

MICHIGAN EQUESTRIAN TOURISM MARKETING PLAN (DRAFT)

Preface

The Promotion, Marketing and Communications Implementation Committee of the 2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan is pleased to present Michigan's first ever equestrian tourism marketing plan. Michigan is blessed with a wide variety of high quality equestrian tourism resources; the ultimate goal of this plan is to capitalize on those resources to increase and improve equestrian tourism opportunities. We hope that this document and the process via which it was developed will contribute to the continued growth and increasing prominence of equestrian tourism of all forms throughout the state. Moreover, we hope that other niche activities will use this piece and the accompanying planning process template to develop their own marketing documents.

The 2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan Promotion, Marketing and Communications Implementation Committee

Co-Chairs

- Sally Laukitis, Executive Director, Holland Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, and Member, Michigan Travel Commission
- Barry Owens, General Manager, Treetops Resort

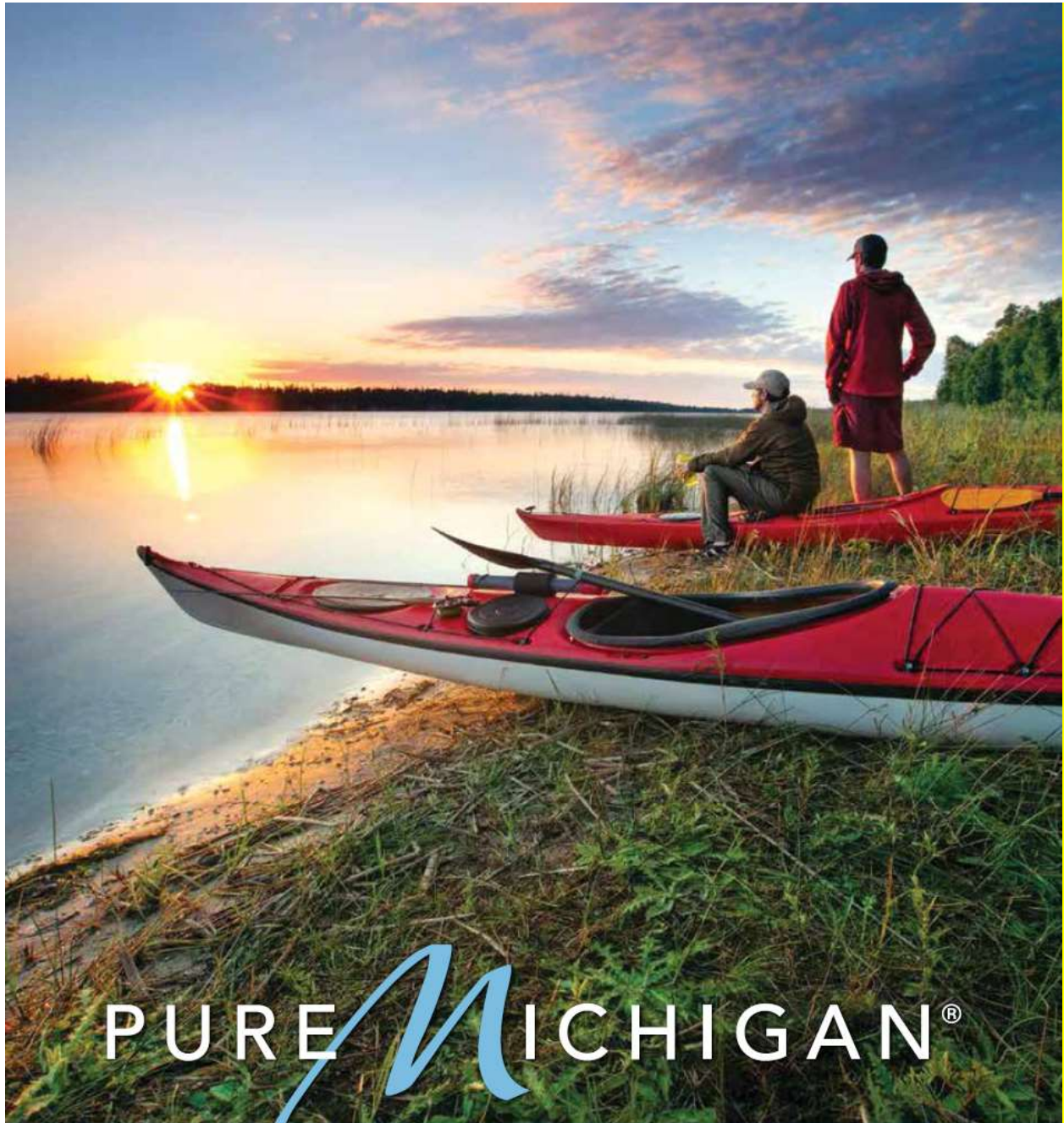
Members

- Roger Curtis, President, Michigan International Speedway, and former Chair, Michigan Travel Commission
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Acknowledgements

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PURE MICHIGAN®

a plan
FOR THE INDUSTRY BY THE INDUSTRY

2012–2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan

Prepared by Dr. Sarah Nicholls, Michigan State University

For more information about the MTSP: <http://tourismplan.anr.msu.edu/>

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Introduction and Rationale

The vision of Michigan's tourism industry – as identified in the 2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan (MTSP) – is that Michigan be recognized as one of America's favorite four seasons travel experiences. To help achieve that vision, the industry has set itself eight goals, each of which is associated with a series of at least two more specific objectives. The goals relate to the eight themes identified as most critical to the industry's continued expansion and enhancement and are as follows:

