Heritage Tourism, Community Development, and Geospatial Activities in Northeastern North Dakota

Rural Northeastern North Dakota’s economic development increasingly includes tourism that generally focuses upon scenic amenities. Yet, cultural amenity-oriented tourism exists and is expanding, too. Uniquely, one form of heritage tourism is using waypointing and geocaching to inform people about local history and geography. Since the summer of 2015, waypointing and geocaching materials have been created for North Dakota’s Red River Regional Planning Council. This collaboration involves the Pembina County Historic Preservation Commission, the Walsh County Historic Preservation Commission, the Dakota Science Center, and the University of North Dakota’s Department of Geography and GISc plus private citizens who are avid geocachers. This poster is focused upon presenting the methodologies used to investigate the asserted sites in the two counties plus follow-up activities that are ongoing. This type of heritage tourism was highlighted in the summers of 2016 and 2017 as part of the Red River Regional Council’s plans for promoting community-based approaches to visiting the area, notably to Canadian tourists, so to continue to diversify local economic development. Waypointing and geocaching activities for the summer of 2018 are well-underway, and more attention is being given to expanding this form of community development in this region of the Peace Garden State.

The Methodology: Multi-Faceted Approach

- Archival
- Field Work - visit sites, visit - efforts during July
- Preparation of the Waypointing Materials
- Reading Materials for Website
- Collaborations across Disciplines and Locales

The topographic maps below illustrate the site characteristics of the Pembina County Historical Society, most located in Pembina County. This is a Region of Historical Significance, and several have developed as a geocache handler.

Geocachers and geocaching can be done as a tourism activity in any season of the year, including winter as demonstrated by the beautiful location of the Vikur Church at Fairbanks. This National Register of Historic Places listed church is probably the oldest historic church in the United States. It was built in 1842 and continues to have religious services.

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This panel has documents about the project and the protocols for using the regional geotrail (highlighted above) and the cover of the passport (to the right above). Directly to the right is an ad for Geocaching 101 that indicates the where, when, and what of the council event sponsored as part of celebrating in 2017 the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act.

3rd Annual Ideas to Actions Summit November 2, 2017

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