

What Do Visitors Want in an Interpretive Center?

Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway Case Study

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- n Introduction
 - n Methods
 - n Results
 - n Observations & Potential Implications
 - n Future Plans
 - n Questions

Overall Objective

Develop a Strong Partnership between UMaine
Parks, Recreation & Tourism Program and Old
Canada Road National Scenic Byway



Survey Objectives

Collect Basic Visitor Characteristic Data

- n Who is traveling the Old Canada Road?

Collect Basic Interp Center Preferences Data

- n Will visitors stop at an interp center?
- n What do visitors want in interp center focus & facilities?

Compare Different Visitor Segments

- n How do interp center results vary?

America's Byways

Umbrella Term

126 Distinct and Diverse Roads

Designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation

National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads

3 National Scenic Byways in Maine:

- n Old Canada Road Scenic Byway
- n Rangeley Lakes Scenic Byway
- n Schoodic Scenic Byway

1 All-American Road:

- n Acadia Byway



Old Canada Road Scenic Byway

Corridor along 80 miles
of Highway 201 from
Canadian border to
Route 43 south of Solon

Designated a National
Scenic Byway in 2000



Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway

- n “One of the most beautiful places in the northeast”
- n Rivers dominate the southern half
- n Forests command the northern section
- n Old-time villages with vernacular architecture
- n Nature dominated landscape



Kennebec River



<http://www.kingfisherriverguides.com/images/forks>

Moxie Falls – The Forks



[tatic.flickr.com/49/173527962_905fbed2f3_m.jpg](https://www.flickr.com/photos/49/173527962_905fbed2f3_m.jpg)

Arnold Way Rest Area



Source: M

New Interpretive Signage



Source: M

A string of small independent communities:

n Moose River

n Jackman

n Lake Parlin

n Bowtown

n Pierce Pond

n West Forks

n The Forks

n Carrying Place

n Caratunk

n Moscow

n Pleasant Ridge

n Concord

n Bingham

n Solon

n Embden



The Construction of Wyman Dam
Moscow, Maine
1928 - 1931



An Area Rich in History

Native American - Irish - French
Farming - Logging - Ice Harvesting
Rivers - Dams - Recreation



http://www.rootsweb.com/~meocrhs/photos_pos

Methods

- n D.O.T. Sponsored = rest area locations
- n 1 Field Surveyors + 2nd on peak weekends
- n 36 systematic random time periods
 - n Memorial Day through Labor Day
- n Wearing OCR or UMaine apparel
- n Interview style – get everyone possible
 - n 636 complete surveys (over 100 declined)
- n Language barrier - French speaking Canadians
 - n 89 surveys done with French translation

Location/Day/Time

Location	N	Day of Week			Time of Day	
		Holiday	Weekend	Weekday	AM	PM
Arnold Way	201	4	5	2	6	5
Attean Overlook	255	2	6	3	8	4
Coscow Picnic Area	253	1	6	3	3	8
Marlin Pond	27	1	3	0	2	1
Total	636	8	20	8	19	18



Traveler Profile

n Gender:

n **60% male**

n **40% female**

n Mean age:

n **49 years**

n Mean income:

n **\$50,000 to 74,999**

n Travelers:

n **48% from Maine**

n **26% from Canada**

n Education:

n **47% had bachelor's degree or higher**

Traveler Profile

§ 64% of travelers were in a party of 2 people

§ 75% were traveling without children

Traveler Profile

Time in Byway Area

- § 58% spending 1-2 hours in the Byway area
- § 32% spending 3-4 hours in the Byway area

Traveler Profile

§ 30% to Old Canada Road Destinations (incl. Moosehead/Greenville)

§ 26% headed to Canada (incl. Quebec/Quebec City)

§ 21% headed to US Beaches (incl. Old Orchard)

§ 23% to other US destinations

Traveler Profile

	% of Respondents
Stayed at home	47%
Stayed in a hotel/motel	20%
Stayed at a campground	11%