- **Collaboration, Cooperation and Partnerships:** Foster a culture of public-private collaboration, cooperation, and partnerships – across the state and beyond – to continue to unify the tourism industry and help grow Michigan's economy.
- **Funding:** Secure adequate and stable funding for all strategic plan initiatives.
- **Product Development:** Enhance infrastructure to support the delivery of a world class Pure Michigan travel experience.
- **Promotion, Marketing and Communications:** Strengthen and grow the Pure Michigan brand through effective mediums at the regional, national and international levels to attract first-time and repeat visitors.
- **Public Policy and Government Support:** Empower the industry to encourage policy-makers at all levels to support the travel industry.
- **Research and Technical Assistance:** Establish a central, easily accessible and inclusive information system to capture and share timely, relevant and reliable industry research.
- **Resources and Environment:** Be internationally recognized for our stewardship of – and rich opportunities to experience – our natural, cultural, and heritage resources.
- **Service Excellence:** Foster a culture of service excellence that allows us to deliver on the Pure Michigan promise.

To assist with the implementation of these eight goals, a committee of industry volunteers has been established to address each topic. Within the area of Promotion, Marketing and Communications (PMC), the implementation committee has recognized the potential role of niche activities in the expansion and diversification of visitation and in the strengthening and growth of the Pure Michigan brand. Following the development of a Michigan Bicycle Tourism Marketing Plan in 2015, equestrian tourism was selected as the second niche activity on which the PMC committee would focus.

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Equestrian Tourism Defined

Horse riding and equestrian tourism are multi-faceted activities. Equestrian-related activities offered in Michigan include: 4-H; cavalry re-enactment; dressage; driving/harness; endurance; eventing; general pleasure riding; polo; racing; showing; show jumping; speed events; and, trail riding. These activities may be:

- Competitive or recreational;
- Serious or casual;
- Individual or group;
- Independent or organized;
- Day trips or overnights.

This variety of equestrian activities and rider types presents both challenges and opportunities. The existence of multiple types of horse riding translates into sometimes widely varying preferences, needs and expectations regarding equestrian and supporting horse-related facilities, which complicates the provision of suitable products and services. Conversely, the existence of these multiple rider types offers the potential for Michigan to appeal to a wider variety of visitors by actively marketing to the full spectrum of equestrians. As such, this plan is broad in its attempt to encompass as wide a variety of equestrian tourism opportunities as possible.

There is little academic research available on equestrian tourism and tourists, though there is a body of work pertaining to equestrian use of trails and natural areas, with a focus on environmental impacts and conflict with other users. A listing of known studies is provided in Appendix One. This appendix also contains a list of equestrian tourism reports and websites. Further analysis of Michigan equestrian tourists using valid and reliable survey techniques is desirable in order to better understand, segment and then market to these visitors.

In general, we know that successful equestrian tourism benefits from:

- Locations with diverse landscapes and terrain that can offer a variety of ride types, lengths and difficulty levels, especially when in picturesque (e.g., rural and coastal) settings.
- The existence of a variety of complementary activities, for non-riders in a group as well as riders after their day's riding is completed.
- Understanding and accommodation of horses and their behaviors, especially on roads and trails but also at horse-friendly accommodations, food/beverage outlets and retail stores.

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The 2015 Michigan Equestrian Tourism Forums

A series of three Michigan Equestrian Tourism Forums were held in 2015 (on October 4 in Ishpeming, November 7 in Gaylord, November 12 in Lansing). More than 45 Michigan Travel Commissioners, MTSP implementation committee members, convention and visitor bureau representatives, equestrian event organizers, members of riding clubs and associations, and other interested equestrians attended (see Appendix Two for the full agenda). Participants were introduced to the MTSP and to the PMC goal/objectives, and then engaged in three activities based around the following series of questions/prompts:

Activity One – Assets And Strengths: What are Michigan’s strengths as an equestrian tourism destination? What people/partnerships/places/brands/stores/events, etc. do we have in Michigan that are unique, that no other destination has or can offer, that have been recognized as ‘the best of’ in the region or the country or the world? Why would or should someone choose to come to Michigan to ride?

Activity Two – Who Does It Best? Which cities/states/countries do equestrian tourism best, are equestrian tourism leaders? Which cities/states/countries would we most like to be compared to, or to be considered even better than? What assets do these places have that make them great (people, agencies/organizations, partnerships, plans, etc.)?

Activity Three – How Do We Get There From Here? What do we need to do to improve Michigan’s equestrian tourism offerings? Who should be involved? Who or what is missing? Who could help (who else should have been here today)? What data or research do we need? What opportunities do you see for growth or improvement in Michigan? Who would we need to partner with to achieve this growth?

The full set of responses to each activity is summarized in Appendix Three. The most commonly cited responses are highlighted below:

Activity One – Assets and Strengths: A wide variety of assets and strengths were identified, many of which related to natural characteristics of the state. Items mentioned by more than one-fifth of participants were:

- The Michigan Shore-to-Shore Trail, 43.2%;
- The number and/or diversity of water-based resources across the state, 37.8%;
- The number and/or length of trails in the state, 37.8%;
- The number and/or acreage of national/state lands in the state, 35.1%;
- The number and/or variety of competitions/events across the state, 35.1%;
- The existence of all four seasons, 29.7%;
- Mackinac Island, 27.0%;
- The state’s natural beauty; 24.3%.

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Activity Two – Who Does It Best? By far the most commonly cited response was Kentucky (mentioned by more than 42% of participants for either its website or the Horse Park). The only other place to be mentioned by more than one-fifth of participants was Florida (most commonly the Florida Horse Park in Ocala and/or Wellington).

