A Critical Analysis of Ontario's Resource-Based Tourism Policy

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Abstract

Conflicts between resource-based industries and resource-based tourism are commonplace, complex, and long lived. The *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* (Government of Ontario, 1997) was one of a number of documents produced by the Government of Ontario in response to such conflicts in Northern Ontario, Canada. Yet in the 13 years since the policy was produced, there has been no research to examine either the impact or effectiveness of this document in achieving its stated goal: "to promote and encourage the development of the Ontario resource-based tourism industry in both an ecologically and economically sustainable manner" (Government of Ontario, 1997, p. 1). This article reviews the context within which the policy operates, summarizes the policy document, and questions both the impact and effectiveness of the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* based on five critiques: (a) the level of transparency, collaboration, and representation in the policy's development; (b) the unity of the policy direction and actions; (c) the incorporation of science into proposed policy solutions; (d) the adaptability of the policy to changing industry and contextual trends; and (e) the completeness of the policy's implementation. In conclusion, we suggest that it is time to revisit, reexamine, adapt, and update this policy document in consideration of current trends in the industry and contextual factors.

Keywords: policy critique, resource-based tourism, Ontario, resource conflict

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1.0 Introduction

Conflict over natural resources and natural resource policies are common, controversial, complicated, and long lived (Nie, 2003). The development of resource-based tourism is often seen as a competing land use for other resource-based industries (e.g., see McKercher, 1992; Williams, Penrose, & Hawkes, 1998). Conflicts between resource-based tourism and other natural-resource-based industries can directly influence the development of a sustainable tourism industry (Johnston & Lemelin, in press; Koster & Lemelin, in press; Lemelin, Koster, Metansinine, Pelletier, & Wozniczka, 2010; McKercher, 1992). In the Province of Ontario, Canada, for example, a long history of conflict exists between the forest industry and resource-based tourism operators (e.g., see Hunt & Haider, 2001;

Hunt et al., 2009; McKercher, 1992; Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1987). This is not surprising, since a large portion of Ontario is characterized by forests that are used for timber operations but are also associated with high recreation and tourism values (Hunt & Haider, 2001). Yet tourism, and resource-based tourism in particular, is steadily growing in economic importance throughout the region (Hunt, Wolfgang, Boxall, & Englin, 2008; Metansinine, Koster, & Lemelin, 2009; Ministry of Tourism, 2007). This conflict has resulted in an increasing, albeit still limited, number of laws, policies, management frameworks, processes, and documents in an effort to consider and integrate the needs of the forest industry and the resource-based tourism industry. The first of these documents, the *Management Guidelines for Forestry and Resource-Based Tourism,* was produced by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) in 1987 (OMNR, 1987). Since that time, the Crown Forest Sustainability Act of 1995 (CFSA) legislated the sustainable use of Ontario's forests and the consideration of ecological, social, and economic values, which includes recreation and heritage values (though, it is noteworthy that the CFSA does not specifically mention tourism; Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 1995). The *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* (Government of Ontario, 1997) was the Ontario government's second attempt to explicitly reconcile the differences between the forestry and resource-based tourism industries.

The importance of this policy in supporting the "development of the Ontario resource-based tourism industry" (Government of Ontario, 1997, p. 1) cannot be understated in a region that has seen significant declines in other resource-based industries (Koster & Lemelin, in press; Lemelin, 2010; Lemelin, Koster, et al., 2010; Southcott, 2006). In light of recent restructuring of the forestry division of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and of policy developments at the provincial level (see *Discovering Ontario: A Report on the Future of Tourism* by the Ontario Tourism Competitiveness Study, 2009; *Places to Grow: Better Choices, Brighter Futures. Proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario* by the Ontario Ministry of Energy & Infrastructures/Ministry of Northern Development, Mines & Forestry, 2009), and considering that 13 years have passed since the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* was released, it is timely to reexamine the original policy and consider much needed updates to the document. This paper summarizes the main points of the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* and questions the impact and the effectiveness of the policy document based on five critiques: (a) the level of transparency, collaboration, and representation in the policy's development; (b) the unity of the policy direction and actions; (c) the incorporation of science into proposed policy solutions; (d) the adaptability of the policy to changing industry and contextual trends; and (e) the completeness of the policy's implementation. In conclusion, we argue that there is a significant need for an updated and more complete policy document that considers the needs of various stakeholders affected by the resource-based tourism industry. Our discussion begins with a brief introduction to the geographical context within which the policy operates (i.e., Northern Ontario) and a review of resource-based tourism in the area discussed by the policy.

