



Stay in Grey TOURISM UPDATE

*An online publication
for everyone who
lives, works & plays in
Grey Highlands.*

Agritourism – Grey Highlands has it all!

Grey Highlands has a rich agricultural heritage dating back to the mid 1800's. The pioneering spirit lives on and today's Grey Highlands farmers are beginning to realize the benefits of opening their farm gates to visitors. Agritourism offers opportunities to experience life on the farm and gain an education and appreciation for growing food and raising animals. Simply speaking, agritourism is where tourism and agriculture intersect and *"encompasses all activities and attractions that connect tourists to a working farm or other agricultural, horticultural or agribusiness operation (including ranches)."*

Grey Highlands' farmers who are taking advantage of the growing interest in agritourism are beginning to develop some really grey't farm gate experiences. Here are some of them:

Kickin' Back Alpaca Ranch – You will never forget a visit to the alpacas and the passion of ranchers Carolyn and Doug Lilleyman can be contagious. A favourite time to visit the ranch is when they have crias - baby alpacas. The alpaca products are just as irresistible as the cute alpacas and if you can't make it to the ranch you can visit them at the area farmer's markets they attend.

Whinny Acres Guest Ranch – If you are not already a horse lover, you will be after a visit to Whinny Acres. Year round, this bed and breakfast offers guests the experience of trail rides, unique horse adventures, wagon and sleigh rides. They offer children's summer day camps and overnight camps. Accommodations include bunkies and family camping.

Farmer's Markets – Get that fresh from the farm taste all in one place by visiting the **Flesherton Farmer's Market** and **Singhampton Farmer's Market**. Every weekend from May to October, you can meet our farmers and get your own home grown bounty of vegetables, fruits, meats, baked goods and preserves. You're sure to meet local artists and craftspeople who will be delighted show and talk about their work.

Pretty River Valley Country Inn – This authentic Agro-Tourism destination features an organic farm that is home to Reindeer, Icelandic, Minis & Percheron horses, Chantecler chickens, pigs and top bar bee hives. All this and much more is what makes this country inn so unique and reminiscent of a European Lodge.

Wilmer Trout Ponds – brings a whole new meaning to a u-pick experience where you fish for fresh trout yourself. It is a complete rush when you pull in your catch of the day.

Stay tuned for information about Stay in Grey's "Farm Gate Trail"

UPCOMING EVENTS



On Stage @ The Bicycle Café

April 2 – Lynne Hanson
April 16 – Zachary Lucky
May 7 – Frog & Henry
June 4 – Zakary Miller

Flesherton Art Gallery
Opening on May 14 @ 7pm
Artists Sona Minkoff and Kyle Haight



Blue Mountain Tour of Arts May 21-23

Maxwell artist **Dar West** will be guest artist @ Corey Stickley in Thornbury

Flesherton Farmer's Market Opening Day – May 21

Splitrail Artists Showing July 1-2 in Feversham

Hosted at Home Accents Emporium

25th Annual Art Garden at Local Colour July 1 @ 7pm



Eugenia Gold Rush Days July 2

For Event Listings & Details Visit
www.stayingrey.ca



TOURISM IN THE COMMUNITY



LITTLE FRIENDS VISITING
KICKIN' BACK ALPACA RANCH



TROUT FISHING OPENS APRIL 4TH

Grey Highlands' Tourism Destination Management Plan

By Rosanne Caruso, Chair, Tourism Advisory Committee

The Municipality, in partnership with Regional Tourism Organization 7 – BruceGreySimcoe (RTO7), has embarked on a process to understand the opportunities associated with tourism and how to help make Grey Highlands an attractive and competitive tourist destination. With municipal funding, matched by funding from both RTO7 and the Province of Ontario, Grey Highlands has set out to create a **Tourism Destination Management Plan**.

- A Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed to guide, oversee and advise on the project. TAC is made up of 6 community members and 2 Councillors and is supported by the office of the CAO.
- [Brain Trust Marketing & Communications](#) was hired to facilitate and manage the process and produce a report by the end of March 2016. Individual and group meetings and visioning sessions have been held with tourism stakeholders. The report is being presented on April 4th and we encourage all to attend...

Grey Highlands - Tourism Destination Management Plan

Presented by: Richard Innes, Brain Trust Marketing & Communications

Monday, April 4, 2016 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm Flesherton Kinplex

Fiddlehead Nursery

- Sonja Hudson

Your garden has the potential to give you more than just a beautiful landscape; it can provide you with food for your table and reduce your carbon footprint. What's more, it can all be designed in a way to minimize work and maintenance. Ben Caesar at Fiddlehead Nursery in Kimberley can show you how. I've had the pleasure of speaking with Ben about what he does at Fiddlehead Nursery.

The concept of edible landscaping seems to be very much on trend with the paradigm shift regarding food - fresh, local and organic and the "100 mile diet". Likewise, it falls in line with the need for us to reduce our carbon footprints and find our way back to a clean way of living and eating. The edible landscape is ultimately designed to provide food for you and your family harvested from your own yard, which, with the right design and plant selection (that's where Ben comes in), will grow a larger yield year after year. For example, Ben's forest gardening design incorporates all perennial plants from trees and shrubs to ground cover and everything in between all in harmony with each other. And, as these plants establish themselves over the years, they will become mostly maintenance free and provide you with a bountiful harvest.

