the groupings so that each table consisted of a person from one of the twelve morning categories.  Approximately 45 minutes was allotted for the discussions, and 30 minutes for the wrap-up afternoon plenary.  Three questions were posed:

1.  What is your vision for "Rhode Island in action" in order to create a sustainable tourism success?

2.  In making the vision happen identify which sectors of the sustainable tourism industry will have to work more deeply together, and on what activities?

3.  To achieve the vision... what new policies will be required - Better use of technology; additional collaborations among the councils; leadership development opportunities?

# Workshop 1
*Conversations on Developing Sustainable Tourism*

Explanations regarding the approach, style and rationale for the workshops are described in the section entitled, Learning Café Process.  In this section the substance of the conversations and contributions by the 100+ participants (who were divided into twelve tourism sector groups) follows. Minimum editing was done so the comments reflect what appeared on the flipchart tablecloths.

## I.     *Changing Conditions Analysis – immediate and emergent –and impact (adverse or affirming) on the visitor experience*

In referring back to Kip Bergstrom's essential starting point: Resilience begins with an astute awareness of the immediate and emergent conditions. This was the first question participants were asked to consider.  While the original intent was to have participants relate the changing conditions only to the visitor experience, some participants related them to tourism operators as well.

*Note: The responses only capture "top-of-mind" thoughts – thoughts that were part of wider ranging conversations.  The responses correspond and are recorded in accordance with thematic category assigned to each group.*

## Farming:

- Challenge for small business to work through governmental process
    - Economic development
    - Cultural coordination
    - State process hasn't caught up with evolution of farming
- Concern for open space / managing building creating demand & product
- Increased interest in locally grown, organic food
- Urban residents, who have never seen where food comes from, lack of awareness of farming.
- Huge demand for local products
- Agri-tourism primed for growth but nobody knows about it.
- Farms are growing & becoming more sustainable

## Transportation:

- Price of gas, emissions, higher water washing out highways, billboards/aesthetics of the transportation system, information on transportation options, congestion

- Health and wellness awareness, restrictions on security.
- Increased interest in outdoor activities and exercise
- Congestion and parking issues in some areas inhibit visitor movements
- Difficult to get around RI
- No money – people more frugal (particularly for unemployed)
- Sea level rising impacts coastal roads – affects tourism areas
- Moving to a "greener" RI
- The impact of rising fuel costs
- Alternate forms of transportation for visitors and residents
- Make green airport green

## Character of Place/Geography:

*(N.B. Answers to the 3 questions for this group were not separated - all responses are noted here)*

- Real life collides with the "visitors experience"
- Character needs to be put into a broader context that may have meaning for the visitor
- Combining elements is a trend we need to encourage – lodging is one key element that is harder to achieve
- A place with unique character may be best appreciated by investors from elsewhere – how do we make investment and environment worthwhile for "angels" from out of town?
- You don't sell what you don't believe in, people need to understand and see the unique character of place and become its best marketing asset
- Marketing character = offering a holistic experience so the visitor can feel "plugged in" to history (culture offered – pulling together compelling contexts requires vision, buy-in, investment)
- What works for industry may not make for friendly tourist experience
- Stable base – people who can't leave – changing economy
- How do we break the caste system that created the built environment?
- What's right about the place?
- More value placed on history
- Broad Street – empty store fronts vs. operating businesses;  bones are there to create a place
- The issue is what people value
- Big box vs. neighborhood

- Projects vs. door stoops/ neighborhoods
- Agriculture – restoration of homes
- Federal housing thrust has killed establishment of community
- Create an economic model to enable people to own a house, fix it up, sell it to equally dedicated neighborhood-builders
- It's all about the community!
- Triple bottom line – people, place, profit
- People are transient – town must be established
- Incentivize the plan – residents are the key
- Time based character – what was the place like in the past?
- Immediate conditions – empty storefronts and vacancy
- Character of place drives choice of living
- Establish an appreciation for history
- Real life/ essence of place
- Constraints of economic realities
- Branding of "southern New England"

## Ecological/Environmental:

- Opportunities for kayaking, biking, hiking, outdoor recreation and sports
- R.I provides essentials for a vibrant eco-system
- Fly fishing opportunities on Albion Bridge
- Creating a green image through river clean-ups hence fish coming back
- Green vacation for tourists in BV
- B + B's on boat
- Future fish ladder vacations (or at least educational interest)
- Recreation fishing for families
- Growth of green spaces into greenbelts and trails
- River getting cleaner – factories closing is greatly affecting this
- Green places to stay
- Fish ladders will bring tourists to witness a new chapter in rebirth of River
- Cleaning brown fields for camping – old landfills
- Green conservation areas in various communities link trail system

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## Arts and Culture:

- Relocate art museums and shops to strategic places – Mall, Airport, downtown, most accessible
- Promote recycling of junk and litter and turning it into art – display in public places (Waterfire, airport kiosks)
- Mill history and culture, colonial architecture, PPAC – popular entertainment
- Rhode Island school of design students, sell student work at airport shops
- Create a love story of RI to attract Chinese people
- Local history and culture museums tell a story of RI – enhance their presence
- Lighthouse tour should be emphasized more. It should be advertised in public areas; hotel, airports
- Parade and dancing show can be a trend for tourism in the summertime.
- Broadway show at PPAC

## People/Experience:

- So familiar with R.I. take it for granted. Doesn't help how we describe it to others
- Can make the drive through RI more pleasing (make them want to come back and explore!) not just a "highway project" you see when you drive to somewhere else
- RI is safe to wander; visitors aren't scared to leave resort property
- If RI is solely a driving destination, cost of fuel has significant impact
- Emergence of social media enables the expectations of a more nuanced experience
- Couch Potato USA;  virtual travel and recreation over actual experience (e.g. videogames and TV)
- Aging people, aging assets. Baby boomers need more comfort on their trip/experience.
- Buildings are not accessible (or you are unsure if they will be)
- Familiarity breeds contempt
- Don't explore your own backyard
- Don't guide visitors well ( "go left where the stadium used be . . .")
- "Cocooning"
- We don't value and respect what we have, need a better appreciation so we can sell RI to others.
- Need to create a differentiator and need to be authentic
- Green is becoming part of the culture
- Messaging is inbound vs. outbound (the power of the social network)  - people know about destination before they get here

- Loss of identity, need an authentic place, proclaiming things that are unique
- Price of gas is low, encourages people to drive

## History/Preservation:

- Social trend "revolution"
- Federal Money, tax credits
- Political controversy
- Cost
- Lack of knowledge regarding sustainability/ecotourism

## Recreation:

- People not aware of variety of recreation opportunities during visit
- Event attract visitors, but advertising is inadequate
- Rich inventory of attractions– but need to explore further opportunities to build
- Print media is producing less content, give them free content
- Public ignorance of local recreation opportunities
- Events to draw attention to other opportunities/ resources
- Children sucked into multi-media/ telecom – can't get them out
- Threatened recreation resources

## Farming:

- Small businesses face challenges working through governmental processes - Economic development/cultural coordination
- Concern for open space
- Managing, building, and creating demand (marketing & product
- Increased interest in locally grown, organic food
- Urban residents lack of awareness of farming.
- Growing demand for local products
- Agro-tourism primed for growth but nobody knows about it.
- Farms are growing & becoming more sustainable.

