

Eco-Tour book ... yeah, there will be an app for that

Sarah Burns
reporter@hintonvoice.ca

The Foothills Research Institute's (FRI) flagship publication, the Northern Rockies Eco-Tour book, is going digital and will soon be available on an iPad near you.

The Trans Canada Ecotour Northern Rockies Highway Guide – compiled from reports and information gathered over nearly two decades of research – is

currently a 300-page highway-based travel guide that covers an area from Hinton to Valemount, Grande Cache to Cadomin and Jasper to Lake Louise. Written by a handful of local authors, including Bob Udell, it will be available as a free application on Apple devices in spring 2013.

"This is a new experience for me," said Udell. "I think it will expose a lot more people to the eco tour than by just selling the book."

The self-guided ecotour starts

3.5kms east of the eastern foothills, quite literally on the footsteps of Hinton's Visitor Information Centre, and weaves detailed stories around more than 130 ecopoints of ecological, geographical and historical importance.

Travellers in the area will be able to download the application to their device and enjoy audio clues to the upcoming eco points as they travel the tour.

Imagine driving down the road and as a point of interest comes within range, the application will begin a narrative of the area – perhaps including local artists' contributions in the form of photography, music or writings.

Alberta-based company, Seekers Media, has won the bid for the project and CEO Jim Barr envisions it as being a great economic generator for the area.

"It will take an already wonderful publication and bring it to life in a way that few people can imagine," said Barr.

"The project brings together a whole collection of communities and will hopefully bring to light some of the hidden gems in the area."

Initially, the application will only be available on Apple devices – the iPad and the iPhone – but there is potential for development on other platforms in the future, said Barr.

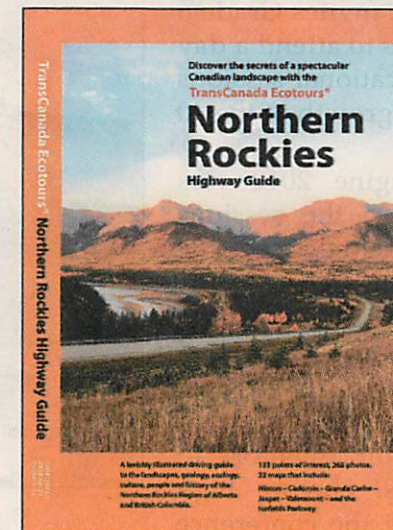
The ecotour guide is part of a bigger collection of ecotours crossing the nation that have been in publication since the mid-1970s.

Canadian Geographic currently features the series on their website. However, all of the publications to date have focused on the region surrounding the Trans Canada highway further to

the south.

The book can be purchased at many locations throughout town, including the information centre and The Hinton Voice.

For more on the book, including an interactive, online map, go to www.ecotourfoothillsri.ca.



A Christmas Dinner
will be served at the
Grace Lutheran Church
December 25 at 12 noon

We do not want anyone to be alone this Christmas.
Please join our family for a little Holiday Cheer.

Contact Lynda Jonson at 780-817-0043
before December 23, 2012.