2.0 Context

Often called New Ontario, Northern Ontario is defined by the geographic area north of the French River–Lake Nipissing and east of lakes Superior and Huron. While the region is characterized by the Canadian Shield and the numerous lakes

of the boreal forest, it is bordered by the clay belt in the east, the boreal-prairie transitional zone in the west, and the Hudson Bay lowlands in the north. In the Canadian Shield, the region is dominated by a postglacial landscape of bare Precambrian rocks and numerous lakes. Although the landscape is rugged, the altitude is not great, varying between 150 m and 300 m above sea level. In contrast, the Hudson Bay lowlands form a 150–300 km wide belt of flat, low-lying land adjacent to the coast of Hudson Bay. Northern Ontario can best be described as a sparsely populated rural area that contains large tracts of Crown land (Lemelin & Koster, 2009). Most of the population is concentrated in major urban centres such as Sudbury, North Bay, and Thunder Bay, with the remainder of the population located in First Nations and smaller Euro-Canadian communities, the latter mostly dependent upon primary resource–extractive industries such as mining and forestry (Dunk, 1994, 2003; Southcott, 2005). While much has been written about the development of northeastern Ontario and the associated trapping, forestry, mining, and other extractive activities, as well as transport and hydroelectric development, agricultural settlement, fishing, and the new economy (i.e., knowledge and technology) (Bray & Epp, 1984; Southcott, 2005), very little has focused on the impact of past tourism and recreational initiatives on the regional economy.

The regional economy of northwestern Ontario is significantly affected by tourism. In 2006 (the most recent data available) visitors (from the United States and elsewhere) spent approximately $69.3 million and generated $58 million in direct, indirect, and induced contributions to the GDP. Labour income amounting to $33.7 million (i.e., 952 part-time, full-time, and seasonal jobs) was also generated during this period. Total taxes generated as a result of visitor spending in the region reached $33.2 million, including $704,000 in municipal taxes (Metansinine et al., 2009; Ministry of Tourism, 2007).

The Travel Activities and Motivations Study measures the kinds of things that Canadian and American visitors look for in their next planned travel experience. What is instructive about this study is that it examines these trends for Northern Ontario. The predominant reason cited for visiting Northern Ontario was to enjoy nature and the outdoors (63% of U.S. visitors, 77% of Canadian visitors) (Metansinine et al., 2009). Hunt et al. (2008) stated that consumptive (i.e., hunting and fishing) resource-based tourism generates considerable revenue for tourist operators in Northern Ontario. In fact, it was estimated that "in 2000 the approximately 600 000 tourist nights generated over $114 million … for operators of non-road accessible tourist sites [fishing and hunting outposts] in northern Ontario" (Hunt et al., 2008, p. 79).

The intention to visit natural areas is not surprising considering the popularity of such Canadian Heritage Rivers as the French, Mattawa, Missinaibi, and the Bloodvein for canoeing enthusiasts, the numerous fishing and hunting lodges located across the northern portion of the province, and the presence of snowmobile and all-terrain vehicle trails. Northern Ontario is also home to a number of large protected areas, including the Chapleau Game Preserve, the world's largest game preserve; the Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area, the largest freshwater marine protected area in the world; and Pukaskwa National Park and Polar Bear Provincial Park, Canada's and Ontario's largest national and provincial parks. Popular provincial parks in Northern Ontario include Lady-Evelyne Smoothwater and Killarney. Many of these protected areas, along

with new proposed sites (i.e., the proposed Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site in northwestern Ontario and central Manitoba), actively promote tourism (Lemelin & Bennett, 2010; Lemelin & Koster, in press).

A number of popular Aboriginal tourism destinations, such as the Cree Village Eco-Lodge, the Temagami Anishnabai Tipi Camp on Bear Island near Temaugamee, Kay-Nah-Chi-wah-Nung interpretation centre near Rainy River, and guided polar bear expeditions in Polar Bear Provincial Park, illustrate a cultural renaissance of sorts for First Nations in northeastern Ontario. More important is that these activities promote cultural and natural heritage and are owned and operated by local entrepreneurs (Lemelin & Koster, in press). Other notable examples of successful outdoor tourism attractions in Northern Ontario include the Polar Bear Conservation and Education Habitat in Cochrane, which was awarded the 2005 Innovation Award from the Tourism Federation of Ontario and the 2006 Tourism Industry Association of Canada award for Business of the Year, and Voyageur Days, which was developed and organized by the Mattawa-Bonfield Economic Development Corporation. Resource-based tourism operators in Northern Ontario offer a wide variety of tourism products (summarized in Table 1).

