

An Assessment of Climate Change and Tourism in Chéticamp, Nova Scotia



Dr. Wanda George, Mount Saint Vincent University
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Is climate change for real?

- Some say yes
- Others are cynical
- Can you list some recent events (last 5 years) that might indicate something is going on?

Natural Changes and Catastrophic Events

- 50,000 natural catastrophes in the last 100 years; 500 – 700 in the last 15 years alone
 - Earthquakes
 - Volcanic eruptions
 - Hurricanes and typhoons
 - Mudslides
 - Floods
 - Forest fires
- Why the increasing number?
 - Exponential increase in world population
 - Climate change
 - Misleading confidence/unprepared populations



The Human Dimension

- People cause climate change. People are affected by it. People need to adapt to it. And only people have the power to stop it.
- Technology alone cannot solve global climate change.
- Our future as humanity depends on unleashing the full potential of both women and men to bring about change.

Elements of Climate Change

- Recent climate change stems mainly from human activities.
- The climate will continue changing, with future warming occurring at a speed partly determined by humanity's success or failure in reducing emissions and, ultimately, greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.

Are We at the Brink...

- We may be at the brink of catastrophic climate change, with temperature increases already capable of causing sea-level rise and droughts and storms of a severity that could make human development nearly impossible, especially among the poor.

Main Indicators in NS

Temperature



1900-2000: Up 0.5°C
2000-2100: Up 2 - 4°C

Precipitation



1900-2000 : 1 in 50 extreme rainfall event
2000-2100 : 1 in 10 extreme rainfall event

Sea Level Rise



1900-2000 : Up 25 cm
2000-2100 : 1 meter

**Storm Surge
Return Period**



1900-2000 : 1 in 100 year extreme surge
2000-2100 : 1 in 10 year extreme surge

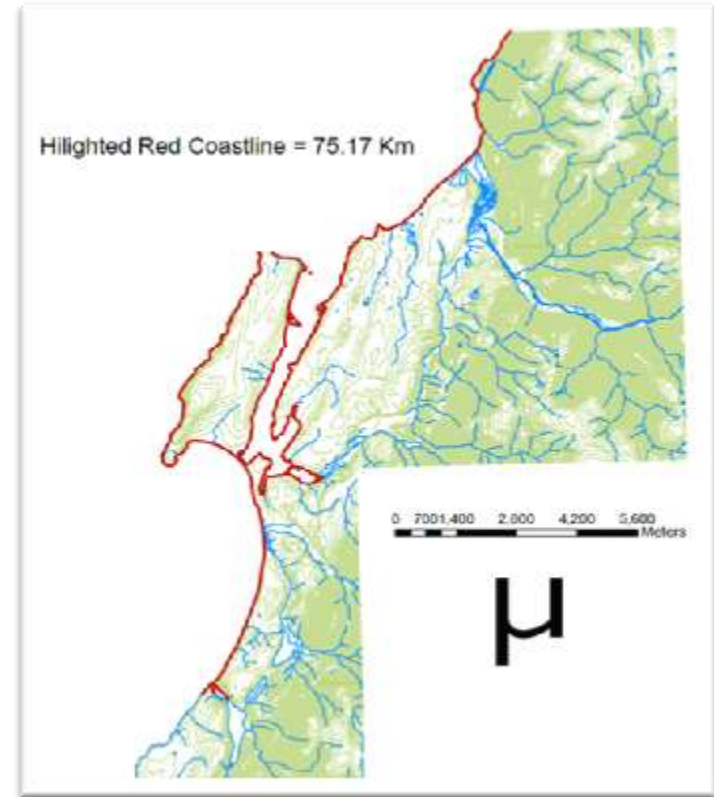
Source: K. Milne, Climate Change Directorate, 2011

Should We Be Concerned?



Source: Saltscapes, Sep/Oct Vol 12 (5), 2011

Chéticamp



Climate Change Concerns

- Partnering opportunity with the Ecology Action Center
 - Coastal Issues committee <http://www.ecologyaction.ca/>

The Coastal Issues Committee (CIC) works towards helping communities be more sustainable through the protection and management of Nova Scotia's coastal and water ecosystems.

How will climate change impact the
tourism industry?

MSVU Research Project



Mount Saint Vincent University

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Project Supervisor: Dr. Wanda George,

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Goal of the Project

- To determine the vulnerability of the tourism industry in Chéticamp and the community's adaptive capacity in responding to potential impacts of climate change.

