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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
Tour Boat Shuttle Service to Georgian Bay Islands National
Park (Beausoleil Island)
PCA-2019-12-GBINP

Closing Date: February 1, 2020



Parks
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Canada 

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

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Tour Boat Shuttle Service to Georgian Bay Islands National Park (Beausoleil Island)

Visitation to Georgian Bay Islands National Park has grown significantly in recent years. Demand for a tour boat shuttle service to this boat access island park presents a growing business opportunity. The Parks Canada Agency (Parks Canada) is soliciting information from experienced individuals, organizations and/or business who may be interested in the development and operation of a boat transportation service that would provide visitor access to Beausoleil Island in Georgian Bay Islands National Park.

Situation:

Parks Canada operates a two-boat shuttle service called the “DayTripper” to transport visitors to Beausoleil Island in Georgian Bay Islands National Park (GBINP). The park is made up entirely of islands and can only be accessed by boat. The DayTripper operates at full capacity throughout the summer and many additional visitors are turned away when the service is full. GBINP is located close to the Greater Toronto Area and market demand for day trip experiences is significant. Parks Canada is interested in growing day visitation to Beausoleil Island in partnership with third party tour boat operators. Parks Canada would like to shift away from operating its own boat service and invest those resources into developing innovative, world class, sustainable experiences on Beausoleil Island. Parks Canada is currently gauging interest from the private sector to provide tour boat services to transport increasing numbers of visitors to Georgian Bay Islands National Park.

Purpose:

This Request for Information (RFI) is intended to gather information about the interest and feasibility for tour boat transportation service for Parks Canada visitors to Beausoleil Island in GBINP. Parks Canada intends to use the information gathered from this RFI to inform an anticipated Request for Proposals (RFP). Parks Canada hopes to:

- a) Determine the level of market interest in a tour boat transportation service to GBINP (Beausoleil Island); and
- b) Solicit information that may outline how and where to foster access to the National Park in an innovative and sustainable way.

The information gathered will inform the feasibility of working with third party operators and may result in Parks Canada issuing a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) process. This process does not constitute an agreement with Parks Canada, nor does it commit either party to any future obligations.

General Description of Service

For the purposes of this Request for Information, the service would constitute shuttling park visitors on a vessel over a relatively short distance to Beausoleil Island (approximately 4 km from Honey Harbour to Beausoleil Island and/or approximately 10 km between Midland and Beausoleil Island), typically for the day. The service would likely begin and end at the same point of departure.

Parks Canada is interested in reviewing conceptual, but feasible information packages that would facilitate visitor access to the park and enhance the National Park experience.

Interested individuals, groups, or business' are invited to respond to this Request for Information to Parks Canada. Information packages should include details, information and requirements as outlined below on how the Park and the private sector can facilitate visitor access that is part of a memorable visitor experience to GBINP.

Considerations

The primary arrival point (i.e. the Park) will be Cedar Spring on the east side of Beausoleil Island. Additional destinations on Beausoleil Island may also be considered. Previous dock configurations at Cedar Spring have accommodated vessels up to 12 meters in length. Information packages from businesses with vessels larger than this size should outline their requirements.

The visitor's entire trip cycle will be an important factor to ensure a quality experience. As such, through this request Parks Canada is seeking to understand how a third party operator can facilitate and compliment the experience provided by Parks Canada in Georgian Bay Islands National Park.

Format for Submission

Respondents are requested to provide a concise Information Package to this Request for Information. Responses are requested in the following format:

- a) Brief company profile, including but not limited to and as applicable:
 - Description of fleet and partner fleets including passenger capacity and vessel length
 - Years of experience in the boating and/or tourism industry
- b) Name of key contact person, including telephone number, and email address

- c) Identification of proposed point of departure, including but not limited to and as applicable:
 - Description of proposed point of departure and amenities
 - Parking capacity
- d) Description of company's ability to provide services related to the entire visitor cycle (planning, travel, arrival, experience and departure) such as but not limited to the following;
 - Reservations (in-person, telephone and on-line)
 - Marketing and promotions
 - Location's ease of access for visitors
 - Washroom availability and accessibility (on board and/or at departure point)
 - Safety of waiting areas, docks, on-board vessel and arrival
 - Length of travel (both time and distance)
 - Estimated number of safe travel days
 - Ability, if any, to provide service to visitors with mobility and accessibility challenges
 - Capability to provide bilingual service through any delivery methods
 - Other complimentary visitor services at the departure point or on-board
- e) Identification of key sustainability factors (e.g. economic, environmental, etc.) and business requirements.
- f) Mechanism of revenue collection and tracking visitation statistics. How can fees be collected and tracked for partial remittance to Parks Canada (this could be Parks Canada fee collection and/or shared percentage of gross revenue).
- g) Other required information specific to the nature of the Request for Information and deemed important by the Respondent.

