

Amenity -based rural development

Moving forward with common
language and a typology of Canada's
rural amenities

Nicole L. Vaugeois, PhD
BC Regional Innovation Chair
in Tourism and Sustainable Rural Development
Vancouver Island University

Kelly Whitney-Squire
MA Candidate, Acadia University



*Presentation at :On the Bright Side: Rural Canada Works Conference,
2010 CRRF/RDI October 14-16, 2010*



**VANCOUVER ISLAND
UNIVERSITY**



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

The Government of Canada has contributed funding towards this initiative.

Overview



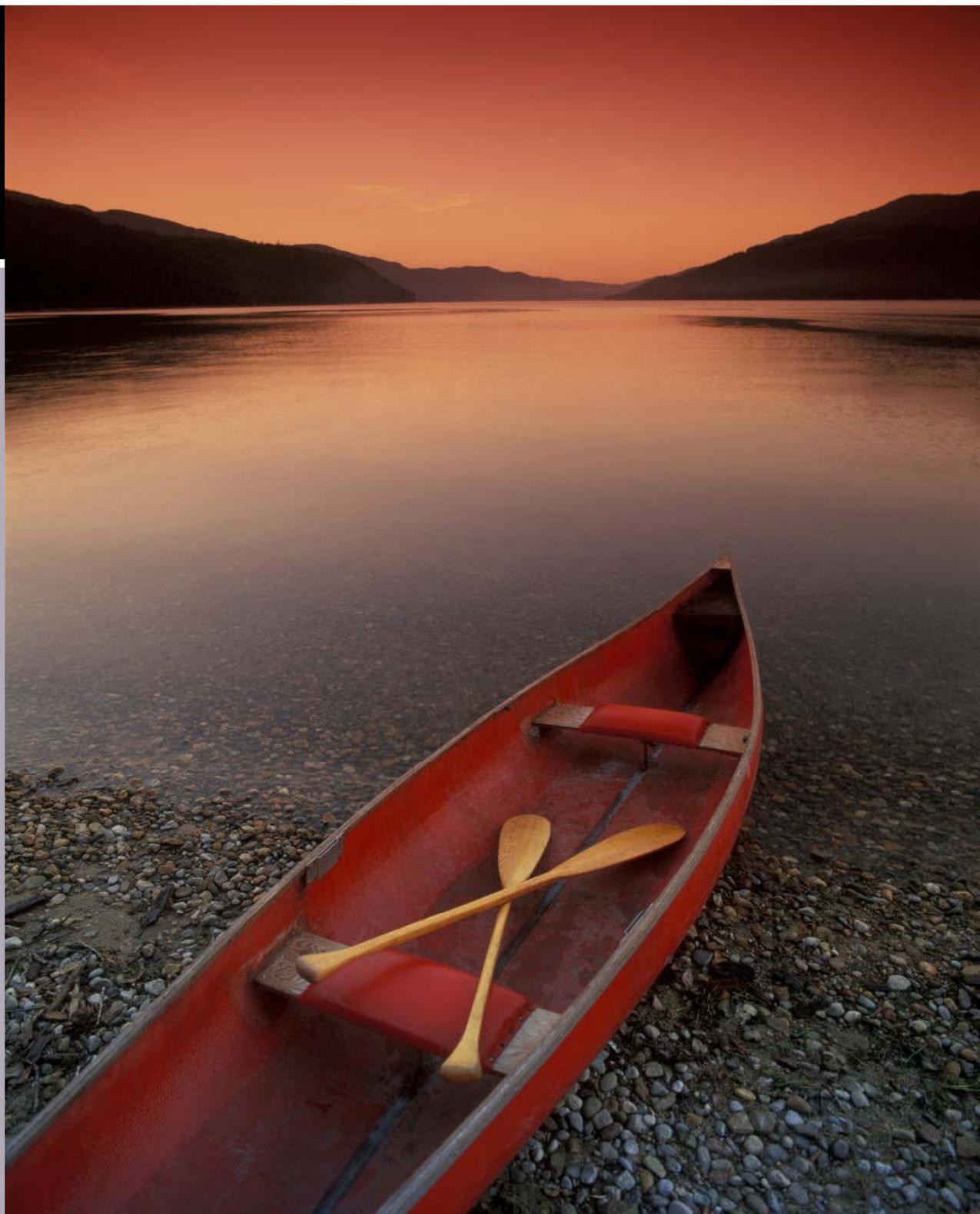
- Amenity-based rural development
 - Introductory comments
 - Insights from the literature
- Canada's Typology of Rural Amenities
- The future with ABRD
- Questions and discussion



Amenities

Amenities refer to the hedonic or pleasurable aspects associated to natural and cultural features of rural areas.