## Sports:

- Visitors want "green" sport venues
- The drive through RI could be more pleasing
- R.I. is safe
- Cost of fuel has significant impact on driving vacations
- Social media enables a more nuanced experience
- Increase of virtual(e.g. videogames and TV) travel and recreation versus real experience
- Aging people, aging assets. Baby boomers looking for comfort on their trip/experience.
- Buildings are not accessible for seniors
- Familiarity breeds contempt:
    - We don't explore our own backyard
    - We don't guide visitors well ( "go left where the stadium used be . . .")
    - "Cocooning"
    - We don't value and respect what we have, need a better appreciation so we can sell RI to others.
- Need to create a differentiator and need to be authentic
- Green is becoming part of the culture
- Need better inbound messaging vs. outbound (the power of the social network)  - people need to know more about destinations before they get here
- Identify specific types of sports people are interested in
- More and more families are planning their travel plans around their children's activities, and their own sports activities
- Affordability – Condition of economy. Challenges faced is the cost for groups who want to use state facilities – need to be marketed better
- Popularity and demand of sports is increasing (structured and non-structured)
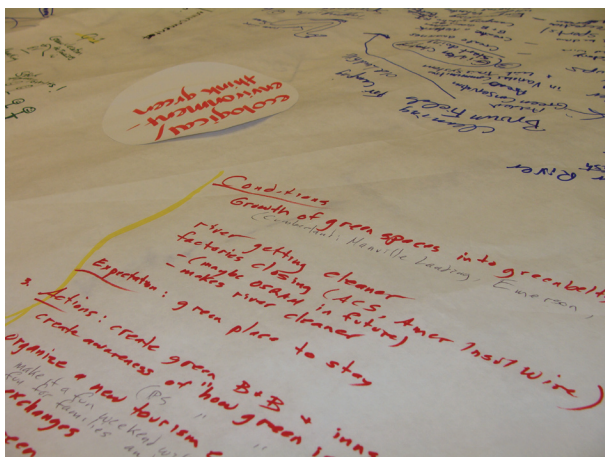


*Notes from the day*

## Hospitality Education/Training:

- Sustainability = Innovation
- New focus of innovation is the front line worker, as they define the customer or guest experience
- To be successful the front line worker needs to be a problem solver who thinks critically and communicate effectively
- If RI is not focused on developing this type of front line worker, it is not sustainable.
- Front line worker need to understand that they are part of the sales team – taking ownership
    o e.g. Newport Harbor Corporation does this well  = employee-owned, e.g. taxi drivers
    o e.g. Mandarin Oriental hotel has their housekeepers record guest preferences in
        Blackberries to fine tune their guest experience in real time
- Training as a way to reduce "churn" (turnover) among front line workers. Some "churn" (turnover) is good as it cross fertilizes ideas

Wild Card:
- Constraints
    o Funding, right of way, security
- Conditions
    o GPS Cell phones/synch
    o Bike kayak
    o Campsites
- Small distances to travel compact state
Planes trains automobiles vs. boats, bikes, and hikes

*II.    In regard to sustainable tourism, what are visitors requiring from their experience – basic expectations and new requests that could become a trend?*

## Farming:

- Need for centralized agency – Regulation Agencies & Economic development
- Allowing eating foods that have been picked at local farms through legislation.
- Expanding tourism season through marketing
- Bus parking limitations for farm tourism
- Agro Tourism growing in RI local food farming promotion by Farm collaborative. The state is selling this well enough Lack of business planning of Family attraction & Green attraction

## Transportation:

- Vision for Intermodal transportation system statewide
- Complete original transportation plan previously compiled – greenways connectivity
- Need proactive plans in place when $ comes through
- Need to rely more on alternatives – buses, rails, ferries, bikes, etc
- Transportation study of rail/highway
- Tourists need detailed information on how to use transportation system to get around RI
- More connectivity + interconnections – bike, bus, train, plane…intermodal opportunities
- Transportation system should be beautiful as well as functional – ex: no billboards, no showing utility lines, etc

## Ecological/Environmental:

- Re-branding with "clean" and "green" image for River – housing/hotels (places to stay)
- Closing factories in Attleboro, Cumberland, Woonsocket, ACS, etc
- No places to stay? Comfort Inn, camp sites, Hampton Inn, Comfort Inn, Marriott on 116 – link these places to state park system
- Create awareness for companies to be green
- Culturally diverse local food
- Encouraging landscaping within urban areas

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# Arts and Culture:

- Sea level rise will negatively affect local coastal communities
- Create a five city art and culture tour of U.S. Communities for foreign markets
- More poetry, poetry and nature, writing workshops
- Make tourists feel at home, foods, languages, airport, taxis
- Translations in museum and places
- Emerging market of foreign cultures – could be good, but how will their experience be?
- Transportation – new rail lines, greater ability to get places

# People/Experience:

- Destination Parking
- GPS Ability
- Local knowledge is key in helping visitors make informal decisions. Also, do locals understand and appreciate the value of the visitors to the region? Connect multiple industries outside of traditional tourism organizations to collaborate
- Desire for personalized experience is heightened.
- Novelty, unexpected surprises, how do we make it easy to tap into local knowledge?
- Explore, find something surprising/experiences that cannot be simulated
- Signage/way finding. Communicating our uniqueness – historical markers beyond preservation to communicating assets

# History/Preservation:

- Authentic
- Unique elements, locally made/artisans
- Accessible - Hours/seasonality (funding to keep open, call to action HELP US!; Personal connection with site and staff; Links/overlaps; ADA compliant
- Personal with staff/site; friends/partners
- Convenient - Affordable local option will win out
- Economical - Premium for high value; Reason for value; Packaging; Variety of options to meet needs (is there enough public interest to make worthwhile); Affordable
- Choice/variety to suit different interests; Various types of info: photos, Braille, audio tours; Eastbay bike path
- Flexible, user choice
- Signage, interpretive, informative, intensive
- Destination; Enough to see; Many choices; Variety; Cooperation/competition of sites
- Hands-on
- Multi-cultural/generational

## Recreation:

- Experience need trends – need a variety of choice, directions, tour guides – not there or people don't know how to find them (disappointed)
- Social networking systems – will be how people learn about recreation opportunities
- Apps for local opportunities
- Under-funded and staffed state parks – trouble meeting expectations; cleanliness and litter
- Need: 1. Public restrooms with supervision, 2. Public transportation, 3. Bicycle security
- All terrain vehicles detract from experience
- Using desire to share experiences with friends on social networking sites to support advertising of recreational opportunities
- Need for tour boats
- Need for expanded volunteer opportunities to provide them experience and the tourist experience
- Time limits determine choice impacts intensity of expectations
- Safety, clean

## Farming:

- Need for centralized agency – Regulation Agencies & Economic development
- Allowing eating of foods that have been picked at local farms through legislation.
- Expanding tourism season through marketing
- Bus parking limitations for farm tourism
- Agro Tourism growing in RI local food farming promotion by Farm collaborative. The state is selling this well enough
- Lack of business planning of Family attraction & Green attraction

## Sports:

- Encourage pesticide – free turf for recreational fields and golf courses. Build on URI special expertise.
- Encourage Audubon designation for golf course (Water management, wetlands)
- Green up the facilities
- Encourage green roofs, solar power on gym roofs
- Use chemical free port-e-john at temporary facilities.
- Geothermal opportunity to heat/cool skating rinks and other sports
- Linkages: Transportation – Buses, Recreation, Retail/Dining, Arts & Culture, and Audubon Society

- The first thought of "sports" in RI for some was "Regattas – sailing"
- Maintenance and access to race courses are critical to regatta and recreational boating (threat of LNG closures)
- Universities and municipalities already have many facilities for the sports that attract national and regional conferences and word of mouth advertising
- Destination Parking
- GPS Ability
- Local knowledge is key in helping visitors make informal decisions. Also, do locals understand and appreciate the value of the visitors to the region? Connect multiple industries outside of traditional tourism organizations to collaborate
- Desire for personalized experience is heightened.
- Novelty, unexpected surprises, how do we make it easy to tap into local knowledge?
- Explore, find something surprising/experiences that cannot be simulated
- Signage/way-finding. Communicating our uniqueness – historical markers beyond preservation to communicating assets