Table 1. *Resource-Based Tourism Offerings in Northern Ontario*

Activities
Hiking/backpacking
Fishing
Camping
Nature viewing, photography, bird watching
Skiing
Canoeing/kayaking
Boating
Hunting
Swimming/water activities
Snowmobiling
Sightseeing/touring
Eco- & adventure tourism
Cultural tourism and events
Aboriginal tourism

Despite the economic impact and significance of tourism to the region and its economy, tourism remains underdeveloped, underfunded, and undervalued (Metansinine, et al., 2009). This is largely the result of ongoing tension between resource-based tourism and other extractive industries, an extensive number of papers that identify issues with the tourism industry, a commensurate lack of action to address these issues, and a negative attitude toward tourism development by residents in the region. An inherent tension exists between resource-extraction

industries, such as logging, and the development of tourism in the region since "the concept of clear cutting of forests is not generally viewed with sympathy by many outside the forestry industry, least of all by the ecotourism population" (Boyd & Butler, 1999, p. 129). In their examination of tourism development concerns in eastern and Northern Ontario, Hinch and Butler (1993) and more recent studies (Rosehart, 2008; Westlake & FMC, 2008) chronicle the legacy of challenges and concerns facing the tourism industry in the region. These studies and reports identified the challenges as follows: leadership roles and responsibilities, funding, infrastructure and product issues, border-crossing issues, lack of high-impact and consistent branding, lack of partnerships, and poor marketing effectiveness. They also suggested that government policies had created additional challenges for the tourism industry, including land-use policies and regulations, restrictive regulations, restrictive land-use and lease policies, lack of coordination between government agencies, and the undervaluation of tourism relative to competing policies. In his overview of the cancellation of the spring black bear hunt in Ontario, Lemelin (2010) argued that the OMNR is perceived as a forestry agency first, a wildlife agency second, and a parks and protected areas third. One participant in this study suggested that Ontario Parks and Conservation Reserves should be removed from the mandate of the OMNR. From a First Nations' perspective, existing designations (e.g., wilderness parks) associated with certain provincial parks (e.g., Polar Bear Provincial Park) in Northern Ontario have prohibited the development of further tourism opportunities (e.g., polar bear viewing, fishing) (Lemelin, McIntyre, Koster, & Johnston, 2010). Lastly, tension and competition between existing tourism agencies at the provincial and federal levels have interfered with the development of a regional tourism strategy for Northern Ontario (Koster & Lemelin, in press).

Moreover, policies could be an important support, rather than hindrance, for a much needed expansion of the resource-based tourism industry in a region that has seen a fairly steady economic decline. Yet, the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy*, which has the stated goal of "…promot[ing] and encourag[ing] the development of the Ontario resource-based tourism industry" (Government of Ontario, 1997, p. 1), is a policy that may be part of the problem rather than the solution.

3.0 Summary of Policy

The three-page *Resource-Based Tourism Policy*, like the Lands for Life process (Cartwright, 2003), was adopted by the Conservative Government of Ontario in 1997 in recognition of the importance and future potential of the resource-based tourism industry in diversifying and strengthening the economy (Government of Ontario, 1997). Northern Ontario, at the time that the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* was written, was relatively affluent, with only minor reverberations of the upcoming forestry collapse being felt (Southcott, 2002). In order to ensure sustainable development, the government recognized the need to create a policy that would apply to "… remote, semi-remote and road access tourist operations using Crown land and resources in Northern and Central Ontario" (Government of Ontario, 1997, p. 2). Prior to the creation of the policy, tourist operators' only means of communicating their concerns was through the environmental assessment process, which was costly and time consuming and caused significant delays (Government of Ontario, 1997). The policy recognized the need to ensure certainty for continued development and the importance of the ecological base and wilderness, upon which tourism and tourism operators depend (Government of

Ontario, 1997). Consultation with "all" stakeholders (forest products industry, mining and prospecting, tourism, environmentalists, anglers and hunters, and various levels of governments, including First Nations) was done in the development of this policy, in consideration of their interests (Government of Ontario, 1997). The policy appears to apply only to tourism operators with a permanent base, the forest industry, and the Ministry of Natural Resources within Northern and Central Ontario, although not north of the 51st parallel (Government of Ontario, 1999).

