
SUMMIT DRIVE



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PROMOTER

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Presentation of the issue:

MRC du Granit was excluded, by the regional tourism association (ATR), from the Townships Trail touristic route because there was no Anglo-Saxon heritage to showcase.

Presentation of the project:

Following this refusal, a working committee was established in 2005. In 2006, a feasibility study was conducted to develop a route different from the Townships Trail, the Summit Drive, running mainly within the MRC du Granit territory. The official inauguration took place in September 2008, and renewal of the financial support from the municipalities, for a duration of five years, was obtained in 2012. In 2013, a new project for the extension of the Summit Drive to Mount Ham was completed. This new section will open in the spring of 2014.

Summit Drive is a great loss leader product for the region.

The key elements according to the promoter:

- publish frequent and targeted communications;
- enjoy the associated notoriety and media attention;
- gradually associate with credible partners;
- take the time needed, provide the means and seize the opportunities;
- deliver the goods;
- take nothing for granted.

QUESTION PERIOD

Q.: Is there a competition with Maine to attract this type of tourism?

A.: Clearly Maine, and even international destinations, are competitors. However, the Summit Drive promotes stays in the region since it is off-centre from the major urban areas of Quebec. The road has a direct impact on the visitors' length of stay.

Q.: Was the ATR a strong contributor?

A.: The ATR associates a lot with the Summit Drive, but other stakeholders took the leadership to promote the project. This has facilitated the implementation of the Drive. Once the idea was accepted by the ATR, it has always supported the project, without necessarily owning it.

Q.: In Italy, you can find several taste trails (routes des saveurs); did you develop this aspect for the Summit Drive?

A.: At this time, we do not promote this feature as there are few agritourism businesses within the MRC du Granit. It is a lack for the Summit Drive, and an area to be developed. In the Eastern Townships, agritourism is well-developed, but the eastern region is cooler for agriculture, so this aspect is not as present. We created a computer application for the Summit Drive, as well as a BaladoDécouverte (discovery walk) application. We want to push this further, even if we are aware that the Wi-Fi and cellular coverage issue can be problematic.

Q.: Are there constraints or disadvantages related to the recognition of an official touristic route?

A.: The audit of the Drive generates many recommendations impacting different obligations. Budget presentations and action plans are required. The policy on road signage for touristic routes must be followed. This policy is currently under review.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

NOTE: All linked documents (PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.) are only available in their original French version.

PowerPoint from Nil Longpré, CLD - MRC du Granit