## Hospitality Education/Training:

- What experience does the customer want? Listen to find out
- A hunger for whole, authentic experiences
- Telling/retelling of the product story
- Low wages in hospitality especially on front line – if the frontline worker can add value that the customer is willing to pay for, wages should go up

## Governance:

- Open Space – urban
- Parking
- Safety
- Signage (good directional signage along roadway)/International symbols.
- Brand (what IS the "ocean state?"). Are we more than the "ocean state"? RI contextual signage
- Example, Route 7 in Vermont has standard business signs along roads

## Wildcard:

- Need lodging accommodations

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*III.     Given Changing conditions and visitor expectation, what actions must tourism purveyors of sustainable tourism take – keep doing, stop doing, do differently, start doing?*

## Farming:

- Diversify farm products that are year round and multi-product
- Diversify tourist marketing, more than just the ocean state.
- Create partnership between farmers, attractions, lodgings and marketing websites.
- Get state agencies out of SILO. (Still using old models of Agriculture management & marketing.
- Agritourism unites Agriculture, Economics, Landscape preservation, Health etc.
- Need coordinators who need to market locally.
- State not marketing Tourism – small Biz.
- Promotion & collaboration is needed to keep $ in state.

## Transportation:

- Connect greenways and bikeways
- Build a world-class 21st century integrated transportation system for RI that will serve tourists as well
- Do not tear up existing railroad tracks
- More info. on bike-paths, greenways for tourists
- Finish rail system projects
- Light rail in Providence metro area
- Boston/ MBTA
- Aquidneck island – connect to Fall River
- Designate bike routes and lanes, scenic highways, byways major tourist corridors
- Promote bicycle tourism adventures/ entrepreneurs
- Non-automotive infrastructure
- Benefit
- Stop proliferation of billboards and infrastructure clutter
- Reduce automotive dependency
- Continue to aggressively pursue rail transportation throughout RI

- For such functions, you need representations from all the various communities of the state
- Diversity – government, education, recreation, youth, seniors, cultural diversity
- People are looking at green modes of transportation
- Improve and expand commuter parking lots statewide
- Promote the value of tourism to the residents, and developing pride in community transportation and the experience provided to all



## Ecological/Environmental:

- Making/finding green places to stay, volunteerism, cleanups, life experience, attractions, GAC combine with festival, volunteers and education
- Zen center – spirituality elemental appeal
- How to satisfy both with 2 industries, single industry catering to both experiences
- Create a green B + B and inns network
- Create awareness of "how green is our valley" and that green places give $ greenbacks
- Organize a new tourism experience – the great American cleanup weekend festival – make it a fun weekend with music, campfires, good food, meeting people, families and singles
- House exchanges
- Create green streets – Broad Street in CF, the Billington greening of America, to encourage plantings, climbing vines (good example in Freiburg, DE, they trained grape vines up poles across wires to create green arches
- Create a river walk – all the way from Pawtucket to Woonsocket
- Expanding wider volunteer ecological – great American cleanup – coming together activities
- Zoning codes to allow low impact for B + B
- Support legislation for no child left behind – more experimental learning outdoors
- Tapping into spirituality concept of ecological movement

## Arts and Culture:

- Family market is important. Create family friendly exhibits for kids
- Make cultural and arts programs hands on.
- Create street festivals based on this culture of RI "block parties"
- Create more venues to display art

## People/Experience:

- Hear me and respond (social media)
- Create better value
- Personal, customized, VIP Service
- Transparency
- Green practices (especially at conventions)
- "Show me" (We're all from Missouri)
- Transportation Hub – clean transport (bus, zip car, bikes, train, air)
- Bike-share program. Cars, canoes, kayaks, zip cars, smart-bike
- New trend; after 9/11, peoples values changed
- Local Knowledge/novelty/learning. Something new makes a great travel experience – relates to customer service, everyone (residents) is in the tourism industry
- Easier to find your way around once you arrive – e.g. bikepath, maps, bike shares, public transportation
- Understanding the global customer
- Conservation, green practices
- Understand and use the power of the social network
- Transportation Hub
- Understanding that the "pre-experience" is important too - What people think/learn about a destination before they even arrive
- Set policies to enhance our own identity
- How do we avoid becoming like "No Place/Anyplace"? – homogenization
- Protect natural resources
- Accessibility
- How do we address people's ability to move without a car? – public transportation
- Understand our competition
- Technology and communication –
- Safety, infrastructure, comfortable, accessibility
- Value, quality, economic, return on life

## History/Preservation:

- Authentic - Keep integrity
- Unique elements - Offer back-door/room tours
- Accessible - Advance reservations; Check on busy time; User-friendly information for visitors (not steeped in history/lingo perspective); Issues: Ability to find; Don't find online resources; Lack of resources - > collaboration, share resources
- Infrastructure
- Visual Appearance - Special/share with friend; Memorable
- Infrastructure Issues: zoning, cost, logistics, neighborhood. Grants, tax credits. Creative thinking; where, how to provide services (i.e. offsite café); Partner with local organizations (schools, churches); Stop "blind construction"; Law/leniency to make other options accessible; Multi-modal (various types of transport); Maps, signage, web info on access, transport
- Personal - Solicit feedback from visitors; Forums online to share ideas (social media)
- Economical Issues:  How do historic sites go green? Cost is steep. Slater mill/water power/fish ladder. Green incentives. Using other site resources to help offset costs; ticket prices
- Choice/variety to suit different interests - Issue: history is boring.  Unattractive neighborhood, site seen as old, passé
- Destination - Keep collaborating and sharing info across sectors
- Hands-on Issue: Can't touch. Need to get people involved. Use kiosk. Use demonstration object.

## Recreation:

- Signage transportation, internet communications, seize additional opportunities to create experiences
- Trails, agro-tourism, tour boats – talk up sustainable tourism – influence tourists and businesses
- Lila Delman/type video feeds
- Develop partnerships

## Farming:

- Diversify farm products that are year round and multi-product
- Diversify tourist marketing, more than just the ocean state.
- Create partnership between farmers, attractions, lodgings and marketing websites.
- Get state agencies out of SILO. (Still using old models of Agriculture management & marketing.
- Agro-tourism unites Agriculture, Economics, Landscape preservation, Health etc.
- Need coordinators who need to market locally.
- State not marketing Tourism – small Biz.
- Promotion & collaboration is needed to keep $ in state.