Parks Canada is interested in any additional comments or advice from respondents on the following:

- a) Projected visitation required to ensure economic viability (including length of season, days of operation, minimum capacity, etc.).
- b) What, if any, support from Parks Canada or a partner organization would be required to sustain such an operation.
- c) Capacity to partner with Indigenous communities.
- d) How much time do you estimate it would take to mobilize operations from contract award date?

- A timeline that details critical milestones required, including type/location of key elements that directly, or indirectly, support this island transportation service.

Information packages should be delivered by regular mail or e-mail to the following location before February 1, 2020 and should quote number PCA-2019-12-GBINP:

Tamie Marshall
Realty Officer
Parks Canada Agency
1869 Upper Water Street
Suite AH201
Halifax, Nova Scotia B2J 1S9
Telephone: (902) 426-8646
Email: pc.realtyservicesontario-servicesimmobiliersontario.pc@canada.ca

APPENDIX “A”

PARKS CANADA AGENCY

Parks Canada is a separate Government of Canada Agency and derives its responsibilities from legislation. Parks Canada’s Chief Executive Officer reports directly to the Minister of the Environment. Parks Canada manages 48 national parks, 167 national historic sites and four national marine conservation areas on behalf of Canadians. Parks Canada is a proud steward of these heritage places and protects and presents them for the benefit and enjoyment of Canadians while ensuring that they remain unimpaired for present and future generations. More than 20 million visitors visit this national network of heritage places each year.

There are three mutually supportive areas within the Parks Canada mandate:

- Protection of heritage resources;
- Facilitation of opportunities for meaningful visitor experiences; and
- Fostering public appreciation and understanding about Canada’s heritage.

In national parks, protection includes all activities related to the protection of cultural and natural resources and natural processes.

Visitor experience is defined as the sum total of a visitor’s personal interaction with protected heritage places, an interaction that awakens the senses, affects the emotions, stimulates the mind, and helps the visitor create a sense of attachment and commitment to these places.

Parks Canada aims to reach Canadians at home, at leisure, at school and in the communities through communication and education opportunities designed to increase awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the significance of Parks Canada’s heritage places and the importance of protecting and presenting them. Parks Canada also strives to engage stakeholders and partners in the protection and presentation of Parks Canada’s administered places.

For more information on Parks Canada visit our website at <http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca>

APPENDIX “B”

GEORGIAN BAY ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/on/georg>

Georgian Bay Islands National Park protects 50 islands and properties within the world’s largest freshwater archipelago, stretching for 50 kilometres along eastern Georgian Bay. Eight-kilometre-long Beausoleil Island is the main island, a 15-minute boat-ride from Honey Harbour, and the hub of visitor activity.

This island park harbours incredible biodiversity. Windswept pines and Precambrian granite of the Canadian Shield transition to forests of sugar maple and smooth-barked beech, punctuated by occasional conifers. Birdlife from raptors to songbirds fly above, small mammals scamper through forest undergrowth and this national park protects a greater variety of reptiles and amphibians than any other in Canada. Cultural roots run deep, reaching back through 5,500 years of human history.

Only an hour and a half drive from Toronto, Georgian Bay Islands National Park welcomes many travellers to its scenic shores. Cyclists tour meandering bike paths and hikers discover secluded lakeside vistas. Romantics escape to rustic cabins at Christian Beach. Families bond and create memories at waterfront Cedar Spring Cabins. And all guests can appreciate the islands’ natural and cultural treasures via easy day-trips. The park offers a variety of accommodations and facilities for day and overnight visitation, including potable water and washrooms located in the Cedar Spring Campground. Access to the park is by boat only.

Over the past few years, there has been significant effort directed towards attracting both day and overnight visitors who do not have a vessel. The combination of newer service offers such as roofed accommodations plus the renewal of the infrastructure in Cedar Spring, has resulted in a steady increase in visitation. This trend is expected to continue.

Annual visitation in recent years has consistently ranged between 40-45,000 park visitors. In 2017, there were over 500 Daytripper trips serving 5,383 passengers between Honey Harbour and Beausoleil Island in the operating period between Victoria Day and Thanksgiving, essentially operating at full capacity. Capacity on the park operated Daytripper service is limited by small vessel size and a limited schedule. The number of passengers served reflects operating capacity, not visitor demand to access the park. Based on the number of reservation inquiries that were declined from our call centre, plus those who arrived in Honey Harbour without a reservation, it is estimated that the park currently accommodates less than 25% of interested day-use visitors, during peak season.



1. View of Cedar Spring Information Building, Beausoleil Island, GBINP



2. View of Christian Beach Cabins, Beausoleil Island, GBINP



