

The Future Of The Coast Of Bays As I See It

by: Matthew Jensen

What is the Coast of Bays? The Coast of Bays is the communities that are found in the Bay D'Espoir region and on the Connaigre Peninsula of the south coast of Newfoundland. In recent years, this area of the province has not been the most economically secure, and people have had to move away in order to find work, but I believe that the future for the Coast of Bays is looking very bright. This is because the people here on the south coast are hard working and industrious people, and more jobs are being created, which will help keep our people here, instead of on the mainland.

In this essay I will explain why I believe the future is looking so promising, and the sectors of the economy which are on the rise - tourism, aquaculture, and the fishery.

While on vacation, people either want to experience as much as possible, or sit back and take it easy. Here in the Coast of Bays region, both options are available. We have serene, peaceful communities and we also have many activities in which people can participate. There are many lakes, ponds, bays and coves which are ideal locations for aquatic activities, such as sailing, scuba diving, swimming, canoeing, and sea kayaking, just to name a few. Another activity which I think would be a big tourist attraction is boat tours, where people could look at our beautiful scenery and famous fiords. There are several hiking trails in the area for people to walk on and enjoy the beautiful scenery and look at the local wildlife, which includes bears, moose, caribou, rabbits, ducks, and others. For the sportsman, the forest along the Bay D'Espoir highway is an excellent hunting ground for moose and caribou. Also, there are many licensed rivers and brooks where people can try their luck at hooking an Atlantic salmon or a trout. There are also several fish-out ponds in the area.

Many people visit the Coast of Bays region to find out about the rich history here. A popular story here in Harbour Breton is the Mildred Baxter/ Paul Langstone story. As a result of our history,

the cultural industries in the area do very good business. For instance, when the Icelandingur, the Viking ship was here during the summer, Cathelia Crafts, our local craft store, did a lot of business with tourists who wanted a souvenir of their visit.

Another factor that attracts people to the Coast of Bays region, not only to visit, but to live, is the fact that the quality of community living is very good. We have small towns where everyone knows everybody else, which makes the communities close-knit and friendly. Most people have strong social and family values, and are always ready to lend a hand. There are also many services in the area, such as a modern hospital, transportation services, quality education facilities, among others. These services can be a major determining factor for people trying to decide whether or not to move here. Another factor is the low crime rate, which makes people feel safe, we have air which is virtually pollution-free, and the cost of living is low. Taking all these things into consideration, why wouldn't people want to live here?

Another industry here in the Coast of Bays region which has really taken off in the last couple of years and has been a real shot in the arm for our economy is aquaculture, which includes mussel farming and fish farms. Right now it is a multi-million dollar industry in our area.

One reason why mussel farming has really taken off in the past few years is that people in the area have realized the potential for it and that there is demand for this product all over the world. The Coast of Bays area is a perfect site for mussel farming, because our marine environment has a warm water temperature, which is perfect for mussels and other species of shellfish, such as scallops. Also, along with mussel farming, there are several support industries such as diving, composting, feed production, and processing. As a matter of fact, a new mussel plant will soon open here in Harbour Breton, which will create several new jobs over the next few years.

In the Coast of Bays area, we have the largest commercial salmonid hatchery in the province, which involves fish such as Steelhead trout and Atlantic salmon. Another aquacultural industry that is being considered and is thought to have great potential is cod ranching, which is the process of catching cod, keeping them in cages, and letting them get bigger in order to increase their value. It is being tried in other parts of the province with success, so there is no reason why it shouldn't work out in our region. Another thing working in our favour is that we are right on the Eastern Seaboard, so we have easy access to markets in other countries.

The industry which is the basis of existence for many communities not just in the Coast of Bays region, but all over Newfoundland is the fishery. Fishing has been our main industry ever since John Cabot came here over 500 years ago. Several years ago, however, the communities in this area took a big blow with the closure of the cod fishery. This put a lot of fishermen out of work, and either forced them to learn a new trade or move away to the mainland to find work. However, in recent years, the number of cod has been on the rise, and there is more work available for fishermen and plant workers. During this time, however, we learned the importance of diversification. While the cod supplies were low, fishermen had to catch other types of fish, such as groundfish, crab, shrimp, and redfish. Also, in order to let the cod stocks replenish, we need to continue to find alternatives to cod fishing, so that the fishery will still be open for generations to come.

In conclusion, the aforementioned reasons, as well as some others, are reasons why I am so optimistic about the future of the Coast of Bays. We have the potential to do so much, and with the hardworking people in the area, we have the ability to achieve all our goals for the Coast of Bays region.