Traveler Profile

	% of Respondents
Automobile	54%
SUV/Truck	31%
Motorcycle	9%
RV	4%


Traveler Profile

**% Return
Visitors**

75%

**Avg. Number
of Years
Visiting OCR**

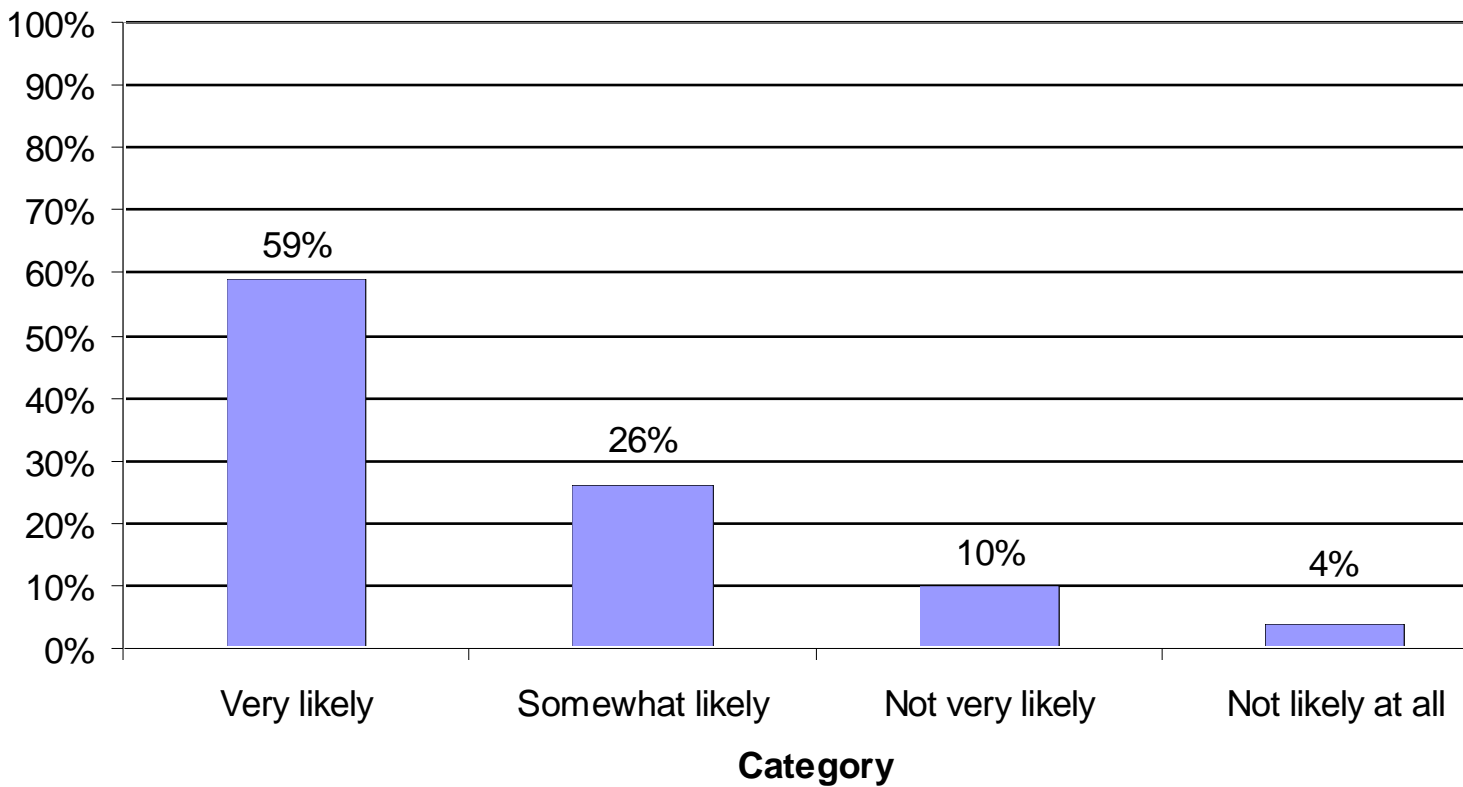
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“The Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway is considering constructing a cultural and heritage interpretive center. It would feature area history, artifacts, historic films and artisan displays.”

How Likely to Visit an Interpretive Center?

Interest in Visiting an Interpretive Center



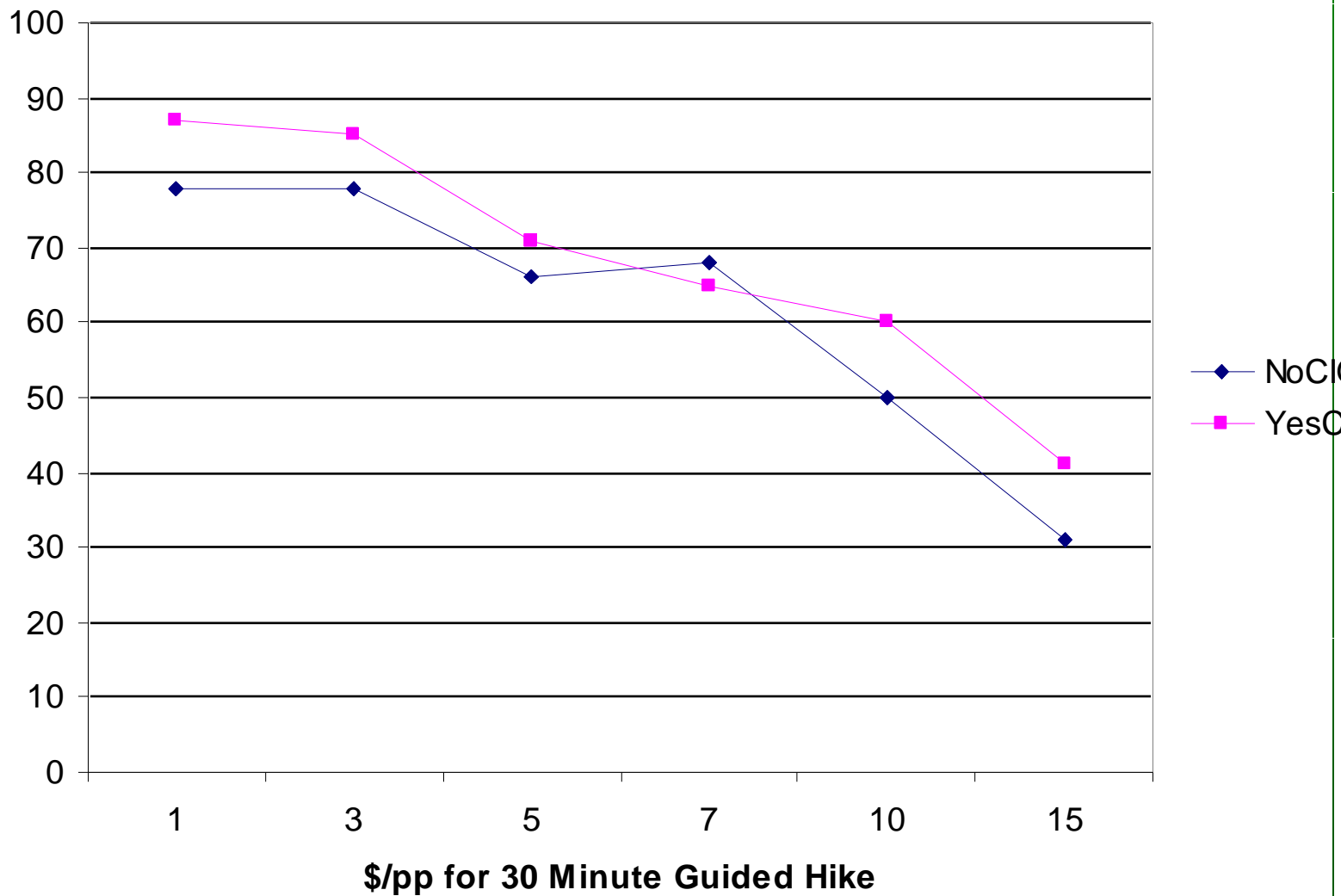
Facility Preferences

Feature	% Rating Highest Interest
Restrooms	78%
Exhibits	52%
Hiking Trails	52%
Travel Information	48%
Outside Displays	47%
Artisan Displays	40%
Snacks	37%
Gift Shop	36%
Guided Programs	32%
Hands-On Activities	30%
ATM	30%
Reservation Line	28%
Film/Videos	28%
Internet Access	18%

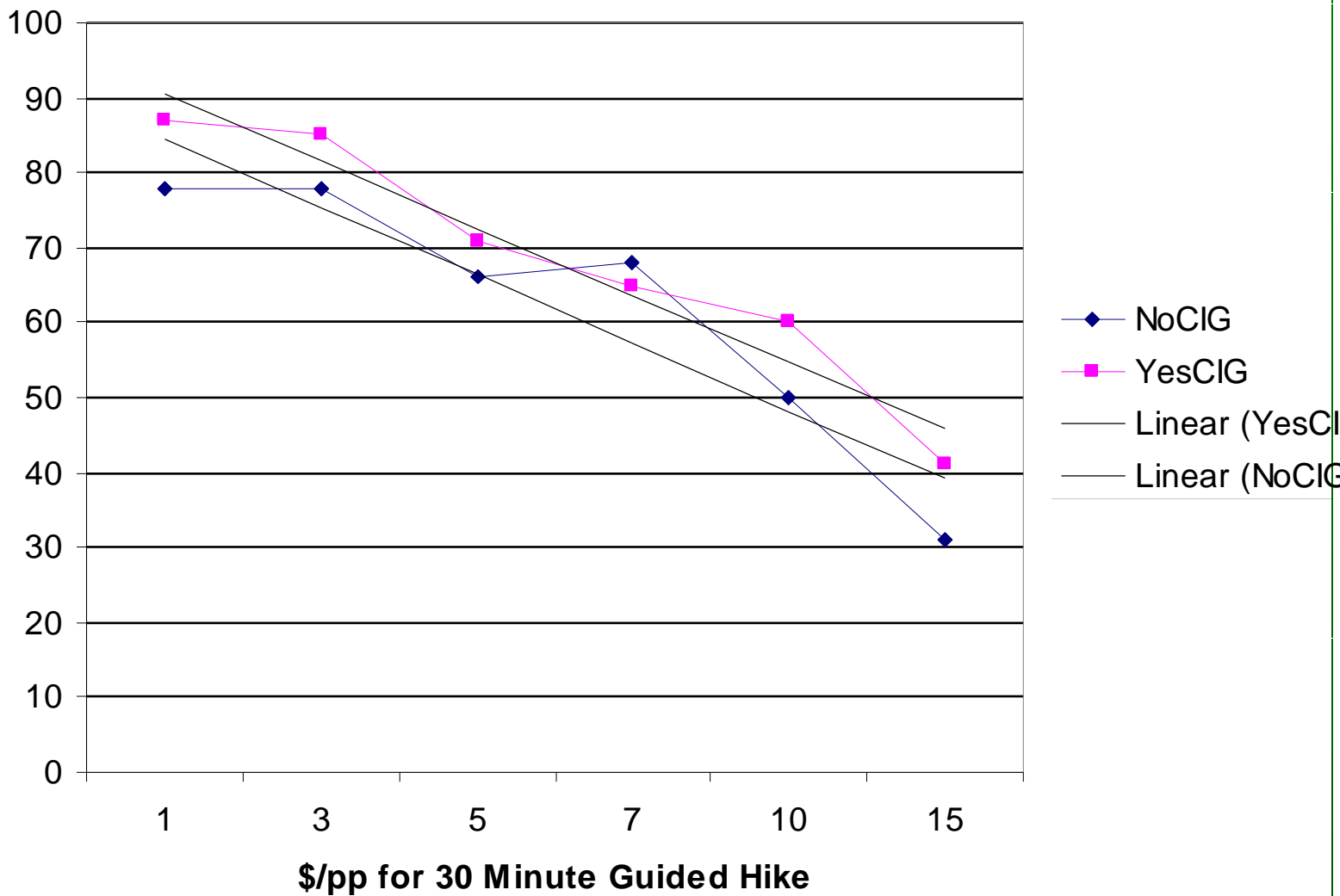
Topic Preferences

Topic	% Rating Highest Interest
Wildlife	62%
Water	50%
Forest conservation	49%
Native Americans	45%
Historic logging	41%
French & Irish migration	40%
Geology	40%
Historic recreation use	34%

Willingness to Pay for Guided Hike



Willingness to Pay for Guided Hike



Comparison of Visitor Segments

Gender (female):

- n Artisan displays ↑
- n Gift Shop ↑

Education (4-yr degree or higher):

- n French & Irish migration ↑
- n Geology ↑
- n Hiking ↑
- n Gift Shop ↓
- n Travel Information ↓

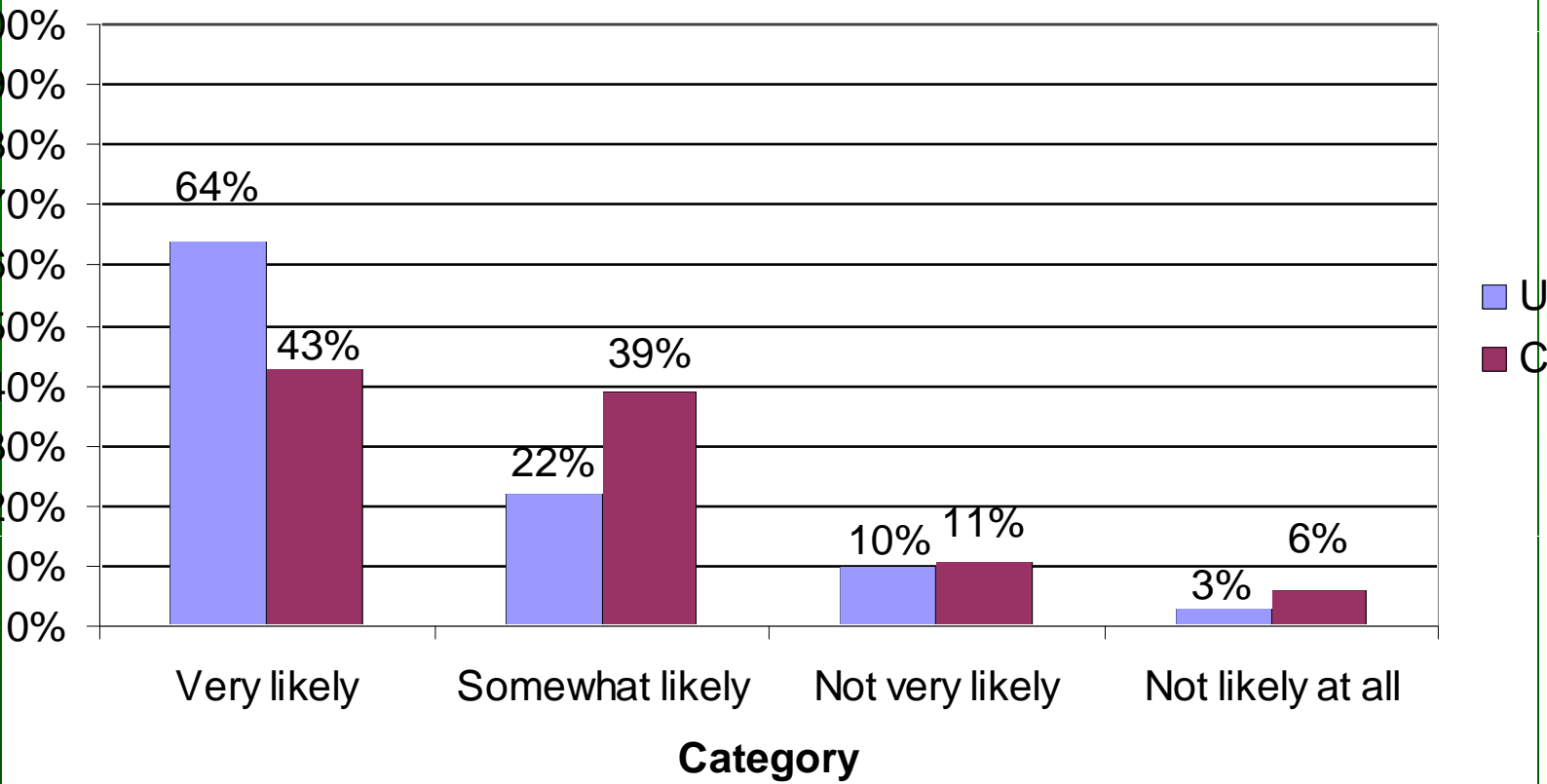
Comparison of Visitor Segments

Age:

- n ATM ↓
- n Internet ↓
- n Hiking ↓
- n Travel information ↓
- n Reservation line ↓
- n Snacks ↓
- n Hands-on activities ↓
- n Guided hikes ↓

Comparison of Visitor Segments

Interest in Visiting an Interpretive Center



Canadians:

- n Native Americans
- n Historic recreation use
- n Logging
- n Wildlife
- n French & Irish migration



Canadians:

n Exhibits



n Artisan displays



n Outside displays



n Film/videos



n Hands-on activities



n Internet



Observations and Potential Implications

Existing visitors “desirable”

Diverse visitors on the Old Canada Road

Cautiously optimistic about interest in interpretive center

Nearly a majority of participants rated the highest interest in:

- n Restrooms
- n Exhibits
- n Hiking trails
- n Travel info
- n Outside displays

Biggest distinct visitor segment: Canadians

Environmental topics of high interest
Even “lowest” cultural/heritage topic of high interest

n 1 in 3 gave historic recreation use a 5 out of 5

Most people were traveling without children

Only 32% were highly interested in guided programs, however...

Visitors see some value in quality guide training

Observations and Potential Implications

Biggest Challenges:

- n Currently “zoomers”
- n Diverse audience
- n Many are more interested in restrooms than anything else
- n Currently high number of return visitors

Future Plans

Finish analysis of Old
Canada Road data
Comparison to previous
research

Analyze survey results
from Rangeley Lakes

- n Visitor Characteristics
- n Tourism Service Ratings
- n Map Activity
 - n Most Special Place
 - n Most Threatened Place



<http://www.rogerkramercycling.org/Images/kennebe>

What Questions Do You Have?

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