- Kentucky Department of Travel And Tourism page on Horses – The Unbridled Spirit of Kentucky: http://www.kentuckytourism.com/things_to_do/horses.aspx
- Kentucky Horse Park: <http://kyhorsepark.com/>
- Florida Horse Park: <http://www.flhorsepark.com/>

Activity Three – How Do We Get There From Here? Suggestions focused on both what needs to be accomplished and who should be involved. The three items mentioned by more than one-fifth of participants were as follows:

- Involvement of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, 27.0%;
- A comprehensive equestrian (equestrian trails) website, 21.6%;
- Involvement of the Michigan Horse Council, 21.6%.

Based on all of the input received at the three forums, the PMC committee identified the following two objectives as most critical for the growth and enhancement of equestrian tourism throughout the state:

- i. Partnerships, Strategic Alliances & Educational Initiatives: Identification and development of strategic partnerships and alliances that promote equestrian tourism and can help educate the broader community about equestrian activities and the importance of equestrian tourism;
- ii. Comprehensive Online Portal: Creation of a comprehensive online portal to gather and display content/information about all types and levels of equestrian activities/tourism.

Additional input was then sought which expanded upon this pair of objectives. Specifically, participants were asked: **{this is the part we are doing right now}**

- i. Related to Partnerships, Strategic Alliances and Educational Initiatives: Who will/should do what? Which brands, agencies/associations, stores, tour companies, and events should be targeted? What other types of organization should be targeted? Which destinations would be the best places to start on itineraries?
- ii. Related to a Comprehensive Online Portal: What databases already exist? What fields/categories should be included in/added to the database? Using what terms should consumers be able to search? What sites or apps could we model the portal on? Who could/should host the portal?

The following two sections outline the objectives and associated tactics developed based on all input received.

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Objective One: Partnerships, Strategic Alliances & Educational Initiatives

Objective: Identification and development of strategic partnerships and alliances that promote equestrian tourism and can help educate the broader community about equestrian activities and the importance of equestrian tourism.

Potential Tactics:

Identify 3-5 signature equestrian tourism opportunities (venues or events) in Michigan and work with Travel Michigan to have those highlighted on the equestrian page on michigan.org; develop a compelling narrative for each opportunity and provide high quality user generated imagery (still photos and video) to accompany this text. The current michigan.org page devoted to equestrian includes links to Horse Stables and Riding Trails, Equestrian Trails and Recreation, Trail Camp Maps, and Up North Trails (<http://www.michigan.org/equestrian>); overall, forum attendees agreed that this page is lacking both in depth and breadth of content and in persuasiveness.

- Based on input from the forums, the 3-5 signature opportunities might include: the Michigan Shore-to-Shore Trail, Mackinac Island, the Michigan Horse Council and the Novi Equestrian Expos, the Great Lakes Equestrian Festival (formerly Horseshows by the Bay), and (potentially) Belle Isle.

Identify the following and develop an outline of potential sponsorship and recognition plans for each: Michigan-based equestrian brands, equestrian agencies and associations, equestrian shops, equestrian tour companies, and equestrian events. The sponsorship plan should include multiple levels of recognition along with opportunities and ideas for involvement in equestrian tourism promotion both at the state and the regional level.

- Equestrian brands, e.g., clothing, tack, feed, equipment (**are there any of these that are based in Michigan?**): These organizations could be utilized primarily for sponsorships (cash or in-kind). Outreach should be led by store owners with the largest volumes of sales or those who have long-time relationships with brand sales representatives, with the goal of product or sponsorship dollars to utilize for future promotion.
- Equestrian associations, and agencies/associations that support equestrian activities, e.g., Michigan Horse Council, Travel Michigan, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVBs) and Chambers of Commerce (see Appendix Four for a listing and description of state-level Michigan equestrian associations and see this site for a list of most of Michigan's CVBs: http://visitmichigan.org/member_info.html). These organizations should be utilized primarily for promotional support, though some might also help with cash sponsorships. Outreach should include working with the tourism organizations for

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opportunities that extend promotional efforts, e.g., via printed literature, visitor guides and web sites. Other opportunities could include listings of events, trails, etc.

- Equestrian stores (tack, feed, clothing, etc.) and riding stables, especially those near event venues and along ride routes: These organizations could be utilized for sponsorship (cash or in-kind) and could also be leveraged for promotional assistance at their physical locations.
- Tour companies that offer riding options, e.g.,: **are there any of these in Michigan?** These organizations would primarily be utilized for promotional support through the leveraging of their current databases and promotional reach.
- Equestrian events including shows, rides, county fairs, etc. (see Appendix Five for a small sample of Michigan equestrian events and venues, the Michigan Horse Council maintains a calendar of equine events, shows and tack sales at <http://www.michiganhorsecouncil.com/apps/calendar/>): These events would be primarily utilized for promotional support through leveraging of their current databases and promotional reach.

Identify the communities that are currently the most supportive of and prepared for equestrian tourism activities.

- Work with these communities' CVBs and equestrian organizations/groups to develop a best practices document/how-to guide that summarizes the partnerships that are in place and describes how any planning and/or management issues have been overcome, e.g., Traverse Tourism and the Great Lakes Equestrian Festival, Discover Kalamazoo and the Richland Park Horse Trials.
- Work with these communities' CVBs and equestrian companies/groups to develop a series of sample itineraries that integrate equestrian activities with other area highlights such as local wineries, breweries and complementary outdoor activities such as hiking, biking and fishing. Host familiarization tours for media and other relevant groups to promote these itineraries. Identify and recruit any local notables who ride/have horses to assist with this promotion.

