

Working Better Together: Fisheries and Tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador

A workshop for opinion leaders, policy makers and practitioners

Report



Sponsored by:
Community-University Research for Recovery Alliance
Memorial's Leslie Harris Centre
Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Economic Development Association



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Photo Credit: Kristen Lowitt, Ph.D. student, Memorial University

Introduction

In Newfoundland and Labrador, as elsewhere, there is a strong but poorly acknowledged and poorly documented interdependence between the fisheries and tourism sectors. This interdependence is particularly strong in rural areas, including in fishing communities, where much of Newfoundland and Labrador's tourism happens. Tourists want to consume local seafood, experience fisheries and fishing culture, and to meet people engaged in and knowledgeable about fisheries and the marine environment; local fisheries provide much of the seafood tourists eat, some members of fishing families work in the tourism sector, and fishing families are among the clientele who patronize local restaurants and hotels.

Our rural communities are experiencing high rates of outmigration and rural populations are aging. The resources available to support economic development in rural areas, including in fisheries and tourism, are declining (as exemplified by recent cuts to Parks Canada and to support for the Regional Economic Development Boards). Employment in both fisheries and tourism is highly seasonal (particularly in rural areas) and some employers are finding it difficult to find appropriately skilled, local workers. Aging labour forces mean this challenge is likely to increase in the future. Both sectors are also very vulnerable to changes in global markets and to environmental and other changes.

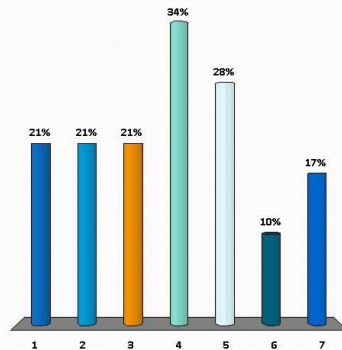
Unfortunately, from a policy and organizational perspective, Newfoundland and Labrador's commercial fisheries and tourism industries have developed largely in isolation from each other. There has been no systematic effort to establish and promote synergies between the two sectors. As a result, there are potentially important missed opportunities for economic development that have the potential to create new business opportunities, strengthen existing businesses in both sectors, and to enhance the sustainability of both sectors as well as some rural communities and regions.

On June 15, 2012, with support from the Rural Secretariat, the Community-University Research for Recovery Alliance at Memorial University (CURRA), the Harris Centre and the Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Economic Development Association (NLREDA) organized a multi-stakeholder workshop in St. John's entitled *Working Better Together: Fisheries and Tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador* (See Appendix A for full program). The workshop used research done by the CURRA and insights from a multi-stakeholder panel to set the stage for facilitated small group discussions led by Ted Lomond from NLREDA and using the staff and facilitated discussion technology and expertise of the Rural Secretariat. Excellent support with organization and with the registration process was provided by Johan Joensen of the Harris Centre.

Twenty-nine registrants from multiple organizations and sectors participated in the half day workshop. As indicated below, workshop participants came from a range of backgrounds including the fishing and tourism industries, not for profit/community organizations, the university, federal and provincial governments, and economic development organizations.

Workshop participants

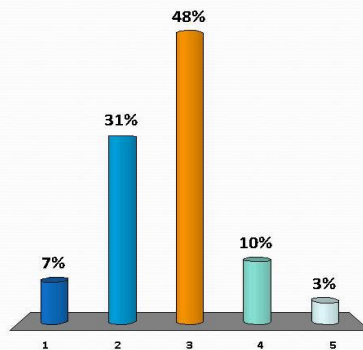
1. Fishing Industry
2. Tourism Industry
3. Not for profit/
Community Organization
4. Academia
5. Government
6. Economic Development
Organization
7. Other



A majority of the workshop participants (58%) had been involved in either the fishing or the tourism industry; only 36% had some background in both industries. However, 79% of participants rated their knowledge of opportunities and challenges related to fisheries-tourism initiatives as moderate or high.

My level of knowledge of Fisheries-Tourism opportunities and challenges is _____.

1. Very high
2. High
3. Moderate
4. Low
5. Very low



During this multi-stakeholder workshop, participants from both levels of government, industry, the university and from nongovernmental organizations were invited to:

1. explore potential opportunities for creating stronger synergies between the two sectors in the form of fisheries-tourism initiatives;
2. examine some of the barriers to promoting such synergies; and,
3. help develop a strategy to promote fisheries-tourism synergies including enterprises that bridge the two sectors in the province.

Professor Barbara Neis, Principal Investigator for the CURRA and the lead supervisor of CURRA-related research and networking related to fisheries-tourism initiatives opened the workshop. In her presentation she summarized potential (missed) opportunities for such initiatives identified in a variety of workshops, discussions and in related reports produced through the CURRA in collaboration with multi-stakeholder steering committees on Newfoundland's west coast in the Bonne Bay and Port aux

Basques regions (the Powerpoint Presentation on Opportunities is in Appendix B; see also www.curra.ca). This background research and networking received financial and other support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council through the CURRA, the Rural Secretariat, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council's MITACS program (by MITACS intern Kristen Lowitt), and through a contribution agreement involving the CURRA (Memorial) and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation that resulted in a report by Ian Murphy and Barb Neis entitled *Navigating the Legislative Requirements for Fisheries-Tourism Initiatives*.