Overall the policy is fairly narrow in scope. While the goal, broadly stated, is "to promote and encourage the development of the Ontario resource-based tourism industry in both an ecologically and economically sustainable manner" (Government of Ontario, 1997, p. 2), the objectives are narrow in focus. The objectives aim to recognize the resource-based tourism industry's importance, ensure the sustainable management of the natural resource base upon which tourism depends, and to realize processes for the allocation of natural resources and resolution of conflicts (Government of Ontario, 1997). The policy is based on a number of principles that focus on the contribution of the government to resource-based tourism, economic development, resource sustainability and allocation, integration of other industries and users, benefits and responsibilities, conflict resolution, public access, and Aboriginal and treaty rights (Government of Ontario, 1997).

The *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* put forward the Tourism Allocation Model presented in Figure 1 (Government of Ontario, 1997, p. 3), which places tourism operators on a continuum from "basic use of resources" to "dedicated use of resources." According to this model, the lowest level of tourism operator (i.e., basic use of resources) is allocated a land base for a main lodge and cabins but no fish or wildlife resources. The model suggests that as the allocation of resources (land, fish, and wildlife) increases, so do the benefits and the responsibilities of tourism operators. The benefits to tourism businesses that are identified in the policy include increased allocation of land, fish, and wildlife, longer tenure security, increased industry recognition, the valuing of remoteness, improved land-use planning processes, open and fair processes, dispute resolution and appeal processes, and restriction of access to the public (Government of Ontario, 1997). With increased allocation of resources, the policy suggests, tourism businesses will also have increased responsibility for stewardship and for potential costs associated with their resource allocations. Both the model and the text that explains the model and specifies the benefits and responsibilities are somewhat vague, with no clear definitions of terms provided.

The implementation statements identified in the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* lay out how the policy will be implemented and who will be responsible for implementation; however, only some of the implementation items have a date associated with them (when specified in the policy, these dates are identified in brackets). According to the document, the government (ministry unspecified) is responsible for such things as developing processes to implement the policy while minimizing red tape, creating a process to resolve disputes (specified implementation date: in early 1997), establishing a mechanism to create agreements with tourism operators and ensuring that forest management planning takes into account the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* (Government of Ontario, 1997). The government is also responsible for negotiating with the Northern Ontario Tourism Outfitters Association (NOTO), as the representative of the
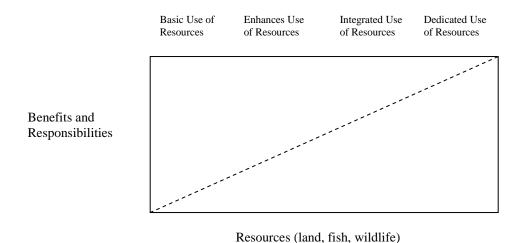
Figure 1. Tourism Allocation Model (adapted from Government of Ontario, 1997, p. 2).

tourism industry, and directly with Aboriginal tourist operators during the implementation of the policy (Government of Ontario, 1997). Additionally, the policy indicates that it is the government's task to ensure that decisions have a basis in ecological, social, and economic data and that it will ensure standards are collaboratively created for the gathering and dissemination of data (Government of Ontario, 1997). Land-use planning for the allocation of resources to tourism operators (specified implementation date: 1997–1998) and creating processes to provide security of tenure are the obligation of the Ministry of Natural Resources (Government of Ontario, 1997). The development of a system for resource valuation is an unassigned task. Finally, the policy recognizes treaty and Aboriginal rights but it does not identify how it will implement these additional considerations or who will be responsible for ensuring that these are represented.

4.0 Critical Analysis of Effectiveness

The preceding overview of the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* suggests that it is an overly concise and, as a result, vague document with a fairly brief list of often unassigned and undated strategies for implementation. Furthermore, the overall impact and effectiveness of the policy could be debated. There are a number of factors identified in the literature that might contribute to the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of a tourism policy, including transparency and levels of collaboration and representation in the process (e.g., Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Hunt & Haider, 2001; Vernon, Essex, Pinder, & Curry, 2005), unity of the policy's direction (e.g., Coffen-Smout, 1997), incorporation of scientific data (e.g., van Kerkhoff, 2005; Shafer & Choi, 2006), adaptability of the policy (e.g., Ostrom, 1999; Dredge & Jenkins, 2003), and completeness of implementation (Coffen-Smout, 1997). This section will examine the policy and subsequent documents to critique the potential impact and effectiveness of the policy by examining (a) the process used to develop the policy, particularly the level of transparency, collaboration, and representation in the policy's development, (b) the unity of policy direction, (c) the integration of science into policy solutions, (d) the adaptability of the policy, and (e) the completeness of the policy's implementation.