Work with equestrian tour operators such as EquiTours (<http://www.equitours.com/>) to develop tour options in Michigan. EquiTours currently offers US options in Arizona, Florida, Massachusetts, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Vermont and Wyoming – why not Michigan?

Develop a presentation that summarises this document and other relevant publications (see Appendix One for a list of equestrian tourism resources). Other topics could include: (i) how to identify equestrian tourism assets; (ii) equestrian tourists – their characteristics, needs/preferences and segmentation; and (iii) how to communicate with equestrians. Share with state and regional equestrian associations and groups and encourage them to

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present this to their local CVB or Chamber of Commerce, with the ultimate goal of establishing an equestrian tourism advocacy/advisory group/team in each area. This group should include CVB and local government representation (e.g., planning, transportation, parks/trails) in addition to equestrian-related entities.

Encourage communities along equestrian-friendly sections of the Iron Belle Trail to fully embrace and integrate horses and equestrian tourists.

Develop a series of YouTube videos to inform riders of opportunities in specific areas of the state and to highlight (inter)nationally acclaimed opportunities. Partner with area CVBs, national brands, local colleges and universities with parks/recreation/tourism and media/video classes/programs, etc. For a mountain biking example see Trek and Andrew Shandro at the new Silver Level International Mountain Bicycling Association Ride Center ® in Copper Harbor, Michigan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rN9btRzqsvA> and Cold Rolled: Marquette Michigan's Snow Bike Route ('an action documentary from Clear & Cold Cinema, Salsa Cycles and TravelMarquetteMichigan.com that explores the history and progression of winter cycling culture in the adventure-loving Lake Superior harbor town of Marquette, Michigan'): <http://vimeo.com/80375092>

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Objective Two: Comprehensive Online Portal

Objective: Creation of a comprehensive online portal to gather and display content/information about all types and levels of equestrian tourism activities and opportunities.

Potential Tactics:

Create or find a partner to host a central depository for all equestrian tourism-related content:

- Travel Michigan is in the process of redeveloping its website (with a greater focus on activities) and the opportunity exists to place considerably more, higher quality and better organized equestrian content on the new site. In the meantime, continue to exploit the many cost-free opportunities to partner with Travel Michigan, e.g., by posting events, trails, tours and shops on michigan.org (there is no cost associated with these postings). To add your property/site, event or deal/package to michigan.org:
 - Add your property/site (includes stores and attractions as well as lodging): <http://www.michigan.org/add-property/>
 - Add your event: <http://www.michigan.org/add-event/>
 - Add your package/deal: <http://www.michigan.org/add-deal/>

Also continue to encourage individual events, stores, etc. and associations/groups to maximize their online/social media presence (via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.). Learn more about social media strategies and keep up-to-date with current trends via Travel Michigan's Social Media Learning Library: <http://www.michigan.org/industry/social-media-learning-library/>

- Or, encourage one or a consortium of equestrian-related entities (e.g., Michigan Horse Council, Michigan Trail Riders Association) to (co)develop and (co)host a stand-alone portal. In either case, start by determining which organization possesses the most complete database – or compile one new database from multiple existing ones.
- In either case, incorporate an online directory that would be searchable by riding type – shows, trail riding, polo, riding lessons, etc. Include the ability for consumers to search by level of expertise – novice, proficient, expert, etc.
- Identify other useful criteria via which to allow search, e.g., for trail riding, locations of trail heads and other entry/exit points, locations of parking areas, amenities on/near trail, distance/time of ride, themes or nearby/complementary activities (breweries, wineries, etc.).

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- Periodically develop and post additional content (with text, imagery and video) and share this content widely via social media channels. These more general interest stories would generate wider interest and reach, while simultaneously building the credibility of the equine industry, and its commitment to creating memorable experiences for visitors, throughout the state. E.g., “best of” lists like the “Top 5 Places to Ride Your Horse in Michigan” or “Top 5 Places to Travel with Your Horse in Michigan” and special features on historical and/or current special or unique Michigan-based horse-related experiences, e.g.,
 - The transportation of horses to/from Mackinac Island;
 - The history of the stables at Belle Isle;
 - The Detroit (and other city) Mounted Police;
 - The value of equine-assisted therapy;
 - The equestrian facilities and associated events at Michigan State University (Hose Teaching and Research Center, McPhail Equine Performance Center);
 - The Held Equestrian Center at Albion College and how students are able to bring their horses to school with them.

Ensure that up-to-date content is consistently supplied to local/regional promotional entities as well as the central outlet/portal referenced above. For event organizers, be sure to always send information about upcoming events to the appropriate CVB(s) and to Travel Michigan (via link listed above). Note that all events hosted on state land can be included in the MDNR Calendar, and all of these events are automatically sent to the michigan.org calendar too.

Work with CVBs to develop a series of sample itineraries catering to a variety of rider types (by age, group size, ability, length of stay, etc.). As an example (not horse related), Muskegon County CVB maintains a ‘Biking & Hiking in Muskegon County’ page (<http://www.visitmuskegon.org/biking-and-hiking>) that includes information about the Lakeshore, Musketawa and Hart-Montague Trails as well as a link to a ‘Biking and Breweries’ itinerary that highlights attractions and breweries along the Lakeshore Trail: http://www.visitmuskegon.org/files/s5MMg3K1NjgFaMj4/d5M6ElbPjfl6yvdp/CVB_bikes_NBrewsItinerary2014.pdf

For trail riding:

- Make use of/consider how to integrate/partner with existing resources such as National Geographic’s All Trails project <http://alltrails.com/>
- Map and GoPro trails and rides by region and post these online. Identify other critical activities/services to be identified in database/on map, e.g., lodging options (by type and cost), tack shops, etc.