## Sports:

- Need to market bike paths, need connections from hotels to bike paths. Need safe on road connections & signage.
- Transportation is critical to moving participants around. – Need train, bus to avoid cars
- Need to foster a walking environment / sidewalks at venues – signage/way faring are critical to out of state visitors
- Need cooperation & collaboration between state, municipal, college, private schools to facilitate regional/national competition space acquisition.
- Need to package sports experience: polo, luge run
- Non-traditional sports, Newport & Block Island sail racing
- RI needs better aquatics facilities
- Need to cross market so that families who come for a sport tournament are encouraged to cross back for another sport or to experience "unorganized sports" like hiking, kayaking etc
- Narragansett Bay & rivers must be clean & dredged (as necessary) to encourage water sports. Marinas need water depth. Good way to attract out of state visitors.
- Need restaurants near marinas
- Develop strategic partnership with other New England cities and towns
- Educate local community on process for hosting events and available resources.
- Hear me and respond (social media)
- Create better value
- Personal, customized, VIP Service
- Transparency
- Green practices (especially at conventions)
- "Show me" (We're all from Missouri)

- Transportation Hub – clean transport (bus, zip car, bikes, train, air)
- Bike share program. Cars, canoes, kayaks, zip cars, smart bike
- New trend; after 9/11, peoples values changed
- Local Knowledge/novelty/learning. Something new makes a great travel experience – relates to customer service, everyone (residents) is in the tourism industry
- Easier to find your way around once you arrive – e.g. bike path, maps, bike shares, public transportation
- Understanding the global customer
- Conservation, green practices

## Hospitality Education/Training:

- Trade ideas on front line innovation
- Figure out how to use social media as an entrée to real, authentic, whole experience, and leverage the good will traveler
- Good part of customer experience is retelling experiences – a good customer experience drives tourism, social media biases experience
- Tourism experience is tacit – cannot communicate it, need to experience it
- Frontline worker can improve value of experience and create an opportunity to increase wage.
- Need to listen to customer, ears on frontline

## Governance:

- RI residents need to see themselves as a tourist destination
- Eliminate turf wars between regional tourism industries
- Good signage ordinances
- State strategic plan for signage
- Historic preservation tax credits
- State model ordinance for mixed use
- What would be ideal public policies to support tourism? Tax, measure secondary benefits; Keep our farms in business
- Restore historic tax credits
- Allow farm stands at farms by local zoning
- Need urban and suburban neighborhoods to qualify for state agricultural preservation /open space bond funding (urban open space)
- Tourism Transportation Summit: Planning and awareness of linkages and enhancements for tourists, such as RIPTA 20 seat bus service on weekends between Kingston station and

Newport for the New York/Philadelphia tourists. Predictable schedule, low cost, high value. Also ferry shuttle between Providence and Newport should be restored but should change scope to be weekends, for conventions, etc.

- Stylized highway signs (remember old distinctive mass pike signs with pilgrim hat?), which serve as template for regions. Make these signs stylized, thematic, will reinforce RI as a place with identity
- State should not renew digital billboard permits and they should be removed. Billboards are illegal. State should also survey all billboards to determine if they are conforming, and force removal if they are not. There is suspicion that many are not legal.
- Need model sign ordinances for municipalities to consider. Statewide planning could serve as a clearance house.

## Wildcard:

- Establish a cross-linking system
- Public docking – come by boat to the city
- Connect bike path, hiking trails, rivers, and ocean too!
- Traffic Coordination
- Leave your car at the border
- Travel RI without using a car
- "Health Adventure"

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## Sustainable Tourism Jan 28th Conference Outcomes

**Morning questions:**
1. Changing conditions analysis: State each of the conditions – immediate and emergent – and/either the adverse or affirming impact on the visitor experiencing the element?
2. With this sustainable tourism element, what are visitors requiring from their experience?
3. Given changing conditions and expectations, what actions do tourism providers of this element Keep doing? Stop doing? Do differently? Start doing?

**Arts and Culture**
- Make art talent from RISD more visible in Downtown Providence, the airport, shopping malls.  Creates shops and venues to sell this art.
- Make visitors feel welcome – provide translations through kiosks, signage and tour guides.
- Family market is important to the arts – make art a hands-on family-friendly experience.
- Create street festivals such as "Block Parties" based on RI culture

**Character of Place/Geography**
- Transient population is the enemy to Place Making
- A place that people want to visit is a place in which people would want to live
- Locals need to love and support that which is authentic and unique in their community

**Ecology/Environment**
- Changes:  Fish ladders will become vacations where families will watch fish and learn how a cleaner river ecosystem sustains a community
- Market and promote a B & B network.  Green, low-impact places to stay such as farm visits
- Link green spaces into green ways and trails.
- Create a non-paved river-walk (hiking path) through Rhode Island
- Tap into the spiritual need (natural place) for a "Walden Pond" type experience

**Farming**
- Visitors are looking for authentic hands-on experiences and something unique.
- Need coordination and strategic planning to promote agricultural tourism.
- Create partnerships among farmers and lodging, visitor marketing and other attractions.
- Trend towards smaller more diverse farms offering local products
- Get out of your silos!

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## History and Preservation
- Historic preservation is the essence of Sustainable Tourism
- Experiences should be authentic, unique,varied and fun and personally engaging.
- Doing good makes one feel good
- We have resource challenge: explore unused resources, use collaboration and communication.
- Need to make sites accessible – demographically available, ADA compliant.

## Hospitality/Education/Training
- Sustainability =  innovation
- Hospitality education = people experience
- Leverage the front-line worker to add value to the customer experience
- Use Social Media as an entree to whole authentic experiences to connect with the next generation!

## Governance
- Implement zoning that supports historic, cultural and agricultural uses
- Enhance tourism transportation linkages
- Recognize agriculture as tourism
- Create a comprehensive signage program
- Develop a new brand for Rhode Island

## Lodging/ Restaurants
- Provide unique quality experiences
- Continue to foster the RI agriculture and aquaculture cuisine
- Create tax incentives to promote sustainability
- Being "green" means you can either make or save money

## People Experience
- Traveling in and around Rhode Island:

Make it easy and convenient,
Increase signage and accessibility,
Make is visually interesting,
Increase public transportation including light-rail

- How to Promote and maintain Authenticity:
    Avoid becoming no place/anyplace
    Encourage an authentic RI experience
    Residents become travel ambassadors
    Visitors are "publishers" with the help of social media
- "Green" needs to become an amenity
- Bring Green into the fiber of our local food product
- Redefine value by being "real"

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## Recreation

- There is a lack of knowledge of opportunities for recreation
- There is a need to communicate using all media
- Expand programs and events to attract visitors
- Create guided programs
- Many resources are not yet being used for eco-tourism and agriculture
- Need more tour boat funding
- Need more funding for tourism development in-general
- Need more public rest rooms
- Need fewer ATVs on our landscape

## Sports

- There is a growing popularity with sports and a trend with families and individuals planning vacations around events
- Visitors are attracted to green venues. Engage in practices that develop sustainable venues.
- Enhance transit to encourage less automobile usage.
- Sports tourism providers should cross-market so visitors coming for one event will stay and enjoy another activity.
- Doing more on one trip will increase sustainability.

## Transportation

- As a result of climate change and fuel costs there is a need for better inter-modal connected mass transportation including bikes, walkways, rail and bus
- Complete the rail-system and improve inter-modal transportation
- Provide visitors with integrated public or alternative transportation information
- Make T.F. Green Airport a "green" airport.
- Create healthy adventures
- Implement connective mapping
- Green Auto/bicycle/kayak/GPS phone connection

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# Workshop 2
*Visions for Sustainable Tourism in Rhode Island*

The afternoon session brought everyone back for roundtable discussions regarding creation of a vision for sustainable tourism in Rhode Island, and to identify some of the next steps to bring the vision to fruition.  As in the morning session, three questions were identified.  What follows is a summary of the responses.