4.1 A Transparent, Collaborative, and Representative Policy Development Process?

The *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* document does not provide a transparent explanation of the process employed in its development. The only reference to the process is contained in the following sentence: "This policy was developed with consultation with various stakeholders concerned about Crown land use …" (Government of Ontario, 1997, p. 2). The policy does not give enough details for an understanding of what approach was used and whether the process was truly fair or collaborative. The limited description of the process could create the assumption that the process was not necessarily inclusive, fair, or collaborative, since the term *consultation* is often misused and can mislead. *Consultation* often refers to a process wherein all parties are not equals, since a person, several people, or a selected body ultimately determines and presents the outcome. In a fair process, there are equal levels of control of the process, all information is accounted for, and there is a third-party facilitator and decision maker (Hunt & Haider, 2001). In a fair process, cultural protocols when dealing with First Nations are also recognized (Cartwright, 2003). Hunt and Haider (2001) suggest that a fair process is more likely to result in solutions that are mutually acceptable and effective. The information provided in this policy document is not enough to determine whether this was a top-down or truly collaborative and bottom-up process.

While collaboration in policymaking often is hard to secure and is lengthy and costly (Vernon et al., 2005), the level of effective collaboration in policymaking also has long-term benefits (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Shafer & Choi, 2006; Vernon et al., 2005). Effective collaboration can create a policy that is more politically legitimate, more innovative, and better understood by stakeholders and that has better coordination of and involvement in implementation (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999). According to Bramwell and Sharman "local collaborative tourism policymaking is inclusionary and involves collective learning and consensus building" (1999, p. 393). Because of the lack of description around the development process, as discussed previously, it is difficult to tell to what extent the process involved collective learning or consensus building; however, the process may have been somewhat more inclusionary.

Collaboration also refers to breadth of inclusion of stakeholders and to the extent to which stakeholders are involved in the process (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999). While the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* claims to have consulted with "all" stakeholders (stakeholders identified in the policy: forest products industry, mining and prospecting, tourism, environmentalists, anglers and hunters, First Nations representatives, and various levels of government), it is clear that some stakeholders were not represented or included (e.g., other recreation groups, biologists, academics, or the broader community). The extent to which various groups were considered or involved is unclear (Government of Ontario, 1997). An additional concern is the level of representation within each group (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999). For example, the policy suggests that NOTO "will be responsible for ensuring the tourist industry is consulted and for reflecting the views of the industry" (Government of Ontario, 1997, p. 4). In 1998, one year after this policy was released, NOTO represented only 528 of 1,700 resource-based tourism operators and their membership consisted of only those operators with larger and more established businesses representing more consumptive tourism user groups (Hunt & Haider, 2001). From the policy, it appears that many nonconsumptive

users (i.e., tourism companies not involved in fishing or hunting) and those without permanent bases on Crown land (i.e., whitewater rafting companies, sea kayaking companies, and many other companies involved in day or overnight trips) were not given consideration and were not represented. A more inclusive process might have looked beyond one organization and sought to include a broad array of tourism organizations that represented the breadth of the tourism industry in Northern Ontario. Perhaps, as was the case during the Commission on Resources and Environment land-use planning processes in central British Columbia, representatives of the broader tourism industry did not have government support or resources to participate in negotiations (Williams et al., 1998). The level of representation within the other groups who were consulted is less clear, but there is no formal mention of any of the other groups in the implementation of the policy, leading to questions about how well these groups were represented. The level of influence afforded to each group that was at the table is also a concern that is not addressed in the policy document. Once again, a level of transparency is called for in the communication of both collaboration and representation in the process associated with the creation of this policy.