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Appendix One. Horse Tourism Resources

Links to free copies are provided whenever possible. If you are unable to access an item, please contact Sarah Nicholls at nicho210@msu.edu and she can email a PDF.

(i) Reports and Factsheets

- Agricultural Marketing Resource Center. (2011). Equine agritourism. Available at http://www.agmrc.org/commodities_products/agritourism/equine-agritourism/
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Strategy for the Equine Industry in Northern Ireland 2007. Web document. Available at: http://www.equinecouncilni.com/file/JZZe9SWu7W_121754.pdf

Torkkola, J. (2013). Seeing the world from horseback: an overview of Hungarian and Finnish equestrian tourism with special focus on Akác-tanya Farm. Saarbrücken, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing. Available at <https://www.lap-publishing.com/catalog/details//store/ru/book/978-3-659-25454-3/seeing-the-world-from-horseback>

(ii) Books and Journal Articles

Abbott, E., Newsome, D., & Palmer, S. (2010). *A Case Study Analysis of Horse Riding and its Management in a Peri-Urban Setting*. Gold Coast: CRC for Sustainable Tourism.

Bailey, A., Williams, N., Palmer, M., & Geering, R. (2000). The farmer as service provider: the demand for agricultural commodities and equine services, *Agricultural Systems*, 66 (3), 191-204.

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Equestrian Travel Association: <http://www.equestriantravel.org/>

The Equestrian Travel Association is the global network of professionals and travelers uniting and supporting horseback riding and equestrian travel destinations worldwide, through education, networking, industry news, research, professional support, development, cost-saving resources, events and promotions. Equestrian travel destinations including dude ranches, guest ranches, working ranches, cattle drives and equestrian related resorts, tour operators, training centers and commercial stables.

International Federation of Equestrian Tourism: <http://en.fite-net.org/>

Equestrian Tourism is now an economic reality and one of the surest ways of developing riding. Equestrian tourism has appeal. People like its values: focused on human relationships, leisure time and the environment. It brings a breath of new life to the rural world, enabling it to diversify and open up onto new perspectives.

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Appendix Two. Michigan Horse Tourism Forum Agenda

2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan Michigan Equestrian Tourism Forum

Red Rock Lanes & Banquet Center, Ishpeming, 1-4pm, October 4, 2015

Treetops Resort, Gaylord, 1-5pm, November 7, 2015

Constitution Hall, Lansing, 9:30am-1:30pm, November 12, 2015

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions – All
2. Why We Are Here – Sarah Nicholls
 - i. Overview of the 2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan
 - ii. Overview of the Promotion, Marketing & Communications Goal/Objectives
 - iii. Overview of the Michigan Bicycle Tourism Marketing Plan
3. Equestrian Tourism in Michigan – Assets / Strengths – Activity – All
4. Equestrian Tourism beyond Michigan – Who / Where Does it Best? – Activity – All
5. Growing / Improving Equestrian Tourism in Michigan – Activity – All
6. Next Steps – Sarah Nicholls

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Appendix Three. Input from Michigan Equestrian Tourism Forums

Activity 1 – Michigan’s Assets and Strengths (n = 37)

What are Michigan’s strengths as an equestrian tourism destination? What people/ partnerships/places/brands/stores/events, etc. do we have in Michigan that are unique, that no other destination has or can offer, that have been recognized as ‘the best of’ in the region or the country or the world? Why would or should someone choose to come to Michigan to ride?

Only items receiving at least two mentions are reported.

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Michigan Shore-to-Shore Trail	16	43.2%
Number/diversity of water-based resources – general mention	14	37.8%
Number/length of trails	14	37.8%
Number/acreage of national/state lands – general mention	13	35.1%
Number/variety of competitions/events	13	35.1%
Existence of all four seasons	11	29.7%
Mackinac Island	10	27.0%
Natural beauty	9	24.3%
Diversity of terrain	7	18.9%
Number of equestrian campgrounds	7	18.9%
Fall colours/related fall activities	6	16.2%
Location on Great Lakes	6	16.2%
Michigan Horse Council Expo	6	16.2%
Horseshows by the Bay, Traverse City	5	13.5%
Number/diversity of places to visit/things to see/do besides riding	5	13.5%
Number/diversity/quality of land-based natural resources	5	13.5%
Number/strength of equestrian clubs/groups	5	13.5%
Friendly/service-oriented people	4	10.8%
Lack of bugs, snakes, etc.	4	10.8%
Moderate summer temperatures	4	10.8%
MSU vet school/hospital	4	10.8%
Number/diversity of equestrian disciplines offered	4	10.8%
Number/diversity of supporting services (feed, hay, tack stores)	4	10.8%
Opportunities for rural/rustic/wilderness experience	4	10.8%

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Activity 1 – Michigan’s Assets and Strengths (n = 37), ctd.