Having been started in 2012, the gardens of Fiddlehead Nursery are now well established. You can now get the plants for your own edible landscape from Fiddlehead and Ben provides expert guidance and offers garden tours, workshops, and design services. The workshops are well attended and attract residents and visitors alike. The nursery itself attracts people from all over the world with Ben getting farm help from the organization WWOOF, World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms. In exchange for room and board, Ben gets volunteer farm workers to help with all the work to be done at Fiddlehead Nursery. These volunteer helpers are usually young, idealistic and enthusiastic to learn from Ben's experience. He has had WWOOFers from Japan, Thailand, Germany, France, Italy and some closer to home from different areas of Ontario. Ben enjoys showing his volunteers Grey Highlands' natural beauty and attractions including hiking and paddling on the Beaver River.



Fiddlehead Nursery opens for the 2016 season on May 14 with workshop dates available into September. I look forward to joining the May workshop to learn how to create my own edible landscape - stay tuned for the Play in Grey blog featuring my experience at the workshop. In the meantime and until you can get there in person, be sure to visit the Fiddlehead Nursery's new website www.fiddleheadnursery.com



Tourists Are Looking For You Online – Will They Find You?

- Sonja Hudson

We in the tourism industry have been told many times that tourists do their research online and if you are not online you are losing tourist business. In attending the recent public presentation by Richard Innes of Brain Trust Marketing & Communications regarding the Grey Highlands Destination Management Plan, he confirmed that the Grey Highlands sector businesses need to improve their online presence. His findings show:

Website/Online	Facebook	TripAdvisor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 65% of businesses online Websites lack photos, videos & booking information Minimal presence on Google Maps Customer testimonials lacking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 27% of businesses have a Facebook page Minimal response to guest comments Room for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9% of businesses have TripAdvisor page 44% of GH accommodators use TripAdvisor Minimal guest response

So it's time to do an online check of your tourism business and review your website content.

Website: Your website does not need to be complex to provide you with the online presence tourists are looking for. Here are some basic features that help attract people to your business:

Website Check List
<input type="checkbox"/> Site Headline & Sub-headline: should be clear and concise telling customers who you are and what you do; ensure it's front and centre to your page.
<input type="checkbox"/> Call to Action: provide booking information or how to place an order; ensure it's easy to find and repeated 2-3 times
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Images: most people are visual; be sure to include images and even videos that will capture an emotional response from your potential customer and support your call to action; ex: a photo of a delicious plate of food will encourage calls for reservations.
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefits: once you have told your potential customers what you do, be sure to tell them why it matters to them and how well you do what you do.
<input type="checkbox"/> How To Find You: provide location, phone numbers, email address <u>and</u> , your business hours.
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Media Links: provide links to all your social media sites where you may have the ability to provide more up to date photos and experiences for your potential customers to see.

A simple yet informative static website coupled with a social media presence which includes Facebook, Google and TripAdvisor will get your business noticed by tourists who are looking for experiences in Grey Highlands.

Social Media: There are many benefits to being on social media but as a small business looking to attract customers it's a marketing dream come true. The three most beneficial sites to have your business listed on are Google, TripAdvisor and Facebook and all are free. Here are the top features you will gain with your business listing:

Google My Business	tripadvisor	facebook For Business
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prominence in search results You appear on Google Maps Customers can post reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase your exposure Capitalise on mobile audience Spotlight your best features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase potential customers Lower marketing costs Reach a targeted audience

Getting Help: Overwhelmed with the whole thing? Well we have the solution.

Participate in *Stay in Grey's Facebook Basics Workshop – If You Build It They Will*
Come \$15 for Stay in Grey Members, \$20 for Non-Members.
Email us to register or for more information info@stayinggrey.ca

Become a Stay in Grey Member

Enjoy the benefits of being connected to Grey Highlands' tourism community, trends & issues.

JOIN NOW FOR ONLY \$5 A MONTH! GET YOUR LISTING TODAY! [CLICK HERE TO JOIN ONLINE](#)

STAY IN GREY TOURISM UPDATE – APRIL 2016

HERITAGE HIGHLIGHTS



Old Markdale Fire Hall

The original building was designed as a two-story fire hall with a tall tower that provided drying space for the canvas hoses and housed a large bell for signaling a fire. A later addition to the hall (south side) had a weigh scale set into the floor. This feature was used as an auto-mechanic area to keep fire engines, whatever their vintage, in top repair. For many years the bell was rung at noon and 6pm. For more than 80 years the hall was staffed by a volunteer fire brigade.



After designation the municipality sold to Chris Steele who renovated the building to open Fire & Ice and Fire House Roastery - a casual venue for great food, fire-roasted coffee, a place to grab a drink with friends to enjoy the night's band and let's not forget a scoop or two of homegrown Chapman's Ice Cream!