1.  *What is your vision for Rhode Island in action in order to create sustainable tourism success?*

    • Highway signs
    • Admission Package for multiple sites
    • Use heritage "trail" of individual sites mapped and organized around a theme
    • Collaboration among hotels, tourist attractions, transportation, and language
    • Rhode Island – "A river runs through it."
    • Maintaining authenticity
    • Diversity – Religion, nationality relevancy of the story being told
    • Future generations – Educate the kids now to respect and appreciate the resources we have here
    • Promote winter activities – Winter sports and indoor events such as maple sugaring, candle light shopping, desert festival, chocolate mills
    • Make a interconnected and accessible "Little Rhody"
    • Increase bikeways
    • Make "Downtown" more walk-able
    • Unique character
    • Locally owned businesses
    • Unique environment
    • Local adventure
    • Local products
    • Continue opening up pedestrian, Green space – Encouraging walking
    • Remove divisions physical (I.E. Highways) Identity by town, region
    • Sustainable growth – reuse of buildings, re-enliven communities
    • Use uniqueness to bring tourists here; use connectivity to bring them back again and again
    • Educate the public about

- Natural Resources
- General population word of mouth
- R.I. Citizens be ambassadors for tourisms
- Need citizen to understand the value of tourism – re-branding
- Understanding the jobs, they have because of tourism

2. *In making the vision happen identify which sectors of the sustainable tourism industry will have to work more deeply together and on what activities?*

- Education
- Historic Preservation – Preserve funding increase
- Transportation – Bus/Trains/Ferry – Schedules need to coincide and buses need to be more fuel efficient
- Tourism councils need to work together to bring people in during off seasons
- Hotel (Hospitality) – Packages to entice people to come
- Great Transportation network
- Hospitality – Lodging, Food, and Restrooms
- Utilize assets for tourism
- Green transport
- Sustainable lodging options
- Locally-based attractions
- Local farms
- Non-fossil fuel burning transport
- History – Celebrate heritage places, art, and culture
- Linkage, to include transportation from Education
- Green Practices to bring back to home base

3. *To achieve the vision… what new policies will be required - Better use of technology; additional collaborations among the councils; leadership development opportunities?*
- Work with GPS firms such as Garmin and Tom Tom to include Rhode Island visitor locations in their built in programs
- Develop more solar, wind, and geothermal energy
- Tour RI could happen during the off-seasons too.
- Regionalization, but bring money here.
- Unions – Bid selections – Fair work environment for both employee and employer
- Accessible and alternative waterfront
- Better Image (Less stigma)
- Continue revitalization of building
-  DEM Consulting to EDC

- Protect Natural and Created assets
- Protect and restore assets: cities, historic sites, farming, water supply, Bay, and scenic views
- Package services (partnership)
- Event Development
- Community dialogue – on-going on tourism issues and resilience
- Streamline permitting for tacked business
- Incentives: Tax (Benefits/Resources for collaborating entities)
- Use of technology/ Communications
- Spotlight what the community wants
- Public – Private Partnership to develop waterfront
- Increase collaborations between providence and Newport on water service
  - Ferry service between Providence and Newport
  - Keep and capitalize on working waterfront
- Further exploration of social media
  - Better communication
  - Community level mentoring programs
  - More efficient cross-selling

## Kent County
*(one group decided to relate the question(s) to this county)*

## Do we separate city centers from "Kent County" vision?

- Peter's vision – have a defined and distinct county-wide experience that is tied together in a "bundle"
- Geography challenge – no touchstone/defining element. What connects Kent County to the country? What connects it to the rest of the state? Brand its rural charm
- Rural assets – Acadia park, Agribiz forest, ocean/coast and parks, "urban assets", villages with charm, mills and other historic spots, recreation – camps, bike paths, PVD
- Hospitality/lodging – Opportunity for coordination with farms, local sourcing and promotion. Opportunity to beef up Apeiron Festival to reach a wider audience
- Ecological/environmental reservoir, septic improvements (happening now), "keep Kent County beautiful", a version of beautification (what will work best in Kent)
- Erin's vision – no contradiction, no bundling – I'm stronger on my own/I'm on my own Main Street•   Gerry's vision – stay in Coventry, visit local farms and parks and visit beaches and visit villages
  – "holistic"
- Gloria's vision – extend centrality of Warwick chamber and CVB to rest of the city "centrality"
- Governance challenge – no dominant archive chamber for the county as a whole – Opportunity to get Apeiron in county leadership role pushing sustainability
- Tom's vision – enhance attraction of eco, history, and ocean

**People Experience**
*(another group worked in a response around visitors)*
- Making RI part of the NY product
- Selling culture of NE
- Understanding what global Conway is looking for
- Combine sustainable
- Build a sound economy
- US government need to finance the way
- NE is "completed"
- Cross-cell destination – NE is already sustainable
- NE is wealthy in so many ways!
- State of NE – Boston and NY are gateways
- What are consumers expecting in their visit?
- Better alignment on overall objectives
- Collaboration on redundant initiatives

# Appendix

## Rhode Island and the Future of Sustainable Tourism

Rhode Island benefits in numerous ways from tourism; indeed tourism is one of the state's leading industries.  In 2006 the industry supports 63,368 jobs and $5 billion in visitor spending. The intervening years, however, have not been kind to the industry.  Visitors and revenues are down, and jobs have been lost but the tourism industry in Rhode Island has not lost the jobs and revenues that other economic sectors have.

Overall the national economic crisis has hit Rhode Island and the industry harder than most states.  Consequently, the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, with release of its 2009 Economic Growth Plan, proposed to rebuild and reinvigorate Rhode Island's economy. Their stated mission is clear:  "Create opportunities to bring new companies into the state and get Rhode Island Working Again"

Attracting new hospitality and tourism enterprises and providing incentives for them to establish themselves in Rhode Island, however, may be extremely difficult.  First of all the tourism industry that exists and is locally owned deserves priority attention, greater support, and re-invigoration.  Indeed this was one call-for-action that led to the Tourism Summit.

There is a tendency to take Rhode Island's numerous appealing attractions for granted.  Pride in them is understandable, but it may be insufficient to garner more visitors.  The 100 beaches, 1,400 river miles, 400 miles of shoreline, and the state's coastal areas receive lots of attention, but these natural attractions are offered by competing destinations as well; and, they are not differentiating, except for some communities that are close by and have a degree of notoriety.

What does help Rhode Island differentiate is its diversity, particularly its complimentary historical and cultural attractions scattered throughout the state.  The future of tourism within the state is dependent on continuation of a dream and vision Nothing is more critical to the economic revival of the state than revival of its communities and the sense of looming opportunities that would spur entrepreneurial activity and establish an unflappable esprit de corps.

"Getting Rhode Island Working Again" begins at the local level – investing in communities, people and place.  Indeed it is investment in the quality of community life that will make Rhode Island a natural choice for new industry, as well as more visitors.  Vibrant communities, hospitable people, beautiful street- and landscapes, community pride, and exciting activities will rejuvenate not only tourism, but the state's economy.

One of the foremost developments in tourism during the past decade has been adoption of sustainability principles.  Indeed these principles and the call for all future tourism development to be sustainable was made by all the conference speakers and reiterated by all conference attendees.  So it is appropriate to applaud The Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC) for endorsing the importance of the green economy to the state.

As RIEDC says, "…It's imperative that Rhode Island seize the current green economy opportunities, bring together invested stakeholders and build a cohesive plan to further develop a viable industry with new green jobs for all and increase the sustainable job force".

By convening The Green Economy Roundtable they started to define a roadmap for Rhode Island's green economy and advance green-sector job growth.  However, tourism was not identified as one of the lead growth sectors.  This is unfortunate because in many places in the world the tourism and travel industries have taken the lead in sustainable development and have demonstrated that green businesses and the green economy is the future.  Rhode Island's Green Economy Network needs to bring tourism to the table.  Let's not forget that Rhode Island is the second U.S. state to sign the GeoTourism Charter.

# Appendix

## What is Sustainable Tourism?

Sustainable tourism, like a doctor's code of ethics, means "First, do no harm." It is basic to good destination stewardship.

Sustainable tourism does not abuse its product—the destination. It seeks to avoid the "loved to death" syndrome. Businesses and other stakeholders anticipate development pressures and apply limits and management techniques that sustain natural habitats, heritage sites, scenic appeal, and local culture.

It conserves resources. Environmentally aware travelers favor businesses that minimize pollution, waste, energy consumption, water usage, landscaping chemicals, and excessive night-time lighting.