4.2 Solid and Unified Policy Directions?

A survey conducted by Coffen-Smout (1997) of individuals in British Columbia showed that effective policies should present a solid and unified direction. An understanding of the economic realities of the region and the importance of sustainable development will produce a policy that is undivided in action (Coffen-Smout, 1997). The *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* does a good job of identifying and defining the issue, focusing on economic and ecological sustainability, and the conciseness of the policy helps it present a unified direction. The brevity, vagueness of terms, and lack of specificity in the policy could, however, be the result of ineffectual collaboration and the lack of representation discussed previously. As a result, the policy may not effectively recognize the full complexity or "wickedness" of the problem, and the policy's solutions may be oversimplified. Nie (2003) discusses how resource-based political conflicts are often "wicked by design" because they involve many actors, multiple solutions, long-term agendas, and many definitions of the problem. A short-term policy solution for "wicked" problems is to not collaborate effectively with all stakeholders, which in the long term compounds the problem. An additional concern with wicked problems is that "those that get to define the problem have the upper hand in forwarding their proposed solution (and political agenda) to the problem" (Nie, 2003, p. 310). Thus, while the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* presents a solid and unified direction, the seemingly simple solutions offered are suspect because of the lack of recognition of the "wickedness" of the issue. Additionally, the policy appears to be unclear about what geographical region it applies to, Ontario, Northern Ontario, Northern and Central Ontario, or "wherever tourist operators depend on Crown resources," and it still does not apply to anyone north of the 51st parallel (Government of Ontario, 1997). Given the level of conflict that is often a characteristic of natural resource management and land use, questions arise about which stakeholders might benefit from a policy that is vague and potentially ineffective, that does not fully recognize the complexity of the problem, and that has not been updated since 1997.

4.3 Incorporation of Science and Adaptability of Policy?

There are two additional measures of effective solutions that are apparent in a review of the literature: integration of science and policy (van Kerkhoff, 2005) and adaptability of the policy (Coffen-Smout, 1997). Van Kerkhoff (2005) suggests that for the creation of effective policy solutions, both natural and social science research needs to be considered. While the policy mandates the use of ecological, social, and economic information in planning for the allocation of resources, it is unclear to what extent the policy uses available research to guide the development of solutions. The policy solutions suggested by the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* might be more effective if the policy's authors followed a more inductive approach such as that used by Shafer and Choi (2003, 2006) in the development of a research agenda to guide the creation of Pennsylvania's Nature-Based Tourism Policy (Shafer & Choi, 2003).

Ostrom (1999) suggests that all policies are "experiments with a probability of failure" (p. 493). Policies, viewed in this humble and learning-oriented manner, should be applied, then tested, and adapted and updated as necessary on a continual basis. Policies focusing on the tourism industry, Coffen-Smout (1997) would agree, need to be prepared to adapt to the dynamic nature of the tourism industry. Dredge and Jenkins (2003) argue that in order for tourism to maintain a competitive edge, tourism policies must be able to change and reorganize alongside the industry. Ontario's policy does not indicate how it will monitor changes or growth in the tourism industry, nor does it state how and when it will adapt to any changes. The document does not indicate the duration of the policy nor does it indicate how they will ensure that the policy has been effective in meeting the needs of the resource-based tourism industry or other stakeholders (Government of Ontario, 1997). The lack of updates or changes to the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* in the 13 years since it was produced might also suggest that this policy has not been effective at adapting to changes in the industry or context. Resource-based tourism in the region is diversifying away from the current focus on consumptive tourism offerings, including hunting and fishing, toward more ecological, experiential, and cultural tourism activities, such as visiting the Cree Village Ecolodge in Moose Factory and kayaking on Lake Superior (Kapashesit, Lemelin, Bennett, & Williams, in press; Lemelin, Koster, et al., 2010; Metansinine et al., 2009). The policy needs to adapt to these trends and changes to effectively support this growth. As recommended in a recent report focused on economic development in Northern Ontario: "It is recommended that MNR [Ministry of Natural Resources] review their regulations with respect to the use of Crown Land for adventure tourism, with a view to minimizing restrictions on the growth of ecotourism opportunities in the region" (Rosehart, 2008, p. 36).