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Upper Peninsula	4	10.8%
Belle Isle	3	8.1%
County fairs	3	8.1%
Novi Equestrian Expo	3	8.1%
Number/acreage of national/state forests	3	8.1%
Number/diversity of types/levels of trail riding	3	8.1%
Number/strength of equestrian programs at universities/colleges	3	8.1%
Breweries	2	5.4%
Mandatory EIA testing requirements	2	5.4%
Historic sites	2	5.4%
Low cost	2	5.4%
Metamora Hunt Club	2	5.4%
Michigan Great Lakes International Draft Horse Show and Pull	2	5.4%
MSU Agriculture and Livestock Education Pavilion	2	5.4%
Public funding for parks/trails/recreation	2	5.4%
Pure Michigan campaign	2	5.4%
Quiet/solitude	2	5.4%
Trail Towns initiative	2	5.4%
Wildlife viewing opportunities	2	5.4%
Wineries	2	5.4%

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Activity 2 – Who Does it Best? (countries, states, cities and events) (n = 33)

Which cities/states/countries do equestrian tourism best, are equestrian tourism leaders? Which cities/states/countries would we most like to be compared to, or to be considered even better than? What assets do these places have that make them great (people, agencies/organizations, partnerships, plans, etc.)?

Only items receiving at least two mentions are reported.

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Kentucky – website, Horse Park	14	42.4%
Florida – Florida Horse Park, Ocala; Wellington	7	21.2%
California – Tevis Cup	6	18.2%
Ireland	6	18.2%
Tennessee	6	18.2%
Ohio – show grounds, All American Quarter Horse Congress	5	15.2%
Virginia – website, Lexington Horse Center	5	15.2%
Western states – general mention	5	15.2%
Arizona - Arabian Show, Scottsdale	4	12.1%
Wisconsin – website, Midwest Horse Fair, State Horse Council	4	12.1%
Wyoming – website, Custer State Park	4	12.1%
Indiana – Brown County State Park	3	9.1%
France	2	6.1%
Germany – CHIO Aachen	2	6.1%
Iceland	2	6.1%
Illinois	2	6.1%
Montana	2	6.1%
South America	2	6.1%
Vienna – Spanish Riding School	2	6.1%

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Activity 3 – How Do We Get There From Here? Who and What is Needed? (n = 37)

What do we need to do to improve Michigan’s equestrian tourism offerings? Who should be involved? Who or what is missing? Who could help (who else should have been here today)? What data or research do we need? What opportunities do you see for growth or improvement in Michigan? Who would we need to partner with to achieve this growth? Only items receiving at least two mentions are reported.

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Involvement of Michigan Department of Natural Resources	10	27.0%
Comprehensive equestrian (equestrian trails) website	8	21.6%
Involvement of Michigan Horse Council	8	21.6%
Better campgrounds (with more facilities)	7	18.9%
Comprehensive listing of all equestrian-friendly lodging	5	13.5%
More advertising/marketing/promotion – michigan.org, horse magazines	5	13.5%
Involvement of USFS	4	10.8%
More private equestrian lodging facilities	4	10.8%
More trails	4	10.8%
Research – economic impact of equestrians	4	10.8%
Research – survey of equestrian tourists (in + out-of-state)	4	10.8%
Develop (themed) equestrian tours	3	8.1%
Horses in photos/videos on michigan.org and local/regional tourism websites	3	8.1%
Improved relationships/more partnerships with other trails user types	3	8.1%
Involvement of/partnerships with CVBs and CoCs	3	8.1%
A Pure Michigan ad focused on horses/riding	2	5.4%
Education of/partnerships with support services, e.g., fuel	2	5.4%
Funding	2	5.4%
Horse-specific version of Pure Michigan brand/logo	2	5.4%
Incorporate all-things-equestrian into Trail Town initiatives	2	5.4%
Involvement of local and state government officials	2	5.4%
Involvement of/partnerships with private land owners	2	5.4%
More campgrounds	2	5.4%
More private involvement in equestrian facilities	2	5.4%
More Shore-to-Shore trails	2	5.4%
Partnerships with/co-use of snowmobile trails and associated facilities (lodging, eating places, etc.)	2	5.4%
Research – equestrian market (who rides?)	2	5.4%
Review of liability laws relating to equestrian enterprises	2	5.4%

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Appendix Four. Statewide Equestrian and Equestrian-Related Groups in Michigan

American Saddlebred Horse Association on Michigan: <http://www.asham.org>

The purposes of the Association are to promote interest in the American Saddlebred Horse in the state of Michigan and elsewhere through education of the virtues of this breed of horse; to improve the quality of the breed; to support promotion of exhibitions and shows; to encourage and assist owners of the breed in the care and training thereof; to stimulate, promote and encourage the interest of young people in the breed; to cooperate with other organizations and individuals to promote and improve general equestrian activities; to disseminate relevant information; and to encourage the sociability, cooperation, enjoyment and good sportsmanship among members of the Association and others.

Back Country Horsemen: <http://www.bchmi.org/whoweare.htm>

We are a grass-roots non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting horseback riding and the use of pack animals on Michigan's public lands. We support and promote multi-user trails throughout the state.

Great Lakes Amateur Driving Association: no website located

Great Lakes Distance Riding Association: <http://www.gldrami.org>

The Great Lakes Distance Riding Association (GLDRA) is dedicated to the education and promotion of equestrian competitive distance riding event participation throughout the state of Michigan. The Competitive Trail (CTR), Limited Distance (LD) and Endurance distance rides in Michigan are sanctioned by the Upper Midwest Endurance and Competitive Ride Association (UMECRA). Our Endurance and Limited Distance rides are also sanctioned by American Endurance Ride Conference (AERC).

Great Lakes Quarter Horse Association: <http://www.glqha.com>

The purpose of the Great Lakes Quarter Horse Association, Inc. is to promote and encourage interest and participation in Quarter Horses within the State of Michigan.

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Great Lakes Region Pony Club: <http://greatlakesregionpc-archive.weebly.com/about-us.html>

The Great Lakes Region Pony Club encompasses 17 clubs in the lower peninsula of Michigan, northern Indiana and northern Ohio areas with more than 150 active Pony Club members.