It respects local culture and tradition. Foreign visitors learn about and observe local etiquette, including using at least a few courtesy words in the local language. Residents learn how to deal with foreign expectations that may differ from their own.

It aims for quality, not quantity. Communities measure tourism success not by sheer numbers of visitors, but by length of stay, distribution of money spent, and quality of experience.

## What is Geotourism?

Geotourism adds to sustainability principles by building on geographical character—"sense of place"—to create a type of tourism that emphasizes the distinctiveness of its locale, and that benefits visitor and resident alike.

Geotourism is synergistic: All the elements of geographical character together create a tourist experience that is richer than the sum of its parts, appealing to visitors with diverse interests.

It involves the community. Local businesses and civic groups work together to promote and provide a distinctive, authentic visitor experience.

It informs both visitors and hosts. Residents discover their own heritage and how the ordinary and familiar may be of interest to outsiders. As local people develop pride and skill in showing off their locale, tourists get more out of their visit.

It benefits residents economically. Travel businesses do their best to use the local workforce, services, and products and supplies. When the community understands the beneficial role of geotourism, it becomes an incentive for wise destination stewardship.

It supports integrity of place. Destination-savvy travelers seek out businesses that emphasize the character of the locale. Tourism revenues in turn raise local perceived value of those assets.

It means great trips. Enthusiastic visitors bring new knowledge home, telling stories that send friends and relatives off to experience the same thing—a continuing business for the destination.

# Appendix

**Tour Operators' Initiative**
Statement of Commitment to Sustainable Tourism Development

1. Commitment to sustainable development and management of Tourism

   1.1 We regard Sustainable Tourism Development as a guiding concept for the sound management of our business.

   1.2 We define Sustainable Development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

   1.3 We are committed to developing, operating and marketing tourism in a sustainable manner; that is, all forms of tourism which make a positive contribution to the natural and cultural environment, which generate benefits for the host communities, and which do not put at risk the future livelihood of local people.

   1.4 As Tour Operators we believe that we can be important contributors to Sustainable Tourism Development. We will strive to anticipate and prevent economic, environmental, social and cultural degradation. We will work towards integrating these considerations into our operations and activities.

   1.5 We are entering into a partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to improve our performance in order to achieve sustainable development and management of tourism.

2. Principles of sustainable development and management of tourism

   2.1 We recognise that tourism can contribute to the viability of local economies. We also recognise that tourism can have negative impacts on the economy, environment, nature, social structures and local cultures. In the long-term interest of host communities and of our industry, we will endeavour to prevent or minimise these impacts.

   2.2 We are committed to complying with local, national and international laws and regulations applicable to our business activities.

   2.3 We oppose and actively discourage illegal, abusive or exploitative forms of tourism.

   2.4 We are committed to a continual attempt to improve our performance in the context of sustainable development and management of tourism.

   2.5 We will manage and monitor the environmental, cultural and social impacts of our activities.

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2.6 We will strive to pursue the best practices in all our activities - internally and when forming business relationships with partners, suppliers and sub-contractors - especially with regard to: responsible use of natural resources (e.g. land, soil, energy, water) reducing, minimizing and preventing pollution and waste (e.g. solid and liquid waste, emissions to air) conserving plants, animals, ecosystems and protected areas (biodiversity) conserving land-scapes, cultural and natural heritage respecting the integrity of local cultures and avoiding negative effects on social structures involving, and co-operating with, local communities and people using local products and skills

2.7 We will encourage our partners, suppliers and sub-contractors to improve their contribu-tion to sustainable development and management of tourism, and will work with them and share information to assist in this.

2.8 We will seek greater co-operation within the tourism industry and between this industry and the public sector in order to further Sustainable Tourism.

2.9 We shall encourage and seek to co-operate with national and local authorities, local com-munities, or any other interested party, to develop and implement the integrated planning and management of destinations in order to preserve the quality and sustainability of these destinations.

2.10 We will develop these principles into a corporate policy. As part of this we will define measurable goals, and will monitor and report publicly on our progress.

3. Public awareness and communication

3.1 We wish to create awareness and active involvement among our customers towards the natural, social and cultural environment of the places they visit. We further wish to encourage host communities and our customers to develop a better understanding and mutual respect for one another.

3.2 We will endeavour in our public communication and advertising to promote behaviour and activities compatible with the principles of sustainable development and management of tourism.

3.3 We will encourage other tour operators to support this Statement.

# Appendix

## Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria

A.      Demonstrate effective sustainable management.

- A.1.   The company has implemented a long-term sustainability management system that is suitable to its reality and scale, and that considers environmental, socio-cultural, quality, health, and safety issues.
- A.2.   The company is in compliance with all relevant international or local legislation and regulations (including, among others, health, safety, labor, and environmental aspects).
- A.3.   All personnel receive periodic training regarding their role in the management of environmental, socio-cultural, health, and safety practices.
- A.4.   Customer satisfaction is measured and corrective action taken where appropriate.
- A.5.   Promotional materials are accurate and complete and do not promise more than can be delivered by the business.
- A.6.   Design and construction of buildings and infrastructure:
  - o A.6.1.  comply with local zoning and protected or heritage area requirements;
  - o A.6.2. respect the natural or cultural heritage surroundings in siting, design, impact assessment, and land  rights and acquisition;
  - o A.6.3 use locally appropriate principles of sustainable construction;
  - o A.6.4  provide access for persons with special needs.
- A.7.   Information about and interpretation of the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage is provided to customers, as well as explaining appropriate behavior while visiting natural areas, living cultures, and cultural heritage sites.

B.     Maximize social and economic benefits to the local community and minimize negative impacts.

- B.1.    The company actively supports initiatives for social and infrastructure community development including, among others, education, health, and sanitation.
- B.2.    Local residents are employed, including in management positions. Training is offered as necessary.
- B.3.    Local and fair-trade services and goods are purchased by the business, where available.
- B.4.    The company offers the means for local small entrepreneurs to develop and sell sustainable products that are based on the area's nature, history, and culture (including food and drink, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.).

- B.5.   A code of conduct for activities in indigenous and local communities has been developed, with the consent of and in collaboration with the community.
- B.6.   The company has implemented a policy against commercial exploitation, particularly of children and adolescents, including sexual exploitation.
- B.7.   The company is equitable in hiring women and local minorities, including in management positions, while restraining child labor.
- B.8.   The international or national legal protection of employees is respected, and employees are paid a living wage.
- B.9.   The activities of the company do not jeopardize the provision of basic services, such as water, energy, or sanitation, to neighboring communities.

C.   Maximize benefits to cultural heritage and minimize negative impacts.

- C.1.   The company follows established guidelines or a code of behavior for visits to culturally or historically sensitive sites, in order to minimize visitor impact and maximize enjoyment.
- C.2.   Historical and archeological artifacts are not sold, traded, or displayed, except as permitted by law.
- C.3.   The business contributes to the protection of local historical, archeological, culturally, and spiritually important properties and sites, and does not impede access to them by local residents.
- C.4   The business uses elements of local art, architecture, or cultural heritage in its operations, design, decoration, food, or shops; while respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities.

D.   Maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts.

- D.1.   Conserving resources
  - o   D.1.1.   Purchasing policy favors environmentally friendly products for building materials, capital goods, food, and consumables.
  - o   D.1.2.   The purchase of disposable and consumable goods is measured, and the business actively seeks ways to reduce their use.
  - o   D.1.3.   Energy consumption should be measured, sources indicated, and measures to decrease overall consumption should be adopted, while encouraging the use of renewable energy.
  - o   D.1.4.   Water consumption should be measured, sources indicated,and measures to decrease overall consumption should be adopted.