Barb discussed the rationale for the workshop (see above) and the history of work leading up to the event. She noted that she and others in the CURRA first started thinking about the issue of (missed) opportunities when they had a series of workshops to mark the 40th anniversary of the BBMS and to promote awareness and discussion of Bonne Bay and its resources for the larger region. At those workshops they noted the limited awareness of and capacity to protect Bonne Bay, discontent among some tourism operators regarding their access to fresh, local seafood, and also learned about an experiential tourism experiment that had been tried the year before through Gros Morne Cooperators where they organized to bring in a group of tourists and hook them up with a local fish harvester for some fisheries-related activities. The program was very popular; GMC was convinced there was a market for this kind of experiential tourism but the initiative has not been repeated. (Missed) fisheries-tourism opportunities emerged again during meetings and a related workshop in Port aux Basques on different marketing options that might improve the livelihoods of southwest coast lobster fishermen. When preparing for that workshop and in discussions with local business people and others they found out that 400,000 people a year go in and out of Port aux Basques and much of the province's seafood is shipped out on the Marine Atlantic ferry. However, there is no seafood shop inside the ferry terminal to tap this market or on the road to and from the terminal; a small retail operation that was running in the town was about to shut down (but has since re-opened under new ownership), and that restaurants in the Port aux Basques region were selling shrimp from Thailand and elsewhere instead of northern shrimp. All of these represent potential (missed) or certainly underutilized opportunities for linking fisheries and tourism.

In 2011, CURRA researchers collaborated with the Rural Secretariat and NSERC's MITACS program to sponsor an intern/doctoral student, Kristen Lowitt, to spend time with fish harvesters and tourism operators in the Bonne Bay area to find out more about how their operations intersected or failed to intersect. As noted in the summary report from that internship:

there are important reasons to begin promoting stronger fisheries-tourism synergies and local seafood consumption in the Bonne Bay region in the near future. Many restaurant operators consulted as part of this project said it is a challenge to get a consistent supply of fresh and local seafood with the quality and traceability they would like. At the same time, fishing enterprises are facing challenges related to low prices for their products along with declining catch rates for some species and short seasons. In addition, the number of local fish harvesters has declined substantially in recent years and it is unclear how many local enterprises there will be in the region in the future.

Experiential activities related to the fishery, such as boat tours led by fish harvesters that take visitors on the water to demonstrate how they fish and catch some seafood, offer another option for fish harvesters to diversify their fishing enterprises while providing memorable experiences for visitors. Experiential tourism activities need to be developed for the best fit between the tourism and fishing seasons. These are a potential option for improving the viability of local

fishing enterprises and for promoting local tourism but none currently exist in the region (Lowitt 2012, p. 4

http://www.curra.ca/documents/CURRA_Fisheries-Tourism_Summary_report_Final.pdf)

The intern's report also described the positive example of a chef who had helped solve his search for appropriate seafood by getting permission to go into a local plant to process his own fish. We also heard, as we had earlier about some challenges.

Turning to other (missed) opportunities, Barb noted that in 1923, a former Newfoundlander operating a salmon cannery in British Columbia had entertained "350 tourists in his Sunnyside Cannery" (Dec. 7, 1923, Bay Roberts Guardian Newspaper Announcements). She asked, "Where in NL is it possible to visit a seafood processing plant? What types of seafood processing plants would be interesting to visit? What could add to the value of this kind of tourism if it existed in the province?"

Barb also talked about (missed) opportunities associated with the extensive marine science and fisheries research being conducted from the Bonne Bay Marine Station (BBMS) and other parts of Memorial University and the broad range of harvester-engaged fisheries stewardship initiatives that had been established since the groundfish moratoria. These kinds of initiatives could provide the basis for stand-alone fisheries-tourism initiatives as well as elements in larger initiatives (boosting, for example, already substantial visitorship to the BBMS). As an example, she noted that the snow crab harvesters in Bonne Bay had voted to temporarily close the crab fishery within the Bay in recent years. From a science perspective, this crab stock provides a somewhat unique opportunity to study (relatively easily) snow crab in their natural environment and to monitor fisheries. Scientific research on the Bonne Bay snow crab conducted through the Bonne Bay Marine Station has suggested the stock will take some time to recover and it is likely this will always be a small fishery.

The combination of scientific research capacity, evidence of local stewardship and other features of this fishery in a heavily touristed region suggests there could be a real opportunity to develop a fisheries-tourism initiative taking advantage of the experiential and educational/knowledge-based tourism opportunities associated with this fishery. For instance, a pilot project involving local scientists, harvesters and the resources and skills at the BBMS and in the regional tourism industry, that created an opportunity for tourists to learn about snow crab and snow crab stewardship and to also consume locally caught, traceable snow crab could substantially increase the wealth to harvesters and to the regional economy generated from this somewhat vulnerable snow crab stock (greater wealth per crab harvested than is available through simply retailing crab locally or exporting it into international markets); enhance research opportunities and the effectiveness of conservation; *and* provide an opportunity to experiment with different approaches to fishing, niche markets, etc.