4.4 Effective Implementation of Policy Objectives?

A final measure of an effective policy is the implementation of policy objectives. One method for determining the effectiveness of implementation is through looking at the presence and achievement of measurable outcomes (Coffen-Smout, 1997). The *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* does not contain specific, easily measured outcomes; however, nine statements broadly identify what is to be accomplished and by whom. Some of these statements are more measurable than others. While it is not easy to track down how well these statements have been implemented, a number of processes and guidelines have been established since

1997 that appear to match the implementation statements. For example, the Lands for Life/Living Legacy land-use planning process in 1999 (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 1999) recognized tourism values and allocated tourism resources (Statement 3). The establishment of Resource Stewardship Agreements in 2001 (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2001a, 2001b) increased the security of tourism operators' tenure (Statement 5) and presents an agreement arrangement with the Crown (Statement 7). A valuation system for tourism resources (Statement 6) was also established in the updated *Management Guidelines for Forestry and Resource Based Tourism* (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2001b) and the *Guide to Resource Stewardship Agreements* (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2001b). However, it is not clear whether the government's commitment to "establish and test a process to resolve disputes" has been accomplished (Statement 4) or to what extent scientific information is being used to guide resource allocation decisions (Statement 8). While some of the nine statements identified in the policy have been implemented, it is not clear whether these processes were implemented in response to the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy*.

An examination of subsequent documentation (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 1999, 2001a, 2001b) that has been produced by the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Natural Resources since the release of the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* in 1997 might lead one to think that the policy has been highly effective in implementing and achieving its goals. While the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* set the stage for future developments, the lack of specific measurable outcomes makes it difficult to tell whether this document was instrumental or effective in the implementation phase. It is possible that the *Tourism and Forest-Industry Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) (November 15, 2000, included in Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2001a) might have been more instrumental in moving the process forward because it had buy-in and involvement of both major stakeholders. As suggested in the *Guide to Negotiating Resource Stewardship Agreements* (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2001b, p. 9), the MOU "is an unprecedented, good faith framework agreement between the two industries." The MOU is referenced more extensively and consistently than the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* in subsequent documents (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2001a, 2001b). Following the MOU, the *Guide to Negotiating Resource Stewardship Agreements* (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2001b) and the updated *Management Guidelines for Forestry and Resource Based Tourism* (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2001a) created a system for developing agreements with the resource-based tourism industry and methods for consideration of tourism valuation and mapping procedures.

5.0 Conclusion

Overall the level of effectiveness of the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* is hard to judge. There is no research available to suggest whether the policy's implementation has been effective in (a) reaching the policy's overall goals and objectives or (b) meeting the needs of stakeholders. However, there have been many positive changes in the way that resource-based tourism is considered by the forest industry and the Ministry of Natural Resources since the policy's creation. The increased level of consideration may have been the result of the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* or of other processes, documents, or political maneuvers; tourism seems to be increasingly viewed as a viable alternative to steady declines in other resource-based sectors (Koster & Lemelin, in press).

Regardless, however, it appears that the *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* falls short on a number of counts. First, the process used to produce the policy is not transparent enough to tell whether the process was truly collaborative or representative. It is questionable whether the policy development process considered "all" stakeholders, as it claims. In particular, the policy may not be representative of the concerns of the whole resource-based tourism industry, which includes indigenous operators, operators not involved in consumptive tourism activities (e.g., ecotourism, cultural tourism, and experiential tourism offerings; see Table 1), and/or operators who do not have or need a permanent base. Secondly, though the policy document appears to present a unified set of actions, the level of collaboration and representation brings this into question. Furthermore, the policy document is somewhat unclear as to whom it applies and to what geographical area it applies. Third, the policy solutions do not appear to integrate available science and have not been adapted to reflect recent changes in context or the tourism industry since 1997. Finally, it is unclear to what extent the actions identified in the policy have been implemented.

As all policies are (or should be) works in progress that could be seen as experiments that are likely to fail (Ostrom, 1999), this policy should be treated as what it is: an important first step and outdated first draft. It is time that this outdated document was revisited, researched for effectiveness, and updated to reflect changes in the resource-based tourism industry while taking into account recent social, economic, and ecological changes and research pertaining to the region. An updated *Resource-Based Tourism Policy* should be created as part of a collaborative process that includes all stakeholders and a broader representation of each stakeholder group, particularly from the resource-based tourism industry. The next draft of the policy will hopefully be forthcoming and will contain refined goals and clear, measurable outcomes, which stems from a combination of natural and social scientific research, local knowledge, and a collaborative and inclusive process, so that governments and critics alike can determine the policy's actual usefulness in practice. An important area of future research could be an examination of the perceived effectiveness of this policy from the perspective of the various stakeholders involved with an end goal of suggesting appropriate goals and directions for the updated policy document. As the resource-based tourism industry continues to grow and adapt, an updated policy document could prove to be an incredibly important support for much needed alternative resource-based and rural economic development efforts throughout Ontario.

6.0 References

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