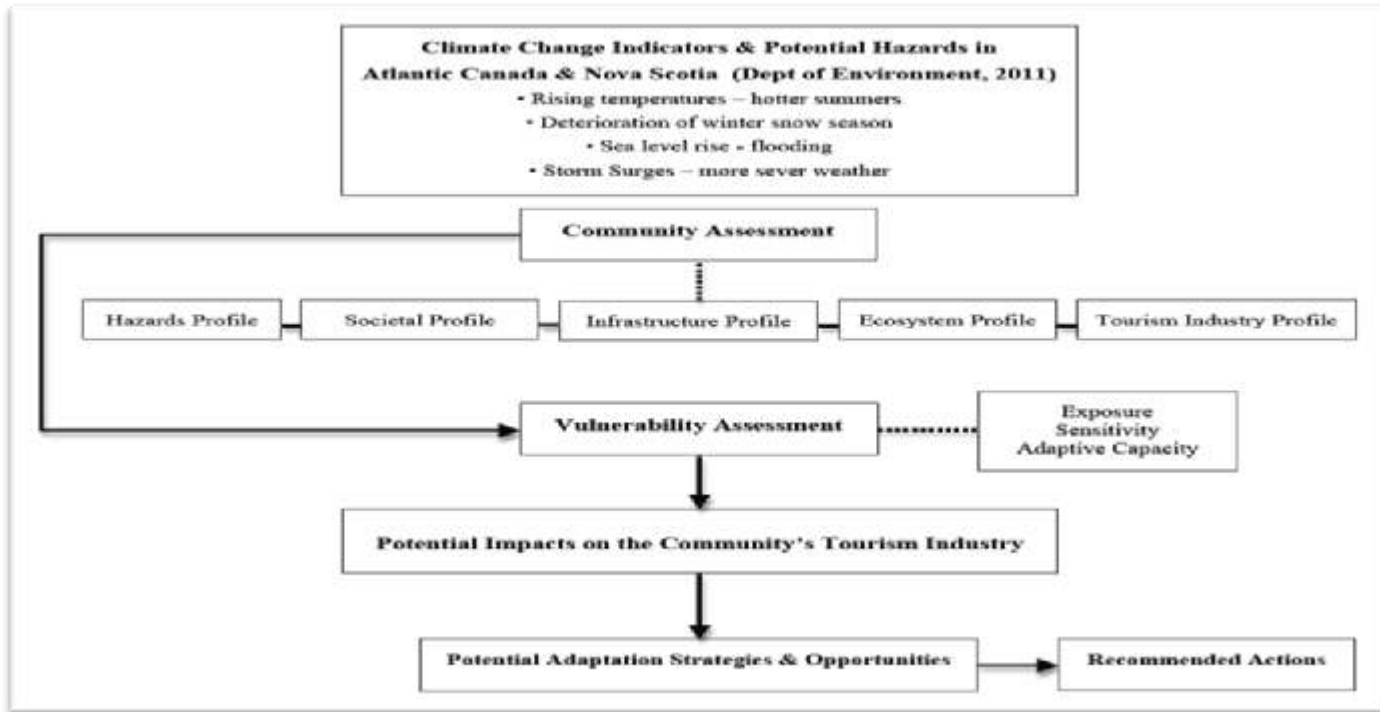


Objectives

- To identify the tourism industry in Chéticamp and area
- To identify some potential impacts of climate change on Chéticamp and area's tourism industry
- To conduct a vulnerability assessment of the tourism industry in the community
- To assess the community's adaptive capacity
- To identify some potential opportunities and make some recommendations to the community

Methodology

- Primary - Interviews, Focus Group, Site Visit, Observation
- Secondary - Government websites, Reports, Brochures, Guidebooks



Chéticamp Tourism Industry

- Seasonal: May – October
- Western entrance to Cabot Trail
- Accommodations, restaurants, shops, cultural museums...
- Primary industry (32% of the local workforce)
- Fewer families, more older couples
- Fewer American travellers in recent years

Changes in Chéticamp

- Tourism season shifting from Spring to Fall
- Leaves change later in the year
- Less snow in the winter, harbour does not ice over
- Coastal erosion
- More extreme weather ('White Juan')
- Collapse of fishing industry



Hazards Profile - Impacts

- Coastal erosion
- Frequent high winds along with sea rise and sea surges
- Warmer temperature in winter
- No snow in winter – possible summer drought
- Colder temperatures in summer
- Seasonal changes

Erosion – Coastal Retreat



Adaptive Capacity

Strengths

- Strong Community
- Acadian Culture, French
- Cultural attractions – Arts, crafts, stories, music, history
- Food establishments
- Local sea food available
- Close to National Park
- Friendly hospital people

Weaknesses

- Lack of financial resources
- Aging population – young people leaving
- Lack of transportation
- Limited medical services
- Lack of attractions for families or children
- Lack of maintenance services for tourists

Adaptive Capacity Cont.