- D.2.   Reducing pollution
  - o   D.2.1.   Greenhouse gas emissions from all sources controlled by the business are measured, and procedures are implemented to reduce and offset them as a way to achieve climate neutrality.
  - o   D.2.2.   Wastewater, including gray water, is treated effectively and reused where possible.
  - o   D.2.3.   A solid waste management plan is implemented, with quantitative goals to

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minimize waste that is not reused or recycled.
- o D.2.4. The use of harmful substances, including pesticides, paints, swimming pool disinfectants, and cleaning materials, is minimized; substituted, when available, by innocuous products; and all chemical use is properly managed.
- o D.2.5. The business implements practices to reduce pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, and air and soil contaminants.

- D.3. Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems, and landscapes
  - o D.3.1. Wildlife species are only harvested from the wild, consumed, displayed, sold, or internationally traded, as part of a regulated activity that ensures that their utilization is sustainable.
  - o D.3.2. No captive wildlife is held, except for properly regulated      activities, and living specimens of protected wildlife species are only kept by those authorized and suitably equipped to house and care for them.
  - o D.3.3. The business uses native species for landscaping and restoration, and takes measures to avoid the introduction of invasive alien species.
  - o D.3.4. The business contributes to the support of biodiversity conservation, including supporting natural protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value.
  - o D.3.5. Interactions with wildlife must not produce adverse effects on the viability of populations in the wild; and any disturbance ofnatural ecosystems is minimized, rehabilitated, and there is a compensatory contribution to conservation management
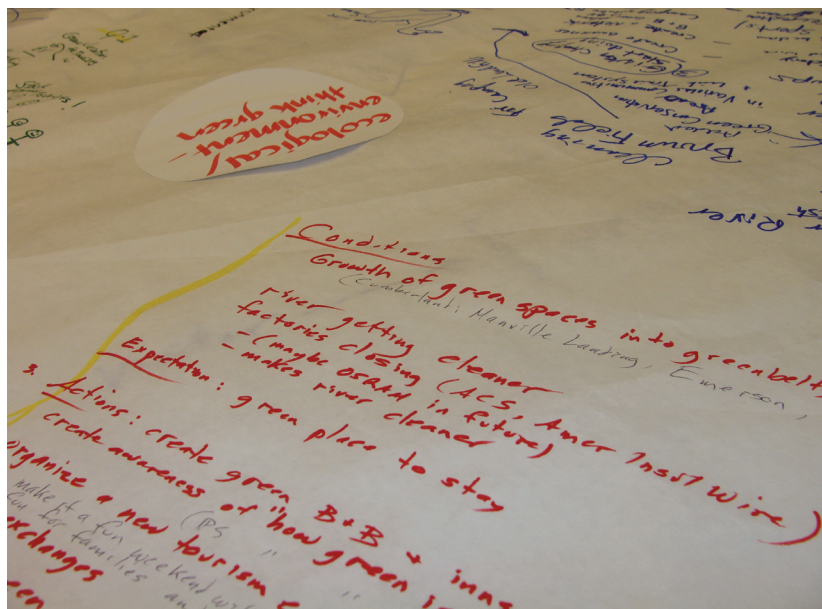


*Notes from the day*

# Appendix

## Resiliency

Resiliency: As an addendum to Kip's brief luncheon address it seems appropriate to add a few more fundamental ideas on the topic of resiliency. This concept has particular relevancy to putting sustainable tourism into action. Here are some pertinent principles that address changing conditions, competency development, and projects:

- Diversity: If sustainability is about innovation, then there is no single kind of solution to resolve sustainability dilemmas. Innovation comes in many disguises and different kinds of critical thinking needs to be applied to resolve a range of pressing issues.
- Redundancy: There should be backup plans and alternative ways to accomplish a task or undertake a project. It's wise never to rely on a single path of escape or rescue.
- Decentralization: Centralizing the pursuit of sustainability may give the appearance of being strong, wise, and in control, but when centralized systems fail, they fail catastrophically. Decentralization of authority and having everyone assume oversight and take responsibility, is a wise thing to do.
- Collaboration: Kip Bergstrom kept emphasizing the point that we're all in this together. It is important to take advantage of collaborative technologies, especially those offering shared communication and information.
- Transparency: Systems should be open and transparent. This makes it easier to figure out where a problem may lie. Sharing plans and preparations, and listening when people point out flaws is essential.
- Fail gracefully: Disappointments and failure happen, so it is essential to ensure that a failure state does not make things worse than they are already.
- Flexibility: Reaching the goals for sustainable tourism requires a degree of readiness to change plans if they are not working as anticipated; sustainability is a moving target and should never be conceived as a stable state.
- Foresight: We can't predict the future, but as has been made abundantly clear throughout this Summit:

*Resilience teaches that we must increase our ability to withstand crises. Sustainability is a brittle state: Unforeseen changes (natural or otherwise) can easily cause its collapse. Resilience is all about being able to overcome the unexpected. Sustainability is about survival. The goal of resilience is to thrive.*

# Sustainable Tourism Conference – Rhode Island
## Continuing Work Group

**Arts and Culture**
Patti McAlpine
Ken Orenstein
Angela Ouimet
Lesley Lambert
Robert Billington

**Character of Place/Geography**
Andrew Pierson
Robert Billington
Natalie Carter
Lilly Kayamba

**Ecological/Environment-Think Green**
Lesley Lambert
Patti McAlpine
Matt DeMello
Caitlin Luderer
Thomas Avila
Peter Flinker
Marie Fonseca
Chuck Flippo
Gerry Turbeville

**Farming**
Gloria Szymkowicz-Petroski
Robert Billington
Natalie Carter
Barbara Dixon

**History and Preservation**
Rick Nagele
Morgan Devlin
Courtney Hayes
Laura McNamara
Michael Abbott

**Hospitality Education Training**
Jill Talladay
Youn Park
Alicia Vanasse

**Governance**
Robert Billington
Natalie Carter
Andrew Pierson
Lilly Kayamba

**Lodging and Restaurants**
Marie Fonseca
Jim Buffam
Ed Pimitel
Bob Ericson

**People Experience**
Jim Gillespie
Jeanne Tracey McAreavey
Phyllis Blanchette
Caitlin Luderer
Erin Ruddick
Lilly Kayamba

**Recreation**
Maria Fonseca
Meg Kerr
Don Martin
Evan Smith

**Sports**
Thomas Avila
Andrew Pierson
Lilly Kayamba

**Transportation**
George Johnson
Sue Folco
Meg Kerr
Chuck Flippo
Bob Votava

# Summit Attendees

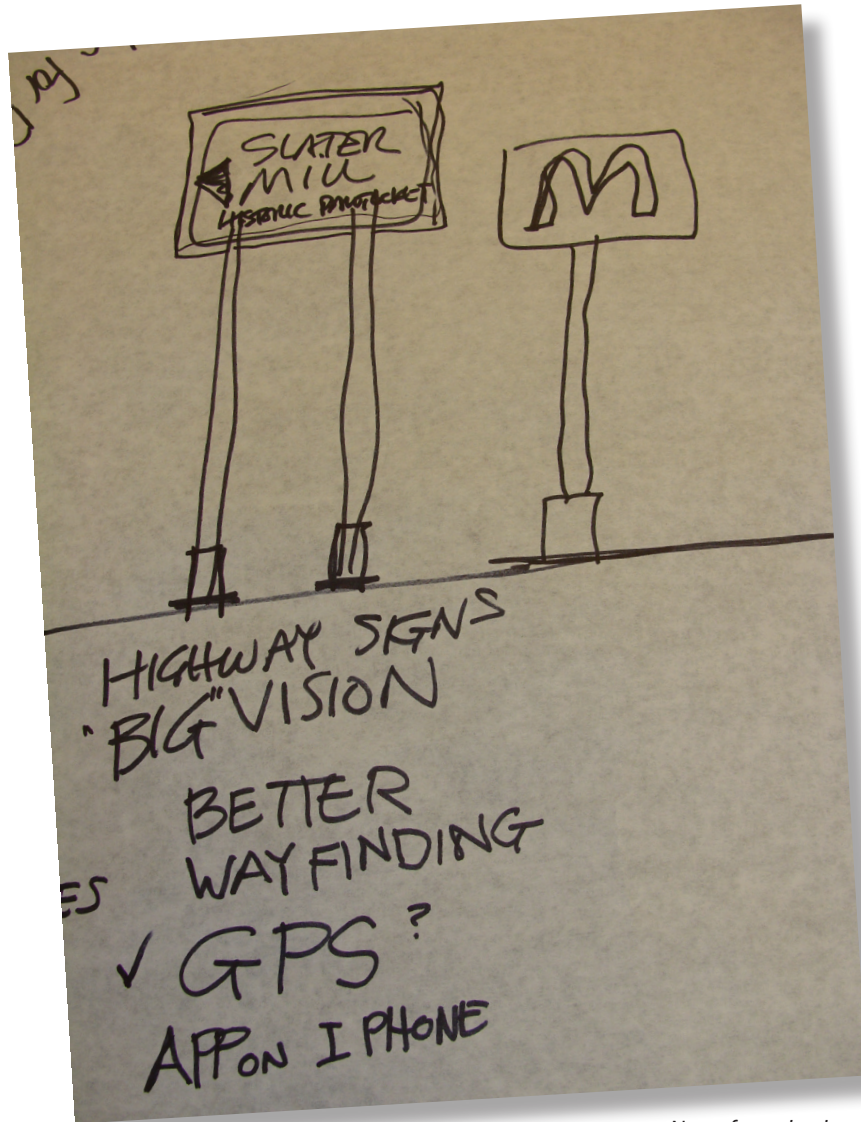| | |
|---|---|
| Abbott, James M. | Architect |
| Arnold, Mary Kim | RI Community for Humanities |
| Asinov, Richard | Providence Business News |
| Aubin John J. | Cumberland Planning Department |
| Avila Tomas | Alberto Sustainable Tourism Development |
| Balfour David | Blackstone Valley Tourism Council |
| Bergstrom Kip | Presenter |
| Bilodeau Arria | Head of the Bay - Gateway |
| Blanchette Phyllis | Providence/Warwick CVB |
| Brodeur Mark | Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation. |
| Brynes Keith | Town of Stonington CT |
| Buffum Jim | Weekapaug Inn |
| Christ Costas | Presenter |
| Closson Capt. Addison | Aquidneck Ferry & Chater |
| Collins Clarkson | South Kingstown Land Trust |
| Cox Bob | Blackstone Valley Tourism Council |
| Crandall Susan | Workforce Results |
| Derdiarian Steve | Vanasse Hangen Brustlin |
| Devlin Morgan | Newport Restoration Found. |
| Dixon Barbara | JHC National Heritage |
| Donnelly George | Graphic Pix, Inc. |
| Dwyer Arthur | East Providence Chamber |
| Elliott Dan, Jr. | Johnson & Wales |
| Ericson Bob | North Smithfield - Town |
| Estey Jessica | Alpacas of Harkney Hill Road |
| Fisher Lawrence | Herreshoff Marine Museum |
| Flinker Peter | Dodson Associates |
| Flippo Chuck | Old Colony & Newport Rails |
| Flynn Kevin RI | Dept. of Administration |
| Folco Susan | Warwick Tourism |

| | |
|---|---|
| Fonseca Marie | Holiday Inn/So. Kingstown |
| Gates Wil | Gates Leighton & Assoc. |
| George Myrna | South County Tourism Council |
| Gillespie Jim | Madden Media |
| Giuliano Mike | Boston University |
| Glankoff Peter | Mystic Aquarium |
| Hall Jeffrey | RI Audubon Society |
| Hayes Courtney | Slater Mill |
| Haywood Michael | Observer/Note taker |
| Heitke Kevin | Burrillville Town Council |
| Hertzberg Aaron | Pawtucket Foundation |
| Jedson Karen | Warwick Tourism |
| Johnson George | So. County Tourism |
| Kerr Meg | Narragansett Bay Estuary |
| Kirwan Donna | Pawtucket Times |
| Lambert Leslie | Narragansett Bay Estuary |
| Leaver Robert | Facilitator |
| Leib Gerhardt | Town Planner |
| Letendre Nancy | Ursillo, Teitz & Ritch, Ltd. |
| Lhowe Jonathan | Visit New England |
| Li Yang | Johnson & Wales |
| Luderer Caitlin | McLaughlin Research Corp. |
| Macris Dean | Dean Consultant |
| Mann Thomas | Pawtucket Foundation |
| Martin Don | Cumberland Outfitters |
| McKenna Bill | RI Planning |
| McNamara Laura | East Providence Chamber |
| Milas Joan | BVTC Lobbyist |
| Muguro Valentine | Student |
| Munroe Steve | Neighborhood Planner |
| Nagele Rick | Advantage Marketing Info |
| Orenstein Ken | Heritage Harbor Museum |
| Ouimet Angela | Johnson & Wales |

*Notes from the day*
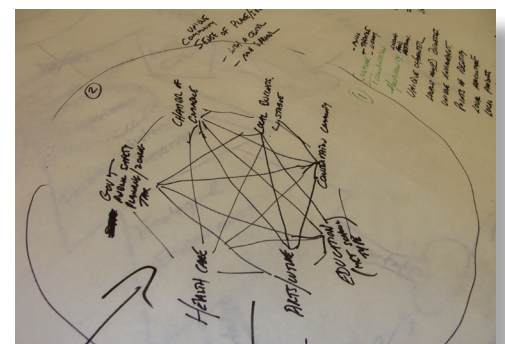
| | |
|---|---|
| Paden Jessica | Office of the Gen. Treasurer |
| Paquette Bob | RI DEM - Parks & Rec |
| Park Youn | J & W University |
| Perry Harvey | Westerly Land Trust |
| Pimental Ed | City of East Providence |
| Plitt Arthur | RIPEN |
| Prapasuchart Panita | Johnson & Wales |
| Read Ruddick Erin | Creating Results |
| Rossi Thomas | Johnson & Wales Prof. |
| Saul Michael | Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation |
| Sawyer Kristin | RI Council for the Humanities |
| Sheridan Martha | Providence/Warwick CVB |
| Sherrill Pam | Pare Corp. |
| Smith Evan | Newport CVB |
| Stevens Jonathan | City of Newport |
| Sullivan Dan, Jr. | Collette Vacations |
| Szocik Joseph | Urgent VC |
| Szymkowicz-Petroski | Gloria Alpacas of Harkney Hill |
| Talbot Jane | City of Woonsocket |
| Talladay Jill | JMT Consulting |
| Tracey-McAreavey | Jeanne M. Community Housing |
| Tremblay Sandy | Johnson & Wales |
| Turbeville Geraldine | Town Planner |
| Vanasse Alicia | Johnson & Wales |
| Votava Bob | DOT Watch |
| Waldman Cornelia | Rose Island Lighthouse |
| Wang Olivia | Boston University |
| Weiss Herb | City of Pawtucket |
| Williamson Diane | Town of Bristol |
| Wojcik Matt | Woonsocket   Economic Development |
| Xu Xuanxuan | Johnson & Wales University |
| Zabinski Rebekah | Save the Bay |

*Notes from the day*