

Community Culinary Map Feedback Results

SAVOUR Muskoka

February 20, 2009

Our region is made up of passionate farmers, chefs and culinary artisans who have been shaping the agricultural and tourism industry in Muskoka for generations. Our region has unique landscapes that produce world renowned products. Our first culinary map is a very exciting initiative for SAVOUR Muskoka and more importantly the way it reflects our community. SAVOUR strives to be a strong non-for-profit organization. Listening to its membership and forging strong collaborations enable the board and its general manager in making informed decisions. In order to encourage community input and participation in the regions first culinary trail map, SAVOUR Muskoka travelled throughout the region hosting focus groups.

The focus groups were aimed at gathering feedback on culinary map best practices. Both the general community and members of SAVOUR Muskoka were encouraged to come out to the following locations; Taboo Resort (Gravenhurst), Riverwalk Restaurant (Bracebridge), Spencer's Tall Trees Restaurant (Huntsville) and Crossroads Restaurant (Rosseau). These four locations represent the main areas of our region. The following will outline the results of the four community focus groups.

SAVOUR Muskoka randomly chose six maps from a collection gathered during the 2008 calendar year. These maps were: Ontario's South Coast (Norfolk County), Grown in Peel Buy Fresh (Region of Peel), A guided tour of Halton Farms (Halton Region), Enjoy Local Food from the East Riding of Yorkshire (East Riding of Yorkshire, England), 2008 Kawartha Choice Farm Fresh Guide (City of Kawartha Lakes) and WHERE Canmore * Kananaskis * Rockies Attractions/Dining Map (City of Canmore). Due to the different types of membership within our organization and there scope the randomly selected maps captured the diverse interests in our organization.

With the maps displayed at each focus group, participants were provided a questionnaire as they were guided through each map. The questionnaire captured information with regards to the effectiveness of the following; overall size of the map, initial impression of the map, how it catches your eye, the content of the map, advertising of the map, colours used

in the map, graphics used in the map and finally the overall effectiveness of the map. The focus group was open to both members of the community, media and members. Each participant was encouraged to ask questions and interact with staff on hand. A total of 70 people participated in all.

The following is a short list of some of the comments and information that arose as a result of the focus group:

- Navigation, the map itself (Topography section) would allow people to navigate themselves throughout the region.
- The map itself (topography section) would need to be free of clutter. For example the maps in question had legends that highlighted libraries, museums conservation areas and forest areas. Our map should have members located on it; part of the reason is due to our large membership size.
- The topography map should be in four part; one large map of the region with three sub section maps highlighting Bracebridge, Huntsville and Gravenhurst which are the main urban centers in Muskoka.
- The topography map should have a grid system so that people can easily find a property / farm from the legend. That way people can easily find the point they were looking for. Again with 80 members the map should be easy to navigate through.
- On the side of the map should include the maps with an abbreviated list of members and the back should include content.
- Too many advertisements and sponsors make the map look cluttered. Feedback pointed towards having the map funded by one or two sponsors rather than the map covered with numerous size boxes, with different colours all over. With a multiyear map the focus groups highlighted that capturing a sponsor each year would not be a problem.
- Colour coding the four areas of membership, under different headings (Restaurant Chef, Culinary Artisan, Retail and Farm) would be appropriate because of the nature of our organization.
- The map should include the farmers markets, dates and times on our map. This would include Bala, Gravenhurst, Bracebridge, Huntsville, Rosseau, and Dwight. This also

alleviates the farms that do not participate in farm gate sales and are only available at farmers markets.

- The map should also highlight any exclusive SAVOUR Muskoka events happening over the year.
- Member advertising should be consistent to give maximum visual effect. Having content reviewed before it is placed on the map is important and with regards to restaurants the content should highlight local farms that they work with.
- The map cannot be too big, some of the maps would be impossible to fold out when in the driver or passenger seat. Needs to be compact and convenient for roads trips.
- The map should include some sort of written forward from a regional council chair and or celebrity. The map should also include information regarding the organization producing the map.

The short list of comments highlighted above will help guide the design and content of our culinary map. The meetings were an excellent opportunity for small producers to come out and meet with members of SAVOUR Muskoka and learn about the organizations vision, mission and values. With the launching of the culinary map in 2009 SAVOUR continues to build value for the region as an organization that strives to promote and educate local food growers and partners.