These make rural areas attractive places to visit, play, live and prosper.



Amenity-based rural development

The use of non production aspects of the rural environment from which individuals, communities, or society at large derive utility. It is this utility and corresponding valorization of rural amenities that are considered *resources* for rural development.



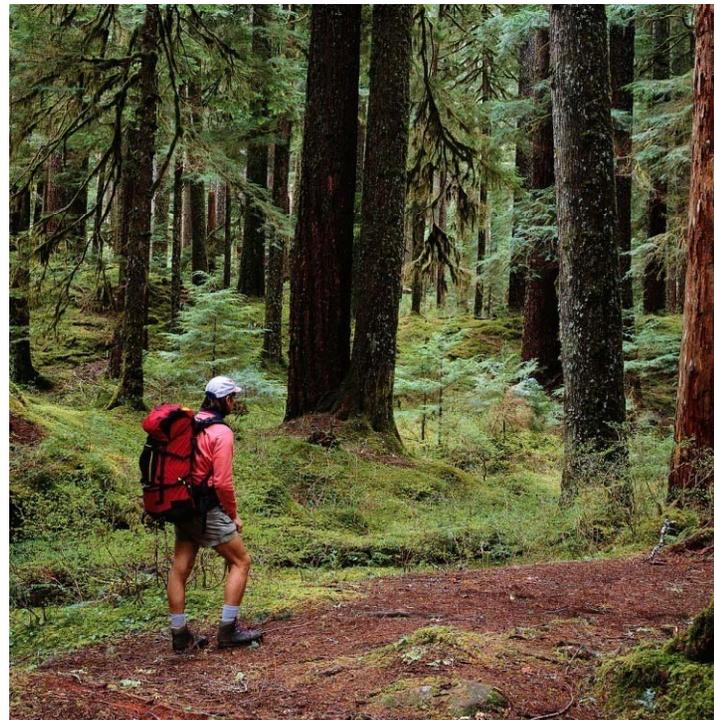
Paradigm shift in rural development

FROM



TO

- Sectoral approach
- Subsidies
- Places of *production (resources)*
- *Export goods*



- Territorial approach
- Investments
- Places of *consumption (amenities)*
- *Import people, ideas and investment*

Where is this coming from?

Rural areas are not homogeneous.

Despite overall trend of decline – some are growing...

This growth is highly correlated to the presence of amenities which are speculated to drive rural development.



Amenity-based migration

- Induces a range of impacts to the landscape
(positive and negative)
 - Environmental
 - Economic
 - Social/cultural

Use of amenities to attract people, ideas and investments requires foresight and appropriate planning supports



Awareness and supports needed

"Rural communities are not yet equipped to deal with the planning consequences of amenity-led rural development. The explosion of impacts has caught many rural areas unprepared."

Need for balance in promotion, protection and valorization.



Feds studying economic benefit of polar bears

...NOTE, ENVELOPE 'B'
CONTAINS ONE '11 GENERAL
INCOME TAX RETURN'
TO BE COMPLETED
AND FILED ANNUALLY...



GABLE GODEHOMAIL

Audiences for ABRD...

- Amenity based rural development attracts new people and ideas to rural communities
 - Visitors
 - Residents
 - Businesses



People are often attracted to rural areas as visitors. They may then be attracted to relocate as a resident, to set up business or invest.

Literature indicates:



1. Broad policy needed (national or provincial scope)
2. Narrow policy needed (local or focused)
3. Evidence of rural proofing or rural lens?
4. Mechanisms to support endogenous (grass roots) development?
5. Mechanisms to support regional approaches?
6. Mechanisms to build leadership and develop capacities of rural residents?
7. Provision of planning mechanisms to balance promotion, protection, valorization?
8. Mechanisms to encourage and support local entrepreneurship and business clusters?