Barb used the example of a very successful sushi restaurant in Caraquet New Brunswick to talk about another potential (missed) opportunity in the region. Caraquet is a region like Bonne Bay and other Newfoundland and Labrador areas where a strong seafood industry coexists with a strong tourism industry. The region has an excellent sushi restaurant, Mitchan Sushi (<http://mitchansushi.ca/>), that uses local (and other) ingredients from the seafood industry. The owner comes from Japanese/Acadian extraction and wanted to return to the region to work. Our commercial seafood industry brings many Japanese buyers and others into the province. To what extent have we taken advantage of their expertise and potential interest in helping to diversify the seafood consumption opportunities in rural areas drawing on local ingredients?

Some other (missed) opportunities Barb talked about in her presentation included:

- Church seafood suppers
- Fisheries-tourism enterprises (based on the agritourism model)
- Cod and halibut commercial fisheries with an experiential tourism component
- Fish markets in farmers markets
- Seafood auctions as tourism opportunities...
- Niche markets and secondary processing (pickled herring, smoked mackerel paté, lump roe...)

The second event at the workshop was a series of panel presentations by representatives from different sectors and from the federal and provincial governments.

The first presenter, Nancy Brace, Executive Director of the Restaurant Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (RANL), focused her remarks around the substantial opportunities for promoting fisheries-tourism through the restaurant sector that exist in the province and a challenge her association has identified related to the provincial (Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture – DFA’s) regulation that requires fish harvesters to sell their fish only to a licensed fish buyer or processor (see Murphy and Neis 2011).

Nancy argued that, “[t]he restaurant industry can be instrumental in growing the tourist season and stretching it into shoulder seasons simply by providing the highest quality food, prepared well, if they are able to boast this food is local and have access to it from the fishermen all year long. The restaurant industry can also go a long way in helping, at least in a small way, to rebuild the provincial fishery at a time when this is much needed ... quality local product made available to the restaurant industry would be a win-win for the restaurant industry, the tourism industry, the fishing industry and in fact to rural development.” She also noted that RANL had recently begun working with the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation on a proposal for a roundtable meeting on culinary tourism that would bring together all of the relevant departments and agencies to discuss the development of a plan for Culinary Tourism for the province. She said, “I hope that eventually, with a plan supported by all parties, RANL can umbrella such a project so we can sell Newfoundland’s cuisine and culinary scene in an effort to put us on the map as a culinary destination, to grow our industry, to reinforce the culinary aspect of tourism and help rural areas grow through the promotion of local foods and food activities. To make this truly happen we need access to fresh, sustainable and traceable fish.”

Nancy noted that other provinces have “built a lasting reputation for their fresh local fish, sourced from an individual fisherperson. Traceable food is now a huge consumer interest and marketing tool that we cannot address in this province.” She knew about a lobster traceability project organized through the Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW) (see presentation by Mandy Ryan below) and referenced in CURRA reports but indicated the association members had little knowledge of it. One problem with traceability and with restaurant access to fresh, local seafood is the provincial regulatory framework requiring harvesters to sell their fish to a licensed fish buyer or processor. According to Ms Brace, “there are currently thousands and thousands of pounds of fish claimed by the fish harvesters each year for personal use [that] they are selling to many restaurants and homes on the side. DFA is aware of this but turns a blind eye unless someone calls and makes a complaint. Both the government and the processors know this high amount of fish claimed for personal use is being sold RANL recommends that if the rules are to be kept status quo, they have to be enforced so that it is fair to all restaurants that purchase fresh product and follow the rules. RANL would prefer that fish harvesters be permitted to sell round fish to restaurants that can then process it; if the harvesters are permitted to process it and sell it as fillet they must be regulated in a way that guarantees they are up to standards for health and safety. A capped

amount that is sold to restaurants would also be acceptable, as it would enable the industry to avail of at least some fresh product.”

Steve Knudsen, owner of the Dark Tickle Company participated in the panel via Skype. Steve’s family had a history of involvement in the fishery but decided around the time of the cod moratorium to focus instead on the production of berry products. The Dark Tickle Company <http://www.darktickle.com/> produces a broad range of berry and other products that are marketed locally and via the internet.

The company also operates the *Dark Tickle Co. Wild Berry Économusée* in St. Lunaire <http://www.artisansatwork.ca/the-dark-tickle-co/> The *Économusée* network of which they are a part, Steve indicated, was started by Cyril Simard at the University of Laval. There are currently 35 *économusées* in Quebec, 18 or 19 in the Maritimes and some in Norway. Dark Tickle was, until this year, the only one in Newfoundland and Labrador (it was recently joined by *Stages and Stores* on Change Islands). In order to be accepted into the organization, firms must be in the private sector. Their facilities need to include a ‘living museum’ opportunity that allows visitors to “discover the history of a craft or trade, meet the artisans, and find out first hand how they are adapting traditional know-how to modern needs.” They generally include, “a visitor reception area, a bustling workshop, collections of traditional artefacts and contemporary creations, a documentation area where you can sit and read about the craft, and a boutique where you can purchase a piece of living history to take home.” Members of the network are required to meet stringent criteria (<http://www.artisansatwork.ca/what-is-an-economusee/>).

The Dark Tickle *économusée* offers guided tours for visitors with “museum-like interpretation” of the history and production of wild berry jams and jellies. Visitors can watch people making berry products using an artisanal approach through windows in the wall of processing facility. They can have a network of interpretive boardwalk trails where visitors can learn about the berry plants and see them growing in their native habitat. These tours also include opportunities to sample the foods, visit a boutique and a museum exhibit about an 18th century explorer and to spend time in their tea room.

In his presentation, Steve emphasized the potential fisheries-tourism opportunities associated with a focus on educational and knowledge-based tourism of the kind they have emphasized at Dark Tickle. This kind of tourism takes advantage of the unique historical, geological, botanical, biological and cultural assets of a location like Newfoundland and Labrador. The province has, in his opinion, many such unique assets including in the fishery. Educational and knowledge-based tourism sells information as much or more than it sells products (such as berries or fish). Its target tourism population tends to be an aging demographic with a fair amount of disposable income. He thinks this is a very large marketplace and one that we are currently under-utilizing.

In the case of fisheries, an equivalent facility to Dark Tickle would produce historic products, perhaps salted, smoked, pickled, bottled or canned items. The items would be high end and produce using a elements of a traditional, artisanal approach that could be observed by visitors and would be coupled with educational, interpretive opportunities related to the history of fisheries in the province/region and to potentially, local marine ecology, and potentially harvested using traditional fishing gears that would be available for visitors to see, etc.

He said some work would need to be done to evaluate and identify the marketplace – who to sell to and what they would want to buy. The products would include those people are hearing about elsewhere in their travels and experiencing to some degree. They would be high end, specialty gift items and not grocery items. The evaluation might include taking a region of the island and evaluating all of its assets,

including fisheries, for educational and knowledge-based tourism. He thinks we would be surprised at how unique those assets are.

Mandy Ryan with the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW) was the third presenter. The focus of her presentation was the Newfoundland lobster pilot project that was part of the *ThisFish* seafood traceability initiative (<http://thisfish.info/>) in 2011. *ThisFish* was developed by EcoTrust Canada in partnership with the Canadian Association for Professional Fish Harvesters, the FFAW and other fish harvester organizations and several seafood suppliers and retailers. The traceability system has three main elements: tagging at boat level, an on-line database and a website. Tags are coded and the customer who buys the seafood (including in restaurants) can use the code to connect to a website that tells him/her the name of the harvester and provides some information about their enterprise, etc. The system offers a way to trace seafood products, brand them, encourage quality improvement, learn more about markets, and provides an opportunity for consumer feedback. The FFAW is attempting to continue its lobster traceability project from 2011 this summer using leftover supplies and would like to expand the program in the future to other species including, particularly, halibut. They are very interested in working with restaurants and other enterprises in the tourism sector to help brand NL seafood products, particularly those that are traceable. For this to happen, they need to find the resources to encourage more harvesters to trace their catch and build solid partnerships with tourism operators and restaurateurs.

In Mandy's opinion, the possibilities for this kind of traceability system are endless and include opportunities to promote better integration of fisheries and tourism, for co-branding by the different sectors and for working with local restaurants around promotion. How, she asked, can we make this system work for us?

The fourth presenter was chef, Todd Perrin, from The Chef's Inn. Todd focused his comments on the barriers chefs and restaurateurs have to deal with around access to fresh seafood. He pointed out that there is a document on DFO's website that documents landings of different species of seafood in Newfoundland and Labrador. This document clearly shows that there many different kinds of seafood being landed that never turn up in local stores and which it is hard for chef's and restaurateurs to access. Some examples of species that are being landed that he would be interested in as a chef but that are rarely, if ever, available locally from seafood retailers and wholesalers include razor clams, whelk, monkfish and sea urchins.

How much raw product is being caught around NL that we don't have access to because of the way the fishery is set up and how the products are sold? The idea that a fisherman catches seafood and I have to go to the 4th guy in the line to buy what I want and I then I can't buy the products I want... That is backwards compared to the rest of the world.

People are aware these species are being caught and landed here but in order to access them you would have to talk to the guy above. This is because they are bargained for, sold, packaged and shipped out; there is no impetus or reason for the people who control the resource to sell some of it to the local market because it is already spoken for. This seafood is not available to us at any price because we are not enough of a market for them.

There should be another avenue whereby I can go to the guy who catches it and bargain for it. The small amount I want won't affect catches or the processors. It seems it is an all-or-nothing equation here. We are heading in the direction of big companies with a focus on high volume,

low quality and export markets. There are all kinds of market niches but the regulations are not set up to give us access to those different niches.

The fifth presenter was Sean Barry of the provincial Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. He divided his presentation into opportunities identified by the department related to fisheries-tourism activities and challenges. Under opportunities he noted that:

1. DFA funding for tourism-related activities may be available through FTNOP, but proposals would have to meet the objectives of the program.
2. DFA has always been active in promoting our seafood products in the local market:
 - a. Collaborate with Dept. of Tourism at local and international events.
 - b. Seafood donation program.
 - c. Various seafood promotions in collaboration with local chefs
 - d. Promotion of local seafood on Marine Atlantic Ferries.
 - e. Summer festivals.
3. Aquaculture seems to offer a number of opportunities, as many of the farm operators are also the processors of the products. (e.g., there was a mussel boat tour in Notre Dame Bay a few years ago. Tourists would go out on a mussel barge, learn how the product is grown, and then have a mussel boil-up on the beach.)
4. Tourism fisheries-related activities that come to mind are the Fogo Island Marine Interpretation Centre; Battle Harbour, Labrador; the new Elliston Sealer Memorial and Interpretation Centre (to be opened in 2014).

In the section on Challenges, he highlighted the following issues:

1. Experiential initiatives such as fishing trips or processing plant activities are very complex and require considerable analysis:
 - There are legal and regulatory matters that will need to be addressed: e.g., tourists on fishing vessels during fishing operations, safety at sea, processing policy restrictions (buying seafood), insurance, etc.
 - Access and allocation concerns as they relate to harvesters losing resources to new entrants (e.g., recreational users). This is particularly important in cases of species with low commercial resource levels (e.g., cod).

In concluding, Sean argued that efforts to promote fisheries-tourism synergies should be driven by tourism, not fisheries. However, with a reasonable business case by interested fishing industry businesses, DFA would be open to discussing this further and to looking at ways to overcome some of the existing challenges.

The sixth presenter was Joan Cranston of the Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat.

The sixth presenter was Joan Cranston of the Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat. In her remarks, Joan noted that the mandate of the Regional Councils is to provide advice to the provincial government around policies to help sustain rural Newfoundland and Labrador into the future. I became involved with fisheries-tourism when I worked for the CURRA project to help

coordinate a series of meetings for the Bonne Bay region between researchers at the Bonne Bay Marine Station and community stakeholder groups in October 2009. During these meetings, fisher people as well as tourism operators indicated:

1. a sustainable fishery is an essential element of the tourism experience in rural Newfoundland, and tourism is playing an expanding role in sustaining the economy of rural communities. The industries are co-dependent and can also enhance the viability of each other.
2. Tourism provides a strong local market for fish and an opportunity to add value to the product that is harvested and sold in order to get a better price. Restaurant operators are willing to pay a higher price to get a high quality product on their tables.
3. There may also be opportunities for experiential tourism; fishermen as “out-fitters” can offer tourists the opportunity to catch fish; fish plants also have opportunities to be part of this process.
4. Fish markets provide a way to market fresh fish to tourists and local residents and to promote increased local consumption of locally harvested products.
5. There is some urgency as there are currently many challenges facing the fishery, especially the inshore fishery. It is essential that fish harvesters receive better prices for their product if we are to maintain a viable inshore fishery.
6. Perhaps most important is the need for the fishery and tourism industries to work together to reduce mutual threats and promote possibilities. The industries face some of the same challenges (short seasons, global markets) and can learn from each others’ experiences. Communication is essential.

The seventh presenter was Mary Taylor-Ash, Assistant Deputy Minister, Tourism, Dept. of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. Mary’s key points included:

- Visitors are interested in experiencing our culinary culture and seafood plays a large part in that culinary culture.
- Travelers have an expectation that the best seafood will be available given the prominence of the fishery in our heritage and economy. They are disappointed when it is not available and fresh!
- Travelers are also interested in knowing where their food is coming from.
- The profile of our non-resident visitors is well traveled people, highly educated, typically traveling as couples (empty nesters).
- They are interested in meeting people and learning about the culture and heritage in authentic surroundings.
- The Department agrees that there needs to be improved supply and distribution channels for locally produced food products.
- The Department is interested in partnering to help facilitate stronger synergies to deliver on what the visitor is seeking.

The eighth presenter was John Collins, Regional Director of Policy and Economics, Department of Fisheries and Oceans. John indicated he was new to the topic and had not had much time to prepare. The preparation he had been able to do, however, helped him see quickly that,

the commercial fishery already adds an enormous amount to tourism. And I know this from personal experience. In the fall of 2010 I was visiting Gros Morne. A couple of seiners were tied up in Norris Point. The boats were well maintained and looked quite good. I was assured by the people

on the wharf that the presence of the commercial seiners was something that tourists really wanted to see when they visited Gros Morne. That message was nailed home when I had dinner in Rocky Harbour and there were over a dozen seiners fishing just outside the breakwater. The tourists were all over it.

- With this as his point of departure, he suggested the main issue is how to enhance the already significant contributions fisheries are making to tourism in the future. “We have an opportunity to generate more wealth and income within the Province in particular within rural areas. We also have an opportunity to improve the quality of our lives – an activity for relatives when they visit from away and to get better access to fresh fish.” John noted, however, that the commercial wild fishery is changing and one of the key changes is declining numbers of participants and an aging labour force linked to relatively low incomes. Drawing on the CURRA report, *Navigating the Legislative Requirements for Fisheries-Tourism Initiatives* by Murphy and Neis (2011), he also noted that while there are some clear opportunities for new initiatives, there are challenges associated with the regulatory framework in fisheries including the

legislative, regulatory and policy related provisions that affect fisheries-related tourism. The rules were created for laudatory individual purposes - to protect fish stocks, regulate the processing industry, vessel safety and food safety, etc., and are administered by an alphabet soup of bureaucracies (DFO, DFA, Transport Canada, CFIA, etc. etc.). The existing web of rules was not set up with fisheries-related tourism in mind and sometimes has an unintended side effect of constraining the growth of fisheries-related tourism.

Acknowledging this challenge to strengthening fisheries-related tourism in the province, he also noted that while there are laws of nature that cannot be easily changed that play a role such as the timing of the onset of soft shell in the crab fishery, of the capelin run, etc. the web of rules discussed in the Murphy-Neis report are man-made and it should be possible to make some changes.

John then turned his attention to the role of DFO in the NL fisheries. “DFO manages fish stocks. It sets management measures such as fish quotas, fishing seasons, gear types ... DFO licences the fishing activity on the ocean. The crew is registered with the NL Professional Fish Harvester’s Certification Board not with DFO. For inland fisheries DFO manages the stock of salmon, does the river classification system, sets seasons, bag limits, size restriction. The Province issues the fishing licences.”

He noted that, “DFO’s number one issue is conservation. DFO is not an entrepreneurial operation whose primary purpose is to create tourism-related opportunities. Ideas need a champion who perceives an economic opportunity and is prepared to work to make it a reality. An idea is one thing but successful implementation requires someone to work out all the “who, what, when, where, why and how” details. DFO is prepared to work with proponents who wish to increase the economic opportunities that are generated by the fishery. I am also personally prepared to work with proponents who wish to make progress on this issue. If you have an idea contact me and I will help you navigate your way through the myriad of DFO rules that may impede progress being made.”

Having made this generous offer, Mr. Collins reminded the audience that:

1. DFO is not the largest player in this game.
2. DFO jurisdiction essentially ends once the fish is landed.

3. If you want access to commercial fish, it would likely be helpful to work with commercial licence holders to get access.
4. Commercial fishing can be hard and dangerous work. We should be careful when we invite people to get involved.

Fisheries-tourism Opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador

The panel presentations were followed by facilitated small group discussions focusing on (missed) opportunities for fisheries-tourism in NL. Groups were asked to discuss the question: *What are the fisheries-tourism opportunities that have the most potential in NL?*

The groups identified opportunities and these were then themed into the following categories:

- Direct sale to restaurants, travelers, markets and auctions
- Experiential tourism – beachside boil-ups, harvesting day trips, working experiences
- Touring of processing plants
- Marketing and branding using traceability
- Increasing access to local products
- Building on existing events, e.g. Festivals
- Education and interpretation to tourists, community and industry
- Being authentic
- Changing government attitudes
- Increasing recreational fisheries.

Fisheries-Tourism Challenges in Newfoundland and Labrador

Discussion in the next section of the workshop focused on challenges to developing fisheries-tourism initiatives in NL. Barb Neis presented some of the challenges identified through CURRA-related research to get the discussion started. She noted that the most commonly identified barriers to fisheries-tourism initiatives identified in CURRA research and related forums have included the legislative and regulatory requirements related to each industry. Some initiatives invoke legislation related to both industries and that fall under the authority of several government departments. There is limited understanding about all of the various regulations and how they would apply at multiple levels including among harvesters and processors and tourism operators and restaurateurs, as well as among representatives of different government departments.

Some challenges include a combination of regulatory and natural barriers. The lobster fishery, for example, ends before the tourism industry peaks but it might be difficult to change this without negatively affecting lobster recruitment. The commercial cod fishery currently takes place in short, sporadic windows making it difficult to add an experiential component and to sustain a daily flow of fresh codfish to the local market. In the Northern Gulf of St. Lawrence, the commercial halibut fishery is managed using a competitive quota which results in all of the halibut being landed within a few hours – as opposed to gradually and on a daily basis over a longer period of time. The latter might be more appropriate for the tourism sector. Gear restrictions might affect the ability to harvest and land seafood appropriate for different market niches and to create educational/knowledge-based tourism initiatives such as écomusée that would want to create products harvested using traditional gears such as cod traps and skills.

Barbara also talked about the fact that NL seafood can only be purchased from a licensed processor (Section 4(c)) or licensed fish buyer preventing fish harvesters from legally selling their seafood to tourists and to restaurant owners and others who lack one or the other of these licenses. She noted that, in 2010 there were 121 fish processor licenses in the province including 10 in-province fish retail fish processing licenses plus 27 active fish buyer's licenses and asked, "How does the regional distribution of licenses match regional demand/need for local seafood in the tourism sector?" Do we have situations where locally landed seafood has to be exported out of a region because of the absence of a local buyer and would, therefore, have to be re-imported for use by local restaurants and retailers? If this situation does not already exist, could it emerge in the future as the fishing industry continues to downsize?

Another challenge relates to difficulties that would confront commercial fish harvesters interested in getting involved in experiential tourism initiatives that bring tourists onto their boats to harvest fish. At present, commercial fishing quotas have to be caught by licensed harvesters (they can't be caught by tourists) on licensed vessels (versus tourism vessels). Experiential tourism could be developed around recreational fisheries but there is a limited range of recreational fisheries in the province. In addition, the regulatory requirements for fishing vessels are less stringent and costly than those for vessels carrying passengers so it would not be simple, under the current regulations, to adapt a fishing boat for experiential tourism.

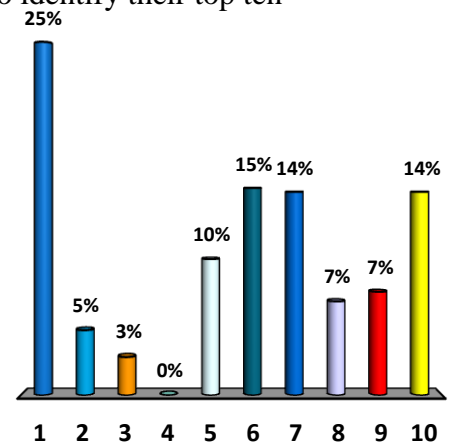
Other challenges relate to:

- An industry largely characterized by specialized, mechanized fisheries and mass production versus more artisanal, hand-crafted fish processing in plants designed for viewing versus exclusion of the public for food quality and liability reasons.
- Infrastructure gaps (training, fisheries management and marketing infrastructure, experiential tourism infrastructure- boat design, plants, distribution networks) needed to connect tourists with harvesters and others.
- Limited interest in and limited knowledge about experiential tourism in the fisheries sector; limited knowledge about fisheries in tourism.
- An aging labour force (although ... leadership, vision, and targeted fisheries-tourism opportunities could help recruit younger people into this new kind of fishery/tourism sector)
- A legitimate fear among commercial harvesters that a burgeoning 'recreational' fishery could threaten their livelihoods and fish resources.
- The elimination of funding for organizations like the Regional Economic Development Boards mandated to try to promote collaborations and experimentation around new kinds of initiatives that could have regional as well as individual, corporate benefits.
- Potential policy changes that could eliminate mechanisms like the owner-operator and fleet separation policies that have helped sustain small scale fisheries that are, potentially, most suitable for fisheries-tourism initiatives
- The freeze on new processing and fish buying licenses at the provincial level.

Taking into account the food for thought from the panel presentations and from the presentation by Barb, workshop members once again broke into facilitated small discussions groups where they were asked to identify the **top 3 challenges that would have the greatest impact on moving forward Fisheries-Tourism opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador.**

Ideas from all the groups were themed and participants were asked to identify their top ten challenges, based on the themes. These included:

- Legislation/regulation affects direct selling, food safety, etc
- Liability and insurance – Tourism and Harvesting
- Lack of population and tourism numbers
- Global competition for tourists and products
- Lack of information and awareness of the potential
- Lack of high level commitment
- Lack of leadership/entrepreneurs to move opportunities forward
- Labour shortages and getting youth involved in the fishery
- Disconnects and lack of cooperation
- Income stabilization (EI Issues)



Of these challenges, the highest ranked included: legislation/regulation that affects direct selling, food safety, etc. (25%); lack of high level commitment (15%), and lack of leadership/entrepreneurs to move opportunities forward and income stabilization (EI issues) (tied at 14%).

Moving Forward on Fisheries-Tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador

The third part of the workshop program focused on identifying: key actions needed to develop fisheries-tourism opportunities in the province; which are most feasible and how can we make them happen? Facilitated small groups were asked to identify key actions and then to identify and rank criteria for prioritizing actions.

The key actions identified included:

- Evaluate existing regulations and identify who can push/champion regulatory changes from the top
- Develop a good and strong policy direction and a simplified/harmonized regulatory regime
- Develop policies that take into account diverse contexts: i.e. in rural, isolated areas it should be possible to use seafood right out of the water
- Carry out quantitative research to provide the basis for development of a strategy for moving forward; study tourist seafood interests
- Access existing research on tourism markets and bring together the research that has been done within fisheries and tourism
- Incentives to develop pilot projects and increase awareness of and access to information about existing and new success stories; provide good positive examples of what can be done and how
- Share stories from other industries (i.e. agriculture)
- A unified voice from this room
- Go for easy wins—it is possible to have live lobster and crab in restaurants right now, without any regulatory changes
- Develop good, strong business risk management kits for such initiatives
- Introduce real, community-based processing licenses
- Increase the fisheries focus in tourism ads
- Form cooperatives
- Create romance and mystery without putting people on boats.

The groups were asked to identify their top criteria for setting priority actions These included:

- Urgency
- High Impact (Community Economic Model)
- Getting right people involved – community involvement
- Economically viable
- Commitment from the top and leadership
- Consensus on priorities
- Benefit to local communities
- Culturally significant and sensitive
- Environmentally sustainable
- Easy Wins.

The group then voted on the criteria they felt were most important, for determining which actions should move forward. Of these criteria, the highest ranking went to 3. Getting the right people involved – community involvement; followed by five other criteria ranked approximately equally: urgency; economically viable; benefit to local communities; culturally significant and sensitive and environmentally sustainable were the highest rank.

Conclusion and Follow-up

The CURRA will be formally finishing up in March, 2013. It has taken responsibility for leading one more initiative on fisheries-tourism in the wake of this workshop: a fisheries-tourism workshop/session that will become part of the programming for the upcoming International Symposium on Rebuilding Collapsed Fisheries and Threatened Communities in Norris Point, October 1-4, 2012.

The Rural Secretariat has committed to providing organizational support for moving the discussion forward including support to workshop participants who volunteered join a multi-stakeholder committee arising out of the workshop that mandate of which will need to be defined when it first meets.

Those among workshop participants who volunteered to join the committee include: 1. Nancy Brace, Restaurant Association of NL; Anne St. Croix, Independent Consultant; Mandy Ryan Francis, FFAW; and Joan Cranston, Rural Secretariat Regional Council. Scott Andrews from the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation indicated someone should contact him about finding a departmental representative to sit on the committee. Ideally, we also need representatives from Memorial, the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and a fish processor representative. Barb Neis has agreed to join the committee in the short term and will also try to identify another representative from Memorial, potentially from the Faculty of Business to join as well.

Workshop Evaluation

In a brief workshop evaluation, participants were asked three questions:

If they “liked the table discussion used in the workshop?”

86% agreed or strongly agreed

If they found the technology (keypads/laptops) useful for this type of session?

82% strongly agreed or agreed

If they felt their views were reflected here today?

18% strongly agreed; 45% agreed; 18% were neutral and 14% strongly disagreed.





Working Better Together: Fisheries and Tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador

A workshop for opinion leaders, policy makers and practitioners

8:30 am -12:30 pm

June 15th, 2012

**Junior Common Room,
Gushue Hall, Memorial University**

Sponsored by:

**Community-University Research for Recovery Alliance
Memorial's Leslie Harris Centre**

Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Economic Development Association

With the support of:

Rural Secretariat (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador)

Synopsis

From a policy and organizational perspective, Newfoundland and Labrador's commercial fisheries and tourism industries have developed largely in isolation from each other. Here, as elsewhere, there exists an interdependence between the two sectors: tourists want to consume local seafood, experience fisheries infrastructure, and meet fishing people, while local fisheries provide much of the seafood tourists eat, some members of fishing families work in the tourism sector and fishing families are among the clientele who patronize local restaurants and hotels. There are therefore substantial opportunities to promote stronger synergies between the two sectors that would create new investment opportunities and enhance the sustainability of both sectors and of rural communities.

Participants in this session will be invited:

4. to explore potential opportunities for creating stronger synergies between the two sectors in the form of fisheries-tourism initiatives;
5. to examine some of the barriers to promoting such synergies; and,
6. to help develop a strategy to promote fisheries-tourism synergies including enterprises that bridge the two sectors in the province

Invited participants include representatives from key industry stakeholder groups in both sectors, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, Memorial University, representatives of the Corner Brook Rocky Harbour Regional Council, as well as representatives from key government departments.

Program

8:15-8:45 Coffee and Registration

8:45-8:55 Introduction: Promoting Fisheries-Tourism Synergies in Newfoundland and Labrador:
(Missed) Opportunities (Barb Neis, Community-University Research for Recovery Alliance)

8:55 – 9:40 Stakeholder Panel (Opportunities)

- Nancy Brace, (Executive Director, Restaurant Association of Newfoundland and Labrador)
- Steve Knudsen (The Dark Tickle Company, via Skype)
- Mandy Ryan (Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union)
- Todd Perrin (the Chef's Inn)
- Sean Barry (Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture)
- Joan Cranston (Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council)
- Mary Taylor-Ash (Assistant Deputy Minister, Tourism, Dept. of Tourism, Culture and Recreation)
- John Collins (Regional Director of Policy and Economics, Department of Fisheries and Oceans)

9:40 – 10:15 Exploring Opportunities for development of fisheries-tourism initiatives in NL (Facilitator:
Ted Lomond)

10:15-10:30 Nutrition Break

10:30-10:40 Report Back on Opportunities

10:40-11:10 Exploring Challenges associated with developing fisheries-tourism initiatives in NL

11:10- 11:55 Moving Forward: What are the key actions, which of these are most feasible and how can we make them happen?

11:55-12:10 Next steps

12:10-12:20 Evaluation

12:20-12:30 Closing remarks

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