U.S. Pony Clubs started in 1954 to teach the English style of riding and the proper care of horses. It is an offshoot of the British Pony Club, which was created in 1929 as a junior branch of the Institute of the Horse. Since then, Pony Club has expanded to many countries around the world. The main purpose is to promote sportsmanship, stewardship and leadership through horsemanship.

Hunter Jumper Association of Michigan: <http://hjam.net>

The Hunter-Jumper Association of Michigan is organized for the purpose of stimulating the sport of riding and showing in the Hunter and Jumper divisions, to service, promote and protect the interests of the Association and the exhibitors, to insure uniform and consistent standards for all Association shows; to encourage the development of exhibitors of all ages by making objective and fair rules for governing competition and to insure impartial and competent judging for all shows; and, to serve and promote the best interests of the USEF and to support and enforce the rules of the United States Equestrian Federation under which all competitions shall be held.

Michigan Appaloosa Horse Association: <http://www.michappclub.com/>

The purpose of this Association shall be:

- A) To cooperate and aid, in every way possible, the programs and functions of the Appaloosa Horse Club, Incorporated;
- B) To promote the interest and improvement in the breed in the State of Michigan;
- C) To approve year-end awards and to regulate all Michigan Appaloosa shows and events;
- D) To provide the support necessary to the youth members of the Association so as to make them better able to handle the responsibilities of adulthood.

Michigan Competitive Mounted Orienteering: <http://www.micmo.org>

MiCMO has had a presence in Michigan for over 20 years.

Do you like to trail ride, but need a challenge or purpose? Are you looking for an inexpensive equine sport? Hoping to network with new friends, find old friends or just finally enjoy your horse? Tired of the politics involved in other equine sports? Looking for a diversified training program for your horse?

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Then CMO may just be for you! To compete in a CMO you need nothing other than you and your horse. No special tack or clothing required, other than a compass, but if you don't have one, we can loan you one!

Michigan Equine Partnership: <http://www.miequine.com>

Through an energized, broad based, grassroots coalition representing all facets of the equine industry, The Michigan Equine Partnership (MEP) is committed to increasing the public awareness and support, influencing public policy to strengthen the industry, and heightening recognition of the economic opportunities and value of the Michigan equine industry.

Michigan Fox Trotter Association: <http://www.michfoxtrotters.com>

Mission Statement: To educate those interested in Missouri Fox Trotter horses as well as to promote the breeding, training and enjoyment of them in Michigan.

Michigan Harness Horsemen's Association: <http://www.mhha.com>

The Michigan Harness Horsemen's Association was founded in 1947 to serve the collective needs of the state's Standardbred horse owners, breeders, trainers and drivers. The purposes of the MHHA are: To protect the financial interests of owners, trainers, drivers, breeders and caretakers of Standardbred horses in Michigan. To supply horses to Michigan parimutuel racetracks, monitor and improve physical conditions and controls for individuals and horses participating at licensed race meetings and to assist race meeting licensees in conducting their racing programs. To encourage and promote the racing training and breeding of Standardbred horses and to administer futurities and stake events in Michigan. The MHHA negotiates horsemen's contracts with pari-mutuel racetracks, functions as a liaison between the horsemen and Michigan county fairs, and represents the interests of all harness horsemen in state administrative, budgetary and legislative matters of concern to the horse racing industry.

Michigan Horse Show Association: <http://michiganhorseshow.com>

The purposes of this Association are to promote and encourage horse shows and to stimulate and reward fair competition among members in raising, training and exhibiting horses and in perfecting horsemanship.

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Michigan Horse Council: <http://www.michiganhorsecouncil.com/>

The mission of the Michigan Horse Council is to:

A) Provide individuals and organizations with a central authority that will support, encourage, supplement, and coordinate the efforts of those presently engaged in the constructive conservation, development, and promotion of the horse industry and horse community in the state of Michigan.

B) Educate and Inform individuals and organizations through all available media, educational programs, and cooperation.

C) Advocate the conservation and promotion of the horse industry and community.

Michigan Horse Directory: <http://michigan-horse.com>

A website dedicated to the businesses and individuals serving the Michigan Horse Community.

Michigan Horse Drawn Vehicle Association: <http://www.mhdva.org>

The by-laws for MHDVA states, in part, that it shall be the purpose of the association to aim for the preservation and maintenance of carriages; carriage literature and related items; the exchange of information regarding horse-drawn vehicles and the development of the driving horse; to serve as an accurate and technical source of information for the benefit of it's members and the general public; to encourage the use of carriages and other animal-drawn vehicles for the promotion of public interest in their contributions to our cultural, social and economic history; and promote knowledge of, and safety in, horse related activities.

Michigan Justin Morgan Horse Association: no website located

Michigan National Barrel Horse Association: <http://www.michigannbha.com>

Michigan Paint Horse Club: <http://www.miphc.com>

This club was founded in 1967 by a group of people who loved Paint Horses. This enthusiasm for the breed lives on today in the Michigan Paint Horse Club. Celebrating over 40 years of adding color to the horse world!!!

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Michigan Pony of the Americas Club: <http://www.mipoa.com>

Would you like to own a POA? Do You Want to Show And Have Fun With Your POA? Join the Michigan State Pony Of The Americas Club!

Family Orientated, Fun, Friendships that last a life time. We offer many shows, variety of classes, NEW Age Division, Novice Youth Classes and 19 and over age group. Offering great week-end High Point Awards and Year-End High Point Awards.