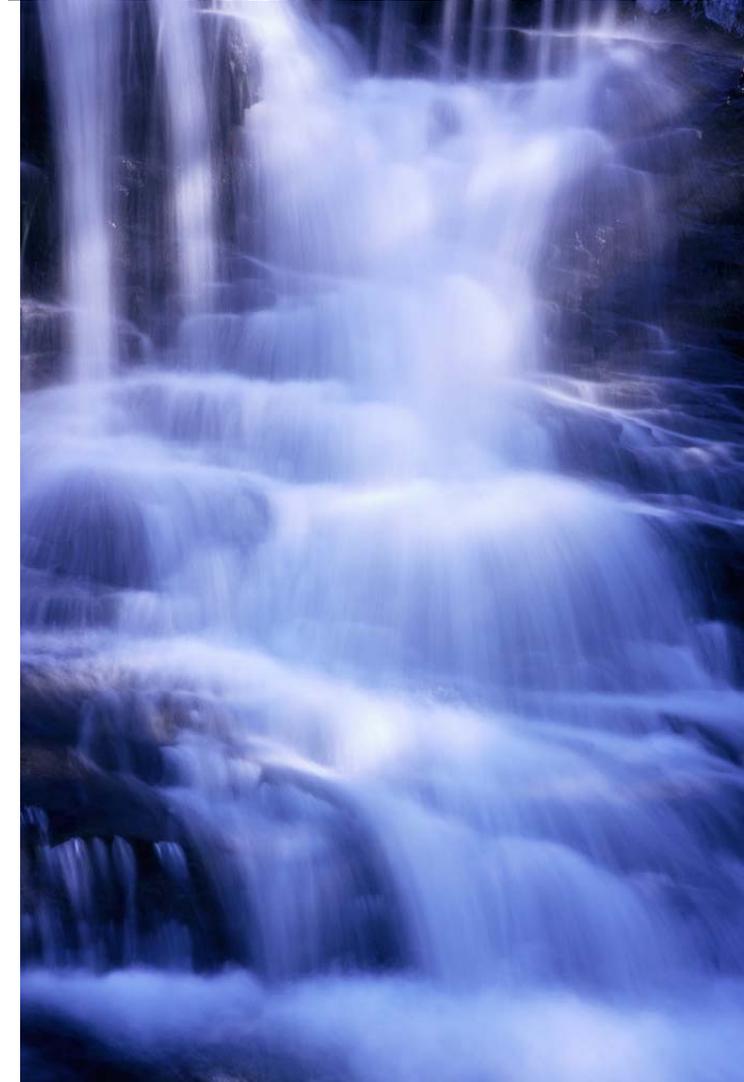
The challenge for integrated policy



Is to identify what amenities exist in regions and the possible development strategies for each type of region –
as uniform, cross-cutting strategies are no longer seen as viable long term solutions for rural development.

Break down of the study...

- What are the types and categories of rural amenities in Canada?
- How is amenity-based rural development currently supported in Canada?
- Where are there opportunities for enhanced supports for ABRD?



Typology of Canada's rural amenities

What amenities are in Canada's rural areas that could support ABRD?



Natural amenities

Amenities that are based on the natural attributes of rural areas including climate, air quality, land and water and which provide the scenic settings and materials for work and leisure pursuits of residents.



Cultural amenities

Amenities based in the cultural context of rural areas including heritage, recreation and sports, arts, work and community and which serve to enhance quality of life in rural regions.



System amenities

Amenities that enable the development of natural and cultural amenities including infrastructure, services and connectivity.

These enable and support rural areas to realize and manage impacts from in-migration, enterprise development or tourism activity.



Lots of questions to answer...

- How does the Typology of Canadian Rural Amenities fit different regions of Canada? Further testing on the universality of the typology is suggested. An audit tool that allows rural areas to assess their own amenities could be developed as a way to translate the typology into practice.
- Data on the role or influence of amenities is not fully understood. Are there a set of factors or preconditions that are required to enable communities to realize value from amenities? Are some factors more relevant than others? And is there a generally recognized process to amenity-based rural development that could assist rural areas to implement strategies?
- What are the specific goals of rural development and which goals are linked to amenity-based development? What are the specific goals of amenity-based rural development? Are they promotion, protection and valorization?
- Which types of amenities contribute to the goals of ABRD? Are some amenity types more important for in addressing depopulation? Encouraging tourism development? Or supporting enterprise for valorization?

And a few more...

- How are these amenities distributed across the Canadian context? Are there high amenity locations and can these be identified, prioritized and supported for ABRD?
- At what level does population and economic growth threaten the existence of natural and cultural amenities? How do rural areas balance the promotion of amenities with their protection?
- What conflicts exist or have the potential to exist in ABRD? Who are the stakeholders with an interest in ABRD? What are their specific interests and, how can a shared set of interests emerge to address the potential conflicts in the promotion, protection and valorization of amenities?
- What common property amenities are suitable for promotion or valorization? Which ones are not? Are there ways to develop programs or strategies that balance promotion and protection or will they continue to be addressed separately by different stakeholders?

Visioning a future for rural BC...



Summary



- ABRD showing promise as an approach to rural development;
- The typology should be used to facilitate dialogue about ABRD across the country, and tested on its usefulness;
- The inventory and analysis should be used to reflect upon current program offerings and realign them for ABRD.

The full report will be released by Canada's Rural and Cooperatives Secretariat

Nicole Vaugeois, PhD

BC Regional Innovation Chair in Tourism and Sustainable Rural Development

Vancouver Island University

250-753-3245 Local 2772

nicole.vaugeois@viu.ca

<http://ruraltourismdevelopment.blogspot.com/>