Strengths

- Beautiful scenery, natural environment
- High level of volunteerism
- State of the art schools
- Local tourism partnerships
- Local radio station
- Wind energy
- Culture is maintained

Weaknesses

- Lack of government funding for infrastructure and marketing
- Not marketed to French speaking markets (France)
- Increase in lone parent families
- No committee in charge of boardwalk
- Declining global economy
- Collapse of fishing industry
- Location – distance a factor

Challenges

- Maintaining French-Acadian culture
- Uncertainty of Government support
- Declining tourism in spring
- Transportation
- Volatile economy
- Keeping youth in the community
- Community politics

Factors

- Assimilation – English tourists
- Subject to Government policy
- Tourist decisions are affected by weather
- Lack of funding
- Travel is affected by the economy
- Young people leaving

Opportunities

- Longer tourism season
- Ecotourism
- Photography packages
- Partnerships with National Park
- Redesign boardwalk
- Develop a committee to manage the boardwalk
- Connect fishing industry to tourism
- Offer combined training to fishers and tourism entrepreneurs
- Motorcycle tourism
- Storm proof buildings on the waterfront
- More activities for families and children
- Provide local transportation
- Guided trails of the Cabot Trail
- Partnerships between businesses

More Opportunities

- Promote to French speaking markets
- Develop beach area
- Existing operations to consider value added products
- Focus on Acadian culture
- Develop further from the coast
- Develop tourism around wind energy projects
- Develop more boutiques
- Develop a partnership with the University (ecotourism, cultural tourism)
- Develop ferry service
- Use local church for concerts
- Consider a community swimming pool
- Shuttle service from Halifax
- Promote small conferences
- Experiment with new winter tourism activities

Areas of Concern

- Boardwalk and coastal area
- Main highway
- Changing demographics of the local population
- Shifting seasons

Strong, resilient community will aid against pending
negative consequences

Recommended Strategies

1. Develop a new plan for the Boardwalk and shoreline area
2. Re-structure tourism industry and diversify the local economy
3. Develop and implement a community awareness program on climate change and possible adaptation strategies

1. New Boardwalk Plan

- Re-design the boardwalk and area.
- Consider a living shoreline – appropriate plants, tree, bushes, shrubs, flowers – sustainable green concept.
- Create a idyllic leisure and recreation space for community and tourists alike.
- Develop a committee to manage the boardwalk and schedule and control activities.

Living Shorelines



2. Re-structure & Diversify

- Four diversified but integrated economic clusters:

Cluster 1: Wind Energy/Technology

Cluster 2: Cultural Tourism

Cluster 3: Educational Tourism

Cluster 4: Ecotourism

Wind Energy Technology



Cultural Tourism



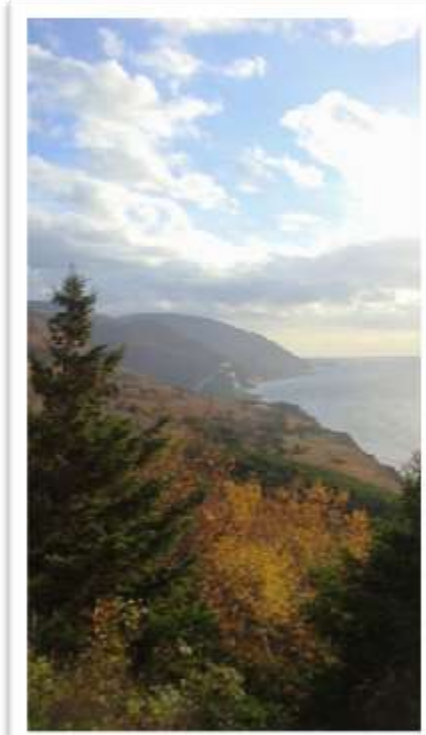
Ecotourism



3. Awareness Program

- Develop and implement a community awareness program on climate change
- Educate the local community and tourism industry about the potential impacts of climate change and possible adaptation strategies.
- It is not just a global issue; it is a local issue!

Thank you!



Questions?