Michigan Quarter Horse Association: <http://www.miquarterhorse.com>

The Michigan Quarter Horse Association is an enthusiastic group of individuals who breed, raise, train, show or just plain love the American Quarter Horse. MQHA offers those who wish to compete nearly 40 AQHA/MQHA approved shows, including an All-Novice Show/Open Show to introduce less seasoned competitors to national competition. Shows offer not only halter, showmanship, western and hunt seat classes, but trail, western riding, roping, reining, barrels and poles, over fences and many other specialty competitions.

In addition, MQHA hosts a yearly trail ride for those who choose to enjoy their horses on a more recreational level. MQHA is committed to educating its membership. Clinics are offered at many shows by AQHA professional horsemen and horsewomen.

Michigan Ropers Association: <http://www.michiganropersassociation.com>

Michigan Ropers Association Inc. was founded in 1949 with the purpose of preserving the art and skill of handling stock by means of a lariat or rope while on horseback. It is our aim to advance the sport to a well-organized and equally well-conducted contest that is family-oriented, and that everyone can enjoy. The MRA would like to grow the sport of roping, and to ensure that every contestant desiring to learn to rope, or to rope in a contest, has the best opportunity for success, and a fair and equal chance.

Michigan Trail Riders Association: <http://www.mtra.org>

The Michigan Trail Riders Association is a non-profit Michigan corporation organized for the purpose of promoting the use and development of horseback and hiking trails in Michigan and encouraging outdoor education in Michigan's natural resources and the many fields of nature study.

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Michigan Trails Advisory Committee (MTAC) Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS): http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-65134_65143_65335_65421---,00.html

The purpose of the Michigan Trails Advisory Council (MTAC) is to advise the Director of the DNR and the Governor on the creation, development, operation, and maintenance of motorized and nonmotorized trails in the state, including, but not limited to, snowmobile, biking, equestrian, hiking, off-road vehicle, and skiing trails. The Equine Trails Subcommittee was created as a subcommittee of MTAC.

Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance: <http://www.michigantrails.org/>

Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance is a non-profit organization that shall foster and facilitate the creation of an interconnected statewide system of trails and greenways for recreation, health, transportation, economic development and environmental/cultural preservation purposes.

Ranch Horse Association of Michigan: <http://www.miranchhorse.com>

RHAM is where real people and real horses come together to have some real fun! No matter what your western riding discipline is reining, cutting, conformation, roping, sorting, sliding, or spinning...we have fun classes to offer you. Come check out our welcoming show atmosphere, where competitors laugh and help each other and the key is to have fun.

The Arabian Horse Association of Michigan: <http://www.miarabhorse.com>

The Arabian Horse Association of Michigan (AHAM) is a statewide organization dedicated to encouraging good relations among our members and to aiding and encouraging the breeding, exhibiting, use and perpetuation of the Arabian Horse. We offer our members two Class A shows, a High Point Program, a monthly publication and various seminars and meetings for their information and enjoyment. We welcome your membership!!

The Eventing Association of Michigan: <http://www.eventingmichigan.org>

The Eventing Association of Michigan (TEAM) is a registered not-for-profit organization created to promote the sport of eventing in our state. TEAM evolved from the Michigan Combined Training Association (MCTA), which was formed in the late 1970's by Bob Hutton to promote the sport among Michigan equestrians.

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Upper Midwest Endurance and Competitive Rides Association: <http://www.umecra.com>

The Upper Midwest Endurance and Competitive Rides Association was formed with the goal of promoting the sport of endurance and competitive riding and good horsemanship under the direction of qualified veterinarians. Furthermore, it was founded by a group of ride managers to standardize a set of rules for the various rides to reduce variation in the way rides were managed, to coordinate ride dates, to tally points, and to present year-end awards at an annual banquet. We host rides throughout the states of Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Walking Horse Association of Michigan: <https://walkinghorsemi.wordpress.com>

The Walking Horse Association of Michigan is dedicated to encourage and promote the riding, exhibiting, breeding and pride in ownership of our breed.

Sound and Natural: It's not only our mission – It's our tradition.

The Walking Horse, the sole possessor of a uniquely inherited gait, exemplifies gentleness and versatility and excels as a family horse in the show ring and on the trails. For over a century, this horse has been walking naturally proud through American history.

The Walking Horse Association of Michigan has been in existence since 1954. The original premise was to bring the Tennessee Walking Horse breed to Michigan and provide people with a wonderful gaited breed. What started as a small group of people who only wanted to show the Tennessee Walking Horse has now evolved into a passionate group of owners, riders, breeders and trainers who stand behind the belief of sound, natural walking horses.

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Appendix Five. Major Michigan Horse Events and Venues

Great Lakes Equestrian Festival: <http://greatlakesequesrianfestival.com>

The Great Lakes Equestrian Festival is held annually in July and August at the Flintfields Horse Park in Williamsburg, MI located just outside Traverse City.

The Festival is produced by Traverse City Horse Shows, LLC, a full-service horse show management company. These nationally rated hunter/jumper competitions feature weekly classes and Classics for children, juniors, adult and amateur-owner riders. Also during the week the festival has classes for young horses, professional hunter derby, open jumper classes and the premier Grand Prix held each Sunday during July and August.

Michigan Shore-to-Shore Trail: <http://www.us23heritageroute.org/greenway.asp?ait=cv&cid=42>

The Michigan Shore-to-Shore Trail is an over 220-mile long trail that runs between Empire on Lake Michigan and Oscoda on Lake Huron. It is open to horseback riders and hikers but not bicycles.

Richland Park Horse Trials: <http://richlandpark.com/>

Photo Credits: