

Proposition of an Ecotourism Resort on Sheldrake Lake

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Preface by Dr. McLeman:

The report that now follows was produced by a group of my students as part of their senior Environmental Studies field course at the University of Ottawa. The students were required to conduct preliminary research on ecotourism generally, and on past experiences with ecotourism in Canada specifically, prior to travelling to Addington Highlands in September 2008. They were also given copies of the 2007 Request For Proposals (RFP) to develop a parcel of crown land on Sheldrake Lake for the purposes of an 'ecolodge'. The students were broken into three groups, and each group was required to conduct interviews and site research with a view to completing the report that now follows. Students interviewed a range of stakeholders representing a cross-section of the community, including local entrepreneurs, people involved in the tourism industry, members of local social organizations, crown land users, local government officials, and both permanent and seasonal residents. They heard a range of arguments both for and against the RFP, and gained an appreciation for the challenges facing small businesses in the area, the livelihoods of local residents, the infrastructure needs of the community, and the aspirations of the community. The students spent a day in Bon Echo Provincial Park cataloguing the activities, facilities, and infrastructure, and to learn more about the type of tourism experience visitors to Addington Highlands seek. They spent an afternoon with elders of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation and had an interpreted tour of the Cloyne Pioneer Museum to gain a greater appreciation for the environmental history. A professional forester took the students on a guided walk in the forests near Sheldrake Lake, to explain the forest ecology of the land to be developed in the RFP.

On the final full day, the students visited the RFP site, accessing it from canoes provided by the Sheldrake Lake Association and using the home of a generous and gracious family as a base. The students traversed the RFP site and collected observations about the topography, aspect, land cover, shoreline attributes and lake bottom conditions. They assessed the site from the perspective of where a developer would want to situate buildings, roadways, parking, trails, septic fields and other necessary infrastructure. They considered what recreation activities would be possible at the site, and what might not be feasible. They then returned to Ottawa and spent the next eight weeks writing their reports.

In giving them my directions for this report, I advised students that they should do their best to come up with a specific development proposal that might work under the terms of the RFP, even if they felt the site was not entirely well-suited for development according to ecotourism principles. The students identified a number of potential challenges for developing the site, and relate to such things as the large proportion of wetlands and small watercourses on the site, the limited amount of distinctive topography, the aspect of the site (the shoreline faces north and east), and the amount of care that would be necessary to ensure the development's water needs are serviced without altering the water quality in the lake. The students noted a considerable challenge would be to attract visitors in winter, and emphasize that the development would require a sizeable marketing budget if it were to succeed.

The report that now follows is their own work, with all its strengths, weaknesses, and creativity. I have done little editing except to replace the names of particular individuals from Addington Highlands when cited in the report with the word “interviews”. None of the students is from this region, and few had been exposed to the concepts of ecotourism prior to this project. None are engineers or professional developers, and so perhaps some of what they suggest may be economically inadvisable, physically impossible, and/or overly optimistic. The report’s strength is in the imagination and originality that these fresh sets of eyes bring to the RFP. It is my hope and theirs that this report will be of some service in stimulating discussion and reflection in Addington Highlands.

Dr. Robert McLeman
University of Ottawa

Note: My addition of this preface has added two pages to this document, so the reader will need to mentally add two pages if searching according to the table of contents. RM

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Summary

This report was created in response to the Request for Proposal number 1-1 entitled “An [sic] Unique Tourism Development Opportunity for Sheldrake Lake in Addington Highland[sic]: Nature[sic]s Heartland”, submitted on September 10, 2007 by the Ministry of Natural Resources of Ontario, the Corporation of the Township of Addington Highlands and the County of Lennox and Addington. As of November 16th 2007, no formal response to the RFP had been received. The students of Environment 4910 (ENV 4910) of the University of Ottawa present herein a proposition to build an ecotourism resort on Sheldrake Lake in Addington Highlands, Ontario. With information gathered from conducted interviews and scientific articles, the ENV4910 team concluded that such project would not be reasonably practicable considering the region’s cultural, environmental and economic challenges.

Proposition of an Ecotourism Resort on Sheldrake Lake

1. Introduction

1.1 Tourism Background

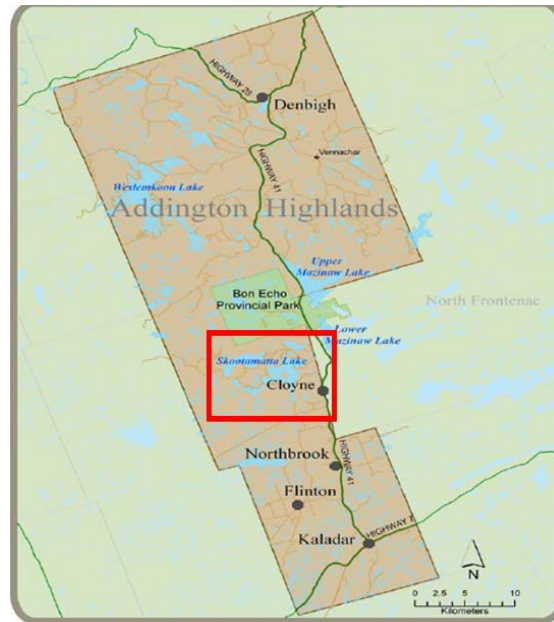
During the last forty years, the tourism industry triggered remarkable changes with respect to innovation and development. The technological progress affecting transportation and the increased living standard of a large portion of the population directly affected people's ability to travel abroad, which in turn increased this industry's revenue in a significant way (David, 2004). The World Tourism Organization estimates there were more than 657 million international tourists in 1999 (WTO, 2000). Unfortunately, this unprecedented growth does not include planning which takes into account the impacts on environmental and socio-cultural factors. Instead, financial gains are put ahead of other considerations. According to Convention on Biological Diversity, there exists a paradox surrounding tourism: economic profit is at the detriment of the natural world, of local identity and of traditional culture. Tourism is an integrated system in which numerous elements are linked together, for example: the protection of the environment and the economic viability. As a result, changes in one of the elements, whether environmental or economic, unavoidably affect the other corresponding elements (Swarbrooke, 1999). There was a world-wide distress call, more so from developed countries, in order to improve planning and management in tourism, at all levels (Inskeep, 1991). Therefore, the concept of sustainable development has attracted a great deal of attention with regards to the study of the tourism industry.

For several decades, tourism researchers have studied means by which local tourism environmental durability can be improved. Two main solutions have been identified: ecotourism and sustainable tourism (Dolnicar, 2007). Ecotourism is known to be a promising tool for rural sustainable development, in particular for fragile environments, to release pressure generated by the tourism industry (Stancliffe, 1998). In brief, ecotourism is defined as a touristic activity which protects the environment while contributing to the local socio-economical development, to education and to durability (Ross *et al.*, 1999). The proposition herein will therefore be based on an ecotourism retreat.

1.2 Study Area

This report aims at proposing the development of an ecotourism resort on Sheldrake Lake in Addington Highlands, Ontario. Addington Highlands is a rural municipality situated in the north part of the County of Lennox and Addington (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Map of Addington Highlands.



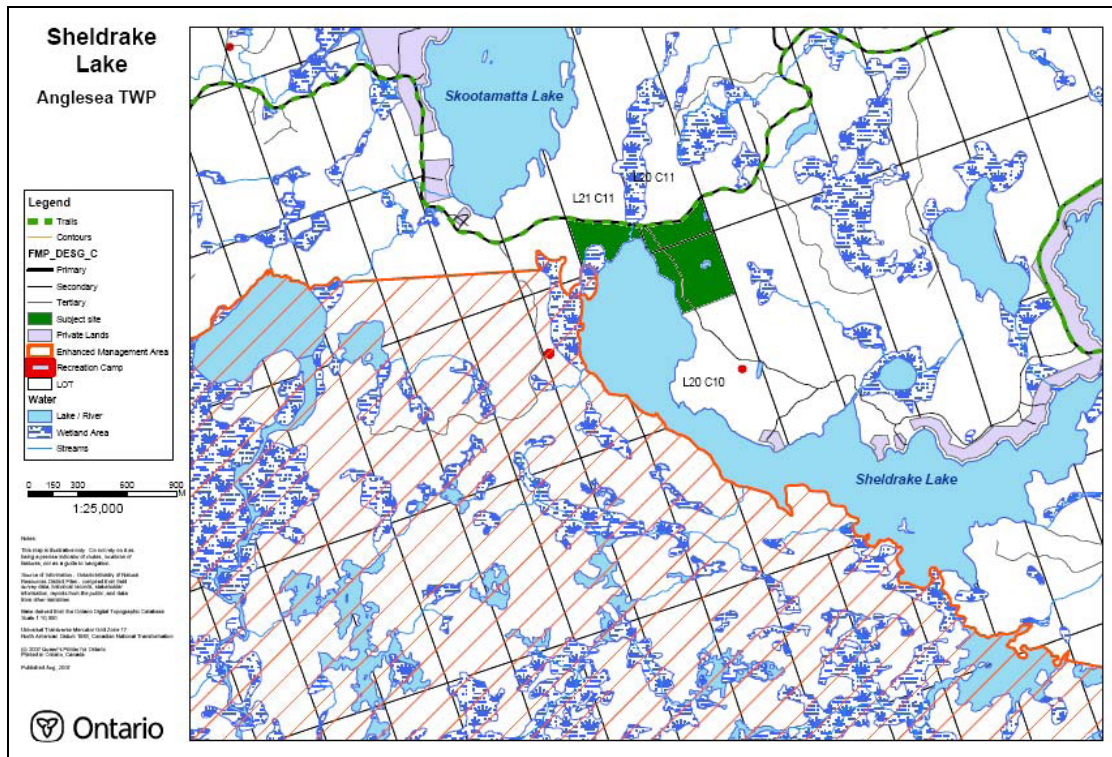
Legend

Red Square: Proposed site area.

Source: Adapted from McLeman and Gilbert, 2008.

The current township includes several small villages; from south to north on Figure 1: Kaladar, Flinton, Northbrook, Cloyne and Debigh. This municipality comprises about 142 000 hectares of land, 70% of which is Crown Land and has a population of 2 400 permanent residents and about 3 500 seasonal residents (Statistics Canada, 2001; McLeman and Gilbert, 2008; Government of Ontario, 2006). Addington Highlands is situated along side of Highway 41, in the south-east portion of Ontario, a car trip of a few hours from the major urban centres of Ontario, Quebec and the United States of America (including Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Buffalo and Syracuse). This region is dependant on the following industries for employment: tourism, construction and extraction of natural resources (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008). In addition, this municipality is part of the Canadian Shield physiographic region and the Land O' Lakes touristic region (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008). The site is mapped in Figure 2. The site covers an area of 78.3 acres, which includes about 900 meters of shoreline (MNR, 2007). Sheldrake Lake has a surface area of 185.6 hectares, is currently occupied by 27 cottages, and is surrounded by Crown Lands. The proposed site, situated on Crown Lands, is characterized by a mature forest of second generation, a thin layer of soil on top of a solid bedrock, and many swamps and ground deviations.

Figure 2: Map of the proposed site on Sheldrake Lake, in Addington Highlands.



Source: The Township of the Corporation of Addington Highlands;
<http://www.crlnetwork.com/data/CRL000008196.pdf>

Addington Highlands could be an option for the increasing demand of tourists wishing to enjoy recreational activities in the heart of an unexploited or barely exploited environment. This region has a great potential to offer many types of outdoor activities considering its physiographic characteristics.

1.3 Proposal Contents

This document, created by the environmental studies students enlisted in the ENV 4910 course (Field Study) of the University of Ottawa, will identify and elaborate in detail several aspects of the proposed development, based on informal meetings and interviews with key stakeholders. These interviews were conducted during the first week of September and the last week of October 2008. This analysis will discuss the physiographic and biological aspects, infrastructure, the economical and cultural situation as well as some marketing elements to be considered in a development proposal. An

overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed site and the available public infrastructure in the region to support such development will be examined and will serve as a platform for the proposed development of an ecoresort described herein. A financial analysis of this project will be included. Attention will also be given to the types of competition that most likely will be affecting ecotourism in the region and a marketing strategy will be proposed. Potential environmental impacts of the development will also be analysed and included in an environmental management plan. There will also be mention of the cultural context of the Algonquin First nation. Finally, the essential elements and challenges will contribute to realistic approach to the feasibility of such ecotourism development.

2.0 Proposed Site for the Development of an Ecotourism Resort

The following section will deal with the proposed site for developing and ecotourism resort. The proposed site's physical components as well as its strengths and weaknesses will be discussed. Then, the municipality's attractions, infrastructures and other suitable characteristics will be examined in order to determine the region's capacity to support such development.

2.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Proposed Site

Some of the site's physical elements make it an ideal location for an ecotourism development. Since the site is situated where there is very little development, opportunities exist for tourists that would like to know more of the region's fauna and flora. Visitors would have access to air of excellent quality and to clear skies suitable for star-gazing. There are no cottages on the north shore visible from the site. In addition, ground deviations would allow visitors to hike. The site is surrounded by Crown Lands which could be used for practicing nature-based activities tolerated within Crown Land policies: "any person may freely travel about on public lands (including public lands under water) for transient activities such as hiking, boating, canoeing, cross country skiing, water skiing, swimming [...]" (MNR, 2007). A public dock for boats is also available on Sheldrake Lake (MNR, 2007).

However, the proposed site is subject to some weaknesses which must be taken into account when planning for an ecotourism development. Despite consequential economic advantages to the municipality, many residents, namely cottage owners on the shores of Sheldrake Lake, are opposed to such development. These residents are concerned about the effects on their outdoor experience and on the water and air quality. Cottagers on Skootamata Lake are also worried about this. These two bodies of water are directly linked with each other and cottagers of Skootamata Lake believe the developmental impacts on Sheldrake Lake will also be felt on their lake.

2.1.1 Site Characteristics for Ecotourism Economic Viability

The proposed site has some strength elements for success: the many swamps lay the ground for Canadian Shield fauna and flora observation, the low level of development activity is appropriate for outdoor activities and interpretation trails in the forest and wetlands. Nonetheless, economic success remains a challenge. This success would be more feasible where sun is more easily available for visitors to enjoy near the water for relaxation, sunbathing or swimming. The presence of the sun plays a major role in tourism. Also, ecotourism development would have more chances of succeeding where the land offers a more varied relief in addition to a body of water to multiply the activities and possibly include adventure tourism (rock climbing or rafting for example). The fact that the lake is fairly shallow could also impact on success as it limits the range of activities offered. The neighbour's willingness or even their participation would be ideal. Moreover, cultural elements in the region allows for cultural exchanges and cultural tourism. Aboriginal people would most likely enrich this last aspect. It remains that even if ecotourism is the most promising sector in one of the biggest industry worldwide, the rather gloomy current global economic situation leaves room for worries.

2.2 Municipality's Abilities to Support the Development

The following section will examine Addington Highlands' ability to support such development. This region offers some attractions that could help toward this type of development; however some weaknesses will need to be addressed in order to allow for the development of an ecoresort.

2.2.1 Natural and Cultural Attractions

Addington Highlands offers many natural and cultural attractions. Located in "nature's heartland" (MNR, 2007), this area has much to offer: "[t]here are acres of spectacular lakes, rivers, and streams or water oriented recreation; forest and highland trails to explore on foot, bicycle, and horseback; dark, star filled skies for night gazing..." (CTAH, 2007). A detailed description of those activities that could be offered at the ecotourism resort is included in section 3.3 entitled "Activities".

From a cultural point of view, this region includes the Bon Echo provincial park which welcomes more than 175,000 visitors per year (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008). In this park, visitors can appreciate native pictographs as well as a carving of poet Walt Whitman's poem on Mazinaw Rock (OP, 2001). In addition, many artists, the Group of Seven for instance, have visited the region to find inspiration from the nature's beautiful

landscapes (English, 2007).The municipality also has a museum which showcases the region's historical European development and some yearly art exhibitions.

2.2.2 Infrastructure

Looking at infrastructure, Addington Highlands could be better adapted to support regional development. Residents and businesses in the area do not have access to cell-phone and broadband Internet service (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008). Since this region is dependant on tourism, the lack of cell-phone and high-speed Internet access is problematic. The tourism industry is highly affected by the weather: its influence is felt when relating to the activities being offered or to the region's visitors. Without Internet access, businesses cannot retrieve weather forecast information (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008). Also, the lack of cell-phone service could be a major obstacle since it would prevent visitors to call for help if there was any road accident (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008). In addition, the municipality does not offer any water treatment for drinking water. Necessary infrastructures are further examined in section 4 entitled "Infrastructure Inventories".

2.2.3 Health, Demography and Education

From a health service standpoint, the capacity to support an ecotourism development is debatable. There is only one family doctor in the region, leaving some residents to travel to Renfrew or Napanee to receive care (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008). There is no emergency clinic, which could be an important problem in the development of an ecolodge. To mitigate this issue, a paramedic service is currently offered, however delays are questionable.

Since there are 2,400 residents in Addington Highlands, such a development would create work and could prove to be beneficial. The population is aging, the majority of residents are 60-64 years old (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008). In relation to the region's health care situation, it is difficult to attract young families since there is no health care available for young ones (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008).

Moreover, there is only one school in the region and some children have to travel more than 150 km per day to get there (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008). The population's education level is relatively low. About 43% of the residents do not have a high school diploma and less than 5% have a university degree (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008).

2.2.4 Economy

The region's tourist season usually starts during May 24th long weekend and closes after Labour Day. This situation can sometime be difficult for business owners since they are dependent on those three to four months to earn their annual revenues.

Furthermore, the mean annual revenue earned by residents is \$15,000 to \$19,000 (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008), which is insufficient for capital investment. This obstacle could be resolved through ecotourism development that would increase jobs available to people in the region and would bring on more customers to some businesses. More details on the economic situation of the region will be exposed in section 3.1.3 entitled “Human Resources”.

In the past, the majority of tourists were from the U.S., but this profitable market is in decline. During the summer of 2008 for example, the Canadian dollar increased in value in relation to the American dollar. For that reason, American visitors were less inclined to take their vacation in Canada, consequently affecting the traffic in Addington Highlands (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008). The global economic situation will be discussed in part 8 entitled “Marketing Strategy and Economic Situation”.

2.2.5 Aboriginal Claims

In Addington Highlands, many land parcels suitable for the development are situated on lands which are claimed by the Ardoch Algonquin First nation (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008). The Algonquins claim the land near the bodies of water discharging in the Mississippi River (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008). These land claims are interpreted as a risk to Addington Highlands’ development, while they should rather be seen as a cooperation opportunity with members of the First nation. Ecotourism development would be advantageous for all stakeholders involved: the developer, the local government, the local population and the Algonquins. This aspect will be further discussed section 9 entitled “Potential Contribution of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation”.

3.0 Detailed Description of the Ecotourism Resort

Development

The land on which the resort would be built is Crown Land as mentioned earlier. Since 1980, the Government of Ontario took on the initiative to use this type of land to promote economic development (MNR, 2007), as is the case for the proposed site for the ecotourism development.

It is important to mention that the proposed ecolodge envisioned by the ENV 4910 students would be open year-round.

This development would be based on the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System for new constructions and renovations. This rating is based on five desired conditions:

1. Sustainable site development
2. Water efficiency
3. Energy efficiency
4. Materials selection
5. Indoor environmental quality (CaGBC, 2008).

Additionally, the team took into consideration ecological tourism principles. Local resources and leisure activities having minimal environmental impacts are very much in demand (Magnin, 2006), while aiming at non-destructive and eco-informative activities.

3.1 Main Structure

3.1.1 Building

Taking into account geomorphologic and environmental aspects of the proposed site in the Request for Proposal, it would be more economical and less destructive in terms of space to build the resort vertically instead of horizontally. The team's objective is to encourage community spirit and that is why cottages owned by individuals or a group of individuals would not answer to this vision.

3.1.1.2 Composition of the Resort: A Speculative View

The ecolodge would be five storeys high including a basement. The lobby would be considered a common area where people would have access to a kitchen and a living room. There would be 12 rooms on each floor for a total of 50 rooms; 25 with one double bed, 25 with two double beds. Thus, this resort could accept a maximum of 150 visitors at a time. As for essential services, a common changing room, showers and washrooms, all divided by sex, would be necessary. The highest floor would be reserved for wealthier tourists wishing more privacy. The rooms would be spacious and include a private washroom. In reference to 2005's legislation with respect to access to built areas of Ontario for disabled people, handicapped people must have equal access to the built installations (MCSS, 2008). This is why an access ramp would be needed in order to link the lobby with the first floor and an elevator would be of service to disabled people and employees of the resort only.

3.1.2 Human Resources

To counter rural exodus of young residents, it is essential to promote hiring of young adults in Addington Highlands. The goal is to reduce the increasing migration rate (90%) of people choosing to live in the city in search of better employment opportunities. Approximately 50 workers would be needed for the operations of the ecolodge. This

would include receptionists, servers, kitchen staff, room maintenance staff, contractors, etc. These would include both full-time and part-time positions to encourage the employment of young people. Particular attention should be paid to consider hiring members of the Ardoch Algonquin First nation to optimize partnership relations with them. A daily or weekly routine would be in place at the resort.

3.2 Ecological Principals

3.2.1 “3R” and Others

The “3R” formula (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) could be strictly applied to produce the least amount of waste as possible.

The lodge would be supplied in food bought from local farmers. In addition to stimulating the local economy, this would reduce the energy needed for food transportation. Consequently, this would imply a cost reduction for the shipping and handling of these goods. Composting should also be included in everyday operations to reduce the amount of waste. In fact, composting reduces by one third the overall quantity of waste produced (Environment Canada, 2003). Compost, the enriched earth resulting from composting, could be used for the maintenance of a garden available to tourists.

Collecting and using rainwater is another essential practice to avoid wasting water. This water could be used to flush toilets or to water gardens on the property (PWGSC, 2008).

Finally, recycling would be required for this type of business. Recyclable items would be picked up on a regular basis by a private contractor from the region. Recycling products could then provide a second life for cardboard or plastics, thus avoiding them being sent to the landfills where they would need hundreds or thousands of years to decompose.

3.2.2 Safeguarding Biodiversity

During the construction phase of the resort and the exterior infrastructures, it would be important to minimize land clearing to preserve biodiversity and faunal habitats. Also, no pesticides or chemical fertilizers would be used for maintaining grass or for gardening. More details are provided in section 7 entitled “Environmental Preoccupations”.

3.3 Materials and Isolation

3.3.1 Hemp Bricks

The five-storey building should be made of the most environmentally-friendly possible materials. Hemp, a plant used for its fibre, turns out to be the best option since it maximizes insulation, has a great capacity in terms of hydrothermal exchanges and has a strong inertia coefficient and is an environmentally-friendly product (Region Alsace, 2008). First of all, hemp is environmentally-friendly as it has a fast growth rate. This material also allows for a 30% reduction in the need for construction wood (Construction ArtCan, no date). Buildings made of this material are well ventilated and energy efficient. However, the ecolodge would need to be structurally supported by solid wood. Overall, a wooden structure holding hemp bricks would be fairly suitable for the ecolodge (Figure 3). Hemp constructions require a very low energy consumption level compared to similar constructions made out of modern commercial materials (ECHOTECK Construction, 2004). Hemp could offer great thermal comfort during both summer and winter. The bricks can be handmade, that is, without consuming energy. This would take care of two things at once: an environmentally-friendly material and an environmentally-friendly technique!

Figure 3: Timber frame and hemp brick walls.



Source: Observatoire de la Forêt Méditerranéenne; <http://www.ofme.org/documents/FiliereBois/EcoTech3.pdf>

3.3.2 PVC Windows

In order to maximize natural lighting and to avoid heat loss, adequate windows and doors are recommended. One window per room would be judged necessary. Larger windows could be found in the lobby area. PVC windows can be an environmentally friendly option if they are made of recycled plastics. They reflect UV rays, allow for maximum insulation and are low maintenance (Grosfillex, 2008). Furthermore, since the southern portion of the building will be absorbing most of the sun's rays, it would be suggested to maximize passive solar gain by having bigger windows on the southern façade and smaller ones on the northern façade.

3.3.3 Green Roof

Another means to insulate the roof structure consists of adding substrate on which would grow vegetation, in other words a “green roof”. Figure 4 shows an example of what the green roof could look like. Green roofs can insulate just as well in the summer compared to the winter season and allow for a 10% saving in air conditioning cost. They also provide the opportunity to set up a garden terrace with areas for relaxation intended for visitors. A green roof bears many beneficial properties: it is energy efficient, cleans the surrounding air, has a long lifespan, and is an additional area for vegetation growth (Laroche *et al.*, 2004).

Figure 4: Green roof.



Source: Rose, O. A.; www.ecosensual.net

3.4 Energy

It is essential to include electricity in the ecotourism resort. The proposed construction would be too big to be powered only by sustainable sources of energy. The envisaged building could be powered in an alternated or combined way by conventional electricity and by clean, sustainable energies.

3.4.1 Electricity from Conventional Sources

The ecolodge will necessitate a substantial quantity of electricity to operate; this is especially true during the winter season. In order for the lodge to receive energy from conventional sources, high tension lines will need to be installed and this of course will be costly and have a significant impact on the environment. The lack of infrastructure at this level on the proposed site will be an important factor with respect to the feasibility of the project.

3.4.2 Solar Energy

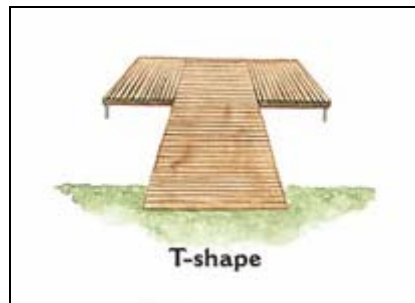
Solar power is an option to bear in mind for the energy supply of the building. This type of renewable energy can heat or cool the building, produce electricity and heat water. It possesses many advantages, mainly economic advantages. Once the initial cost of solar panels is paid for, this energy is practically free (NRCan, 2007). In the long run, it is very cost effective. More details are available in section 6 which accounts for the financial analysis of the project. On top of this, the sun is an unlimited or almost unlimited resource contrary to water used in the production of hydroelectricity. Solar energy is a clean energy as it does not produce any greenhouse gas. Solar panels could be installed in one of the green roof's corners.

3.5 External Infrastructure

3.5.1 Dock

As there is no beach area on the shore of the proposed site, the construction of a dock is recommended for leisure or/and relaxation. A "T" shape dock is suggested. This would allow for people to swim and for the launching of canoes or kayaks (Figure 5). The dock could be made of wood from the region's forest industry. The lumber would need to be treated according to building standards specifically for semi-submerged wooden construction. It is recommended to pressure treat the dock's structural lumber while avoiding treating the remaining surface of the dock, leaving it as natural-looking as possible (DFO, 2008).

Figure 5: T-shape dock.



Source: Government of Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada;
http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/regions/central/pub/dock-quais-on/04_e.htm

3.5.2 Boardwalk

Because of the numerous swamps, fauna, flora and physiographic components of the area, mounting a boardwalk above the swamp area would offer opportunities for tourists to observe nature present in the area. This boardwalk would cross the marshlands (Figure 6). Once more, it could be made of lumber from the region's forest industry. Interpretive signs could be installed alongside the boardwalk. These signs would provide tourists with information on birds, fauna and flora from the area. Thus, amateur ornithologists could practice their hobby while learning more about birds in the vicinity. Marshland destruction is incompatible with the establishment of an ecotourism industry. All in all, faunal and floral heritage would be exposed.

Figure 6: Example of a boardwalk crossing wetlands.



Source: Ville de Montréal, 2008;
http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/url/page/parcs_fr/rep_decouvrez_grands_parcs/rep_parc_ilebizard/parc_ILEBIZARD?nomPage=bt_parc_08

3.6 Activities

Activities available to visitors should cause minimal impacts to the environment, enhance environmental education and support biodiversity conservation (Auziaz, 2008). Many activities answer to these criteria.

3.6.1 Summer

An example of a summer activity included in such a view would be trail hiking. Water-based activities could include canoeing and kayaking, which pose minimal environmental impacts. At the end of the dock, swimming would be allowed. Artificial target archery, fishing and star gazing would be other interesting activities. The ambience found on the green roof could be fairly appropriate for observing stars. An employee well-informed in the astronomy field could explain the different constellations and associated mythology to tourists. Other activities being offered would require leaving the resort area: exploring the Bon Echo Park, visiting the local museum, etc.

3.6.2 Winter

With regards to the winter season, interesting activities could be offered such as snowshoeing, skating, ice-hockey, cross-country skiing and ice-fishing. Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing could be practiced on land as well as on Sheldrake Lake. In addition, group activities outside the resort site could be organized with aboriginal guides for tourists to get more familiar with ancestral practices. More details are provided in section 8.

4.0 Infrastructure Inventories

For the well-functioning of the ecolodge, some infrastructures will need to be developed. Each infrastructure is discussed in more details in the following sections.

4.1 Roads

Considering the lodge's size and occupant capacity, road construction would be necessary. This road would not be made of asphalt; instead, it would consist of a gravel

road large enough to permit two-way traffic. The location for the road should be chosen as to avoid marshlands near the proposed site. The length of the road would be from 1,500 to 2,000 metres. The Canadian Shield bedrock and ground deviations should be taken into account in the construction of this road. Besides this, the construction of a road is inevitable as emergency vehicle access is a requirement for insurance reasons.

4.2 Wastewater Treatment

Another type of infrastructure that would be necessary for the resort's operations relates to water treatment. There are no water treatment services available in the region. Therefore, septic tanks and septic fields would most likely need to be built. This however would not come cheap. It is worth noting that some wastewater treatment systems available on the market are cleaner than conventional septic tanks. For example, the Pinnacle Company offers septic tank systems which biologically filter wastewater for all kinds of buildings (Clean Water Canada, 2008).

4.3 Waste

Waste collection would be required despite recycling and composting practices carried out by the managers of the resort. It is suggested to have a private agreement signed between the resort operators and a local contractor for the transportation of detritus to one of the six landfills in the region (McLeman and Gilbert, 2008).

4.4 Wells

A well would need to be dug as municipal water system is not an offered in some rural regions such as Addington Highlands. Because the proposed land is somewhat elevated and mainly consists of rock, the well could possibly be deep. There would be significant costs involved in the digging of a deep well. However, the depth of the well is unknown; the cost would then be variable. Well water collection will have a major impact on the water table as a great quantity of water would be needed to run the resort, more so when at full capacity. A geotechnical study would need to be conducted to provide more details and give insight to possible impacts on the water table. However, a well would be required for the supply of drinking water. Water used for other purposes could be pumped out of the lake if rainwater would not be able to meet the demand for water intended for toilets and other purposes. Once filtered in the septic tank system, water could be returned into the lake, without practically any contaminating agents.

4.5 Parking

Employees and visitors will need park their vehicles. Thus, a parking area is required. Considering the use of public buses is non-existing in the region, there would not be many customers without their personal vehicle. The parking area should be near the building in order to maximize the use of space. It would be made of compacted earth and stones instead of asphalt, in other words it should be kept in a natural state within reason. This would permit conservation of the area's natural aspect and protect fauna and flora from chemical component included in the spreading of asphalt.

5.0 Potential Competition Affecting the Development of the Ecolodge

In the Land O' Lakes region, located in the heart of Addington Highlands, many sources of touristic competition are susceptible to bring an end to the development of the project. In the next section, certain sources of industry competition are discussed.

5.1 Partially-Owned Properties

A partially-owned cottage is a fairly new concept which implies many owners for the same property¹. Frontenac Shores is the most popular partially-owned property in the Land O' Lakes tourist region. The ecoresort is comprised of three luxurious cottages located on Lake Mississagagon. This resort is fully occupied all year round (Frontenac Shores, 2008). The proposed ecotourism resort on Sheldrake Lake would not aim at the same clientele. However, this competition should not be underestimated. The idea of offering a more luxurious setting at the proposed site could definitely compete with partially-owned properties.

5.2 Bon Echo Provincial Park

The Bon Echo Park could be perceived as a form of competition to the ecolodge since the park allows for stays of several days for campers or recreational vehicles. Of course, the proposed resort would attract customers in search for more comfort than what is offered at Bon Echo. However, the Bon Echo experience remains a tourist attraction that must not be ignored. It would be beneficial to consider some sort of cooperative agreement between the ecolodge and the park. In fact, visitors seeking a higher level of comfort could still be able to visit the Bon Echo Park without spending the night.

¹ This allows people to have access to a prestigious cottage without necessarily having the means to be an independent owner. Costs are divided between several owners. Each owner has the right to the cottage for a predetermined period.

5.3 Other Tourist Destinations

There are other tourist destinations in the Land O' Lakes region. The Loon Lake Lodge is one example. In fact, this establishment attracts customers wanting to enjoy different summer activities. These activities are in direct competition with the proposed ecolodge. The Land O' Lakes region includes 40 establishments welcoming vacationers and offering them activities similar to the ones offered at the ecolodge (Land O' Lakes Tourist Association, 2008). Thus, there exist various sources of this type of competition. It makes sense considering the tourism industry is the main industry of the region. Moreover, this competition is intense as all regional businesses aim at generating their annual revenue during the summer season. For this reason, it is important to offer activities during all seasons.

6.0 Financial Analysis

The following financial analysis was developed in accordance to information provided in the RFP number 1-1 entitled "An Unique Tourism Development Opportunity for Sheldrake Lake in Addington Highland: Natures Heartland", submitted on September 10, 2007 by the Ministry of Natural Resources of Ontario, the Corporation of the Township of Addington Highlands and the County of Lennox and Addington. It is also a result of evaluating elements included in the University of Ottawa ENV 4910 students' proposition of ecotourism development. It covers some of the financial challenges to be considered during all phases of the project's primary realization. Other items not explicitly calculated are also mentioned. This analysis is divided in three sections: general considerations applicable during all phases of the development, the preparation phase and the construction phase. Figure 7 shows generalized results applicable to a feasible ecolodge for Addington Highlands obtained from *The Tourism Company* in 2003.

Figure 7: Analysis of an ecoresort's feasible economic potential in Addington Highlands.

Potential Financial Performance: Ecodge		
Number of Rooms		50
Annual Occupancy		65%
Average Room Rate	\$	150.00
Revenue		
Rooms Revenue	\$	1,775,000 50%
Food & Beverage Revenue	\$	1,186,000 33%
Program and Rental Revenues	\$	593,000 17%
Total Revenue	\$	3,558,000 100%
Expenses		
Salaries & Wages	\$	1,601,100 45%
Other Operating Expenses	\$	880,500 25%
Total Expenses	\$	2,490,600
Return on Investment		
Net Operating Income Before Debt Service, Depreciation, & Income Taxes	\$	1,067,400 30%
Total Project Investment	\$	8,320,700
Annual Return on Investment		12.8%
Source: The Tourism Company, 2003		

Source: The Tourism Company, 2003.

6.1 General Considerations

Proponents must quote their estimated prices in Canadian dollars and exclusive of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) (MNR, CTAH and CLA, 2007).

6.1.2 Financial Resources

The *Prince Edward/Lennox and Addington Community Futures and Development Corporation* is a potential source of financing for new projects such as the one proposed herein. Up to \$325,000 in financing is available (CTAH, 2008). There are also marketing support programs available from four public organizations. They are the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) at the national level, the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation (OTMPC) at the provincial level, the Ontario East Tourism Corporation (OETC) at the regional level and the Land O' Lakes Tourist Association (LOL) at the local level (CTAH, 2008).

The \$80 million Eastern Ontario Development Fund (EODF) is available to attract investment and support job creation in eastern Ontario. It can invest up to 50 per cent for economic development projects valued at \$100,000 (MED, 2008).

6.1.3 Policies and Regulations

Proponents must conform to all applicable building codes, regulatory standards and licensing requirements on all land areas for the development (MRN; CTAH; CLA, 2007).

6.2 Preparation Phase

Proponents are responsible for all costs associated with the preparation of the proposition (MRN; CTAH; CLA, 2007):

- Without charges for the proposition described herein.

Proponents are responsible for all costs associated with negotiations between the Province of Ontario and themselves (MRN; CTAH; CLA, 2007):

- Without charges for the proposition described herein.

The Province of Ontario is not responsible for any profit losses in profit by the Proponents if the proposition is refused (MRN; CTAH; CLA, 2007).

Proponents must prepare and conceive architectural plans signed off by an accredited expert (Berlinguette, 2008):

- Based on the project's dimensions and characteristics, it would be ideal to have a technologist produce ten architectural drawings which could be approved by an architect in order to save money. The cost of using the technologist's services would amount to approximately \$3,000, while the cost associated with the architect's approval would be about \$2,000 for a total of \$5,000 towards the production of all plans (Berlinguette, 2008).

The Developer must carry out an archaeological survey before the commencement of any work (MRN; CTAH; CLA, 2007).

The Developer must carry out an MNR Class Environmental Assessment for Resource Stewardship and Facility Development Projects (MRN; CTAH; CLA, 2007):

- Without initial charges for the actual assessment, but this could affect the budget depending on the conditions.

Proponents must obtain from the MNR one or more of the following Land tenure documents:

- License of Occupation; \$270.00 (one time admin fee).
 - Land Use Permit; \$150.00 (one time admin fee, 5% of the annual rent value).
 - Crown Lease; \$300.00 (one time admin fee, survey cost paid by the Developer, 7% of the annual rent value).
 - Sale and Letters Patent; (survey cost paid by the Developer, appraisal fees paid by the Developer and 100% of the purchase value). To apply for Sale and Letters Patent, the Developer will be required to have the lands approved for sale, appraised to determine market value by an accredited appraiser (ACCI) based on the terms of reference provided by the MNR. The appraisal is subject to review and approval by the MNR:
- According to Michel (2008), land appraisal for land such as the proposed land would cost between \$7,500 and \$10,000 considering its location and the in-depth analysis required.

6.3 Construction Phase

It is important to note that local resources will be first used if they are available.

6.3.1 Roads

Taking into account Tembec's forest road cost estimates, the cost associated with the construction of a gravel road and ditches would at least be \$80,000 for 2 km, the road distance required to get to the site (Tembec Inc., 2008). However, considering we would be dealing with a municipal road, it could be five to ten times more expensive.

6.3.2 Land Preparation: Land Clearing

About 0.25 acres of the 78.3 acres allocated or about 10,890 square feet would be used for the construction of the lodge, the parking area and the boat launch area (Berlinguette, 2008).

6.3.3 Energy Sources: Electricity from Conventional Sources

Based on the length of the road needed (2 km), 30 electrical posts at 200 feet interval will need to be installed. Each post installation costs about \$1,000. All in all, approximately \$30,000 would be required to allow for the lodge to be supplied by electricity from conventional sources (Berlinguette, 2008).

6.3.4 Main Building

6.3.4.1 Interior and Exterior Construction

A surface area of 2,200 square feet is standard for accommodating rooms, private and communal washrooms, the kitchen, the lobby, etc. For a five-storey building, this would sum up to a surface area of 13,200 square feet. About \$200 per square feet is needed for standard material construction (insulation, wooden structure, finishing, etc.) including all fixed equipment (toilets, wiring, etc.). With the inclusion of appliances in the kitchen, beds, furniture, etc., cost estimates could amount to \$3,000,000 for building the ecolodge (Berliguette, 2008).

6.3.4.2 Modified Construction

This section looks at the costs involved with using non-standard material for the construction of an ecotourism resort, such as the ecolodge propose in this report. As mentioned above, an estimated cost for the construction of this ecolodge with conventional material and equipment could amount to \$3,000,000.

Hemp

The use of hemp for insulation and for exterior bricks would reduce the above mentioned anticipated costs (Éco-logis, 2008).

Green Roof

A green roof of 2,200 square feet would cost about \$20,900 based on calculations done by Laroche, Mitchell and Péloquin (2004). Moreover, these authors claim green roofs save up to 10% in air conditioning and have a long lifespan (Laroche *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, additional help is available for the financing of energy efficient buildings from the Government of Canada, which announced in 2004 it would include green roofs as a material subject to incentives (Laroche *et al.*, 2004). The Office of Energy Efficiency can finance up to 50% of the planning costs and up to 25% of the work cost depending on how feasible energy conservation opportunities (Laroche *et al.*, 2004).

6.3.5 Water Supply

Drinking water will be made available from a well. The digging of a well would be quite costly in this region considering conditions mentioned in section 4 (Infrastructure). The functioning of a well suitable for a dwelling of four people requires about \$6,000. For the resort capable of receiving up to 150 customers, it would be wise to envisage the possibility of the need for more than one well where there cost would amount to \$225,000 (Le Roseau épurateur, 2008).

Service waters would be supplied by a wastewater treatment system integrated to the septic system which would be installed to accommodate 150 people. Such a system would cost about \$560,000 (Le Reseau épurateur, 2008).

6.3.6 Sources of Energy for the Operation of the Resort: Solar Power

A 2 m² panel installed on the roof would cost about \$630 and could produce up to 300 kWh to meet the building's demand (APPER Solaire, 2008).

6.3.7 Parking

A parking area of about 6750 square feet should be able to accommodate up to 150 people. Comparing the construction cost for a gravel road, this could cost a minimum of \$9,000.

6.4 Estimate of Total Expenses

All in all, based on the research conducted by the ENV 4910 team, the proposed project could amount to a minimum of \$4,000,000 for the preparation and construction phases.

7.0 Environmental Management Plan: Environmental Impacts and Management Methods

The environmental management plan's goal is to establish a framework in which it would be possible to avoid environmental damages and to use resources in a responsible and sustainable way. The proposed development's environmental management plan examines negative environmental impacts and the means to attenuate them. To implement this plan, tools such as negative impact reduction procedures, a surveillance plan and an overall management plan have been chosen to answer to the ecotourism industry requirements (Gibson, 1993). These components contribute to a balance between environmental conservation and tourism development.

7.1 Procedures to Reduce Negative Impacts

Integrated approaches including environmental considerations and environmental evaluations would be essential during the planning phase of the project in order limit

environmental damages and spending, and to reach as best as possible the project's objectives (CIDA, 2005). Steps to be followed are presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Steps to complete environmental impact assessments.



Source: Adapted from CIDA, 2005.

7.2 Environmental Preoccupations

It is important to acknowledge that the construction of the ecoresort would generate negative impacts to the environment. The clearing of land, excavation and production of waste would be the potential elements most harmful to the environment found at the proposed site (INAC, 2008).

The main components to consider while elaborating the environmental management plan are: the land, the site access road, the parking area, the infrastructures (septic tank, construction of the resort) and finally nearby structures surrounding the site such as the dock, the boardwalk and trails.

7.2.1 Impacts and Solutions

7.2.1.1 Road and Parking Area

Dust could impair air quality during the construction of the access road and the parking area. Dust prevention should then be managed by setting speed limits for vehicles, using dust-reducing equipment and choosing a road path following the usual wind pattern. Another potential impact deals with ground compaction. It is recommended to minimize the number of pathways by avoiding undesignated driving areas to alleviate this impact. There would also be impacts on wildlife and aquatic life. In fact, there would be a risk of hurting animals or destroying their habitats. It would then be advisable to respect speed limits, stay away from sensitive habitats during the construction phase and avoid having the road near bodies of water.

Ground erosion caused by the access road and the boardwalk could induce negative consequences such as heavy sedimentation to the bodies of water nearby. The collapse of shores should also be considered a risk. To avoid such an impact, it would be suggested to build small bridges instead of low water crossings (fords). If these impacts are not limited, aquatic life and habitat destruction in marshlands, streams or lake could arise.

7.2.1.2 Construction

There are three categories of activity which could harm the environment during the construction phase. Those are: land clearing and excavation, building construction and landscaping, and site cleaning.

For those three categories, environmental components most affected would be: ground erosion, loss of native vegetation, shoreline impacts and impacts on wild life and aquatic life. To alleviate these impacts, it would be advised to remove the least amount of vegetation possible bearing in mind sensitive zones; avoid circulation zones near shoreline areas, and plant native vegetation. With regards to wildlife and aquatic life, it would be important to avoid water pollution and the disturbance of sensitive habitats.

During everyday operations at the site, daily surveillance should be conducted to make sure everyday activities do not bear unexpected negative impacts. One of the most important preoccupations is operational failure, in other words environmental problems following the use of the land. An example of this would be fire, which should be controlled as soon as possible. Another aspect relates to damages to vegetation. To minimize this problem, it would be important to designate specific corridors for machinery operations (garbage truck, vehicles, and lawnmower), maintain the surroundings through landscaping intended to replant native species of plants and avoid weeds spreading on the land. With respect to the lakeshore, it would be prudent to make sure that there are no landslides occurring. To do so, geotechnical studies must be

conducted during the planning phase and follow up with the application of proper geotechnical control to stabilize the ground.

7.2.1.3 Septic Field, Septic Tank and Water Table

Attention should be given to ground quality, underground water quality, water quality and aquatic life. During the planning phase, developers should make sure the septic tank and septic field are at a reasonable distance from any bodies of water. The use of the most recent biological filtration technology would be important in having an effective wastewater treatment system.

As for the water table, overconsumption of water should be avoided. It would be advisable to conduct a geotechnical survey informing on the recharge rate and to have alternative water supply sources. Measures such as the use of grey water and rain water are to be included in the development proposition. Another way to avoid overconsumption of water is to install water efficiency devices (low flow showerheads, faucet aerator in the kitchen and in the washrooms).

7.2.1.4 Energy

Energy needs could also provoke environmental impacts. Electrical posts leading to the lodge affects especially the natural aspect viewpoint in the site's surrounding. It would then be preferable to have high vegetation (cedar hedge for example) growing by the post for them to be hidden as much as possible. In addition, the energy supply system includes solar panels which could block the sun from reaching the surrounding vegetation. It would be recommended to build a groomed pathway leading to the solar panels or to have them installed in a designated area on the green roof.

7.2.1.5 Waste

Concerning waste management, incorporating sustainable concepts such as the 3R strategy (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) and composting would be recommended. A sustainable approach to waste management is crucial as garbage can gravely pollute the environment. Moreover, garbage trucks produce a lot of dust pollution. It would then be important to have dust suppressing products so the air quality, soil quality and water quality do not get affected negatively.

All in all, the most probable impacts to occur if the resort gets built are:

- soil erosion
- contamination of Sheldrake Lake
- diminishing and contamination of the water table

- air pollution
- wildlife habitat modifications.

7.3 Surveillance Plan

Follow-up activities and surveillance aim to evaluate a project’s actual effects on the environment and to identify unpredicted effects during the planning phase (CIDA, 2005). Figure 9 provides a summary of important questions to ask during the elaboration of a follow-up plan (CIDA, 2005).

Figure 9: Environmental follow-up and monitoring sheet.

<p>Mitigation Strategies What mitigation strategies were planned for this initiative? What mitigation measures were implemented? Did they fulfil their intended purpose? Did they adequately mitigate risks or effects?</p>
<p>Unforeseen Effects Where there any unforeseen biophysical or social effects? If so, what were they? For negative unforeseen effects, how were they (or will they be) mitigated?</p>
<p>Changes to the Initiative Describe any changes (and the reasons for such changes) to the initiative since the initial environmental assessment that could affect (may have affected) the environment.</p>
<p>Changes to the Environment What environmental changes have occurred since the initial assessment that could affect (may have affected) the initiative (e.g. a change in level of infrastructure, pollution, and so on)? Are additional actions necessary in light of these changes? If so, explain.</p>
<p>Accidents/Mishaps Describe any accidents or mishaps such as spills, contamination, or workplace hazards that occurred, as well as their effect. Indicate whether or not these risks were known/addressed before implementation. How were they dealt with?</p>
<p>Concerns/Changes Outline any changes or concerns that should be addressed.</p>
<p>Recommendations List any environmental lessons from this initiative that could be of use in the future, or any needs for further research that have been identified, and so on.</p>
<p>Environmental Objectives Explain how environmental objectives that were previously integrated to the design of the initiative have been attained.</p>

Source: CIDA, 2007; <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/EMA-218123623-NPD?OpenDocument>

7.4 Management Plan for Visitors

First of all, in order to maximize visitors' experience, the ecoresort would be based on viability principles. To transfer this philosophy to future customers, the team has elaborated policies, practices and activities taking the natural environment into consideration. This conception aims to educate people on the Canadian Shield wildlife and flora as well as the region's cultural aspects.

For example, in regards to policies applicable to tourists, washrooms are to be communal on the first three floors. The idea behind this is to reduce the need for construction material, limit the waste of water and inform customers of water overconsumption impacts. Moreover, this idea could generate a collective attitude. A second example relates to building a green roof. The objective is to minimize energy consumption while offering a green aesthetical perspective to tourists as activities take place on the roof. These activities would consist in star gazing, reading, relaxation and gardening.

In summary, the information contained in this section aims at including the environment in all aspects of the development. The environmental management plan is then seen as an excellent tool to develop a framework in which to mitigate potential negative impacts.

8.0 Potential Contribution of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation

The aboriginal presence should be considered in the regional ecotourism development approach since ecotourism could increase the value of traditional knowledge and way of life aimed at sustainability. For example, The Moose Cree First Nation in Ontario have taken at heart ecological concepts while trying to bring together current thinking and ancient wisdom (Kapashesit, 2002). In particular, they have looked at ways to define ecotourism in the context of their community (Kapashesit, 2002). The Ardoch Algonquin First Nation's culture includes many elements that could very much valuable to the region's ecotourism development. Maple sugar and maple syrup, canoe making, wild rice harvesting, Pow-Wows, aboriginal arts, legends and traditional knowledge pertaining to hunting, fishing and trapping could enrich the ecotourism experience, the aboriginal culture and stimulate the local economy. Ecotourism could also revive a sense of cultural belonging and solidarity by bringing them even closer to their culture. Moreover, knowledge of aboriginal history and culture would result in a better understanding of Aboriginals people. The Ardoch Algonquin First Nation Manomin Heritage Centre relates to those elements:

“the community centre will provide a "space for community members to come together in culturally significant space for community gatherings, cultural and

linguistic programs, education and training, as well as social and health services." As well, the centre will "offer programs to non-members who want to learn about Algonquin people, culture and history.'" (AAFN, [no date]).

Subsidies offered by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada are available to First Nation to help in the realization of ecotourism initiatives focused on economic development for First Nations. Those subsidies could directly help the aboriginal community and indirectly contribute to non-Aboriginals in relation to ecotourism. Considering this, it would be beneficial to improve communication and cooperation between Aboriginals, the local government, non-governmental organizations in favour of environmental protection, and the developer(s) with an aim to build desirable partnerships. However, even if Aboriginal people represent opportunities for ecotourism development, caution should be taken to avoid overconsumption from tourists otherwise benefits will be reduced.

9.0 Marketing Strategy and Economic Situation

Tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world, generating 3.6 trillion dollars. Of this, nature-based tourism and ecotourism represent 160 billion dollars and growing. In fact, these types of tourism are growing at a rate of 20% per year (DNO, 2007). In Canada, this sector is growing annually by 3% since 1975 (DNO, 2007). Before engaging in the ecotourism industry, one must not neglect the marketing dimension of the business. In order to have a successful marketing strategy, it is necessary to expose the owner's company and the products or services it offers (DNO, 2007). It is also important to identify the targeted clientele (DNO, 2007). This being said, unique environmentally friendly elements (materials used, star gazing from a green roof, etc.) as well as ecotourism-compatible activities found at the ecoresort should be mentioned in all publicities. Cultural and natural heritage, including those landscapes that have inspired artists, should be emphasized. In addition, it is recommended to include an educational and local contribution component in the promotion of the resort.

Since ecotourism is perceived to be an alternative to mass tourism, welcoming too many tourists could easily become in conflict with ecotourism. Therefore, it is recommended to go for an effective investment performance as opposed to a high volume of tourists. Could 150 people provide for an effective investment performance while remaining with the definition of ecotourism? Nonetheless, the clientele should be rather wealthy. Based on a study, "[e]cotourists are not easily defined or described. Appreciative of soft or extreme adventures, occasionally in search of physical challenges, which are found in activities such as canoeing, rafting or mountain biking, they may be loyal to a single discipline or might appreciate a mix of activities. They may be part-time "ecotourists" or devoted disciples. A rustic retreat might be what they are after, or perhaps a more luxurious experience. It is difficult to put a finger on who practices ecotourism and exactly what they are after. Generally, they are looking for an activity with a physical aspect, which may be more extreme for some younger travellers and more

luxuriating for mature ones. They spend between eight and 14 days on vacation and want access to cultural and educational sites and activities. They look for a wealth of knowledge from their guides. These tourists have at least one thing in common: they use the environment responsibly. Some apply these principles to their day-to-day lives and will want the entire experience to reflect such values. They may even refuse to stay in a place which does not use alternative modes of energy, such as solar or wind power. One thing is certain: this clientele is educated, mobile and evenly distributed between women and men. For the most part, they are between the ages of 25 and 54 and wish for good-companionship and to develop friendships during their vacation. They usually earn more than the average worker. Twenty percent make more than \$75,000 a year. Many are professional and work in a managerial-level position” (DNO, 2007).

The three key marketing elements “- business, goods and services and clientele - are all influenced by the economy, society, social trends, competition, the market, marketing tools and budgets” (DNO, 2007).

Ecotourists live in developed countries, but new markets are emerging in places such as South-East Asia and Latin America (DNO, 2007). Thus, it would be wise to direct the marketing strategy toward the international market, specifically Europe and Asia, instead of the American market. American “tourists represent 33% of all overnight visitor spending in Northern Ontario, or about \$485 million although they represent only 19% of tourism volume in the North” (Rogers, 2004). However, the declining economic situation in the U.S. does not look promising and should translate into less American tourists in Addington Highlands. This is why it would be better to look into what the international market has to offer.

In order to develop the right marketing strategy essential for the ecoresort’s success in Addington Highlands, it is imperative to be well-informed. The Land O’ Lakes Tourist Association represents as a useful source of information to any developer interested in establishing a business in the region. On top of this, it would be advantageous to “obtain information from agencies or a DMO such as Destination Nord, a Community Futures Development Corporation, from one or all three levels of government, a Chamber of Commerce or from Statistics Canada” (DNO, 2007). Other sources of information are crucial in planning a marketing strategy: Internet, regional or local newspapers, trade magazines and interactions with competitors and colleagues through trade shows (DNO, 2007). Worldwide competition should be acknowledged, but regional competition (partially-owned properties, Bon Echo Provincial Park, etc.) should be carefully studied since it could affect the economic success of the resort. Fishing or hunting should not be included in the marketing strategy. These activities could conflict with ecotourists’ expectation or desired experience. In the same way, the forest and mining industries could be incompatible with ecotourism even if they base their operations on sustainable development. If fishing, hunting, logging or mining are to continue in the future, it would be best if they take place at some distance away from the ecoresort so the tourist attraction’s image does not get tinted. Understanding the region’s ecotourism market would also help towards achieving business success. In 2002, Eco-North 2002 Conference and Trade Show was held in Sudbury, followed by a second one

in 2004 in Thunder Bay. These conferences promoted sustainable, nature-based, heritage and adventure tourism activities in Northern Ontario. The conference summaries were found to be very helpful as they informed on positive experiences and lessons learned from entrepreneurs that have ventured into the ecotourism industry. Many of the information could be of use to developers to initiate this type of industry in Addington Highlands. Also, some accounts were applicable to the region as some were somewhat in the same setting.

To reach customers, web sites represent the best marketing tool available to promote tourism: “[t]he most important is to keep it simple, easy navigation, clear functionality, so if the web site is more than 20 pages you have to have a web site search engine. You have to have a booking engine or a transactional mechanism. The booking engine should be accessed from the home page and all of the other pages you have should cross and that is the main point of having a web site” (Starkov 2002). Local photographers could work towards including an attractive visual aspect of the area in all publicities for the resort. Management of the marketing strategy will need to be done where high-speed Internet is available. There is always the option to have a two-way satellite signal for high-speed Internet, however this is very pricy. As no broadband Internet service is available in Addington Highlands, this will most likely be done in Kingston or Belleville so things like changing the web site, confirming reservations and replying to customer emails. The lack of high-speed Internet access constitutes a major weakness since it limits regional development possibilities, and at the same time, local economic prosperity.

Partnerships with other businesses or organizations are suggested as they allow cross-promotion of products or services through a network and lead to complementary businesses. In fact, “[d]iversifying the products you offer can be an important strategy to attract repeat customers and is also a great way to ensure the sustained profitability of your business venture” (DNO, 2007). In this way, partnerships would make ecotourists’ experience a more complete one.

10.0 Conclusion

As per the World Tourism Organization, in addition to preserving natural areas, ecotourism initiatives must procure economic advantages to local communities by creating employment opportunities and generating sources of revenue. At the same time, residents and tourists are becoming aware of the necessity to protect natural and cultural heritage. In Addington Highlands, ecotourism constitute a great challenge considering the difficulties developers and residents must face whether at the social, environmental, climatic, infrastructural, political and cultural level. All in all, this region possesses many desired natural and cultural elements: numerous lakes and their effluents offer opportunities for outdoor activities and the presence of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation. However, when looking at the regional competition, like Bon Echo Provincial Park, these businesses are susceptible to put a stop to the proposed development.

Furthermore in the Sheldrake Lake area, the appropriate infrastructure is lacking and social activities and leisure are not at their fullest. The lack of infrastructure poses a problem for carrying out a strong marketing strategy. As well, the regional population is aging, young people are migrating to the cities and average household income are considerably under the provincial mean indicating a major lack of capital for investment. It is then possible to confirm that no local investor could embark in such a project. According to the Green Building Rating System, building an ecoresort demands lots of initial capital. As per the ENV 4910 group, a minimum of more than four million dollars would be needed to venture in this project. This estimate includes construction of a road, parking area, septic system, waste management, and environmental management, etc. The planning and construction of an ecoresort would also cause some negative environmental effects such as a reduction in the quality of air, ground and water. Also, the proposed plan suggests ideally 150 customers all year-round. Is this number considered suitable for an effective investment performance and is this in respect with the ecotourism definition. With all regional difficulties taking into account, is it possible to build a resort on Sheldrake Lake while at the same time protecting natural and cultural heritage? All in all, it seems rather unthinkable such a business be viable on Sheldrake Lake. In brief, the major obstacle to the local community is the financial situation which slows down entrepreneurs as discussed in this report. Without government support, the project does not seem to be economically viable. If the provincial or federal government were to subsidize the start-up costs of the resort, then ecotourism development may be more viable.

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