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**MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
12-03-2024**

DESTINATION NORTHERN ONTARIO ACHIEVES GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

(Sault Ste. Marie, ON) – Destination Northern Ontario is excited to announce that it has achieved Gold Level Sustainable Certification from GreenStep Solutions, following its recent commitment to the Sustainable Tourism Pledge. This pledge demonstrates Destination Northern Ontario's dedication to improving business sustainability performance through 2030.

The certification from [GreenStep](#) was awarded following a rigorous assessment, review, and verification process. The process required Destination Northern Ontario to assess sustainability performance across four categories: environmental, socio-economic, natural and cultural, and management using GreenStep's sustainable certification criteria. The criteria has been formally recognized as meeting the standard for sustainable organizational management by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and is aligned with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The sustainable tourism program is delivered by GreenStep, an award-winning sustainability consulting firm and Certified B Corporation established in 2008. GreenStep has helped thousands of businesses measure and improve their sustainability performance. Their sustainable tourism programs provide assessments, certification and training for tourism businesses, operators, and destinations.

"I'm proud to see that Destination Northern Ontario (RTO13) achieved Gold Level Certification status based on our GSTC-recognized criteria. This is another important contribution to the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario's efforts to ensure that the province is the destination most committed to sustainability in Canada," stated Angela Nagy, President & CEO, GreenStep. "Northern Ontario abounds with natural and cultural beauty, and I'm excited to see that the region is being led by a sustainability focused organization like Destination Northern Ontario."

Destination Northern Ontario is committed to measuring and improving its sustainability performance annually by working on the following initiatives:

- Develop one sustainability strategy and a sustainability product development team to discuss and analyze the available research and the recommendations for sustainable tourism outlined in the Destination Northern Ontario Tourism Product Development Strategy.
- Implement waste reduction and recycling programs across our offices and events and adopting sustainable procurement practices by sourcing environmentally friendly products and services.
- Evaluate the current database of tourism businesses already committed to sustainable practices and incorporating a "sustainability" tag for easy identification.

Working Together To Build A Stronger Tourism Industry



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- Collaborate with the Culinary Tourism Alliance on a three-year partnership to promote sustainable food tourism in Northern Ontario, with continued support for Feast ON Certification
- Support local communities and businesses through partnerships and collaborations.

"We are thrilled to achieve Gold Level Sustainable Certification from GreenStep. This recognition underscores our commitment to sustainable tourism practices and aligns perfectly with our vision for Northern Ontario as a unique and distinctive tourism destination," said David MacLachlan, Executive Director, Destination Northern Ontario. "Destination Northern Ontario is focused on enhancing our sustainability performance, minimizing our negative impacts, and leading by example in our commitment to building a sustainable future for the region."

Destination Northern Ontario is dedicated to prioritizing sustainability in all of its operations and will conduct a self-assessment to identify further opportunities for improvement and development.

"On behalf the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario we would like to congratulate Destination Northern Ontario on achieving the GreenStep Sustainable Tourism organizational gold Certification through the Advancing Sustainable Tourism in Ontario initiative. The unique opportunities and challenges of working across a region with varied geographical and population densities, as well as factors, unique to Northern Ontario made for an expansive and detailed process in ensuring accuracy and true representation of your vast landscape," said Andrew Siegwart, President & CEO, Tourism Industry Association of Ontario. "The collaboration taken through each area to ensure attention to detail showcased the importance of ensuring a sustainable approach to tourism, so it is not surprising that this is the first region in Ontario to achieve gold status. Thank you to our valued partner, Greenstep, for their expertise and guidance throughout this process. As we continue this forward motion of learning, respecting our land and each other - we continue to commit to advocating, sharing, and providing resources to advance sustainable tourism within Ontario."

Together, we can make a positive impact on our environment and communities by actively engaging in sustainable practices and supporting initiatives that foster growth, equity, and well-being for all.

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Destination Northern Ontario

About Destination Northern Ontario (DNO)

Destination Northern Ontario is one of 13 not-for-profit regional tourism organizations funded by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. We are the largest tourism region in geography, the second largest in expenditure and the only region that includes sub-regions.

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Northern Ontario will be a unique and distinctive tourism destination wherein high-quality products and experiences resonate with consumers, entrepreneurship is valued, and tourism provides local, regional and global connections for the entire region. Destination Northern Ontario will take a leadership role to strategically guide and champion growth in Northern Ontario's tourism industry, through strong communication, collaboration and partnerships with industry.

For more information on Destination Northern Ontario, please visit: www.destinationnorthernontario.ca. Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/DestNorthernOnt or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/DestinationNorthernOntario for the most up to date news and information.

About GreenStep

Founded in 2008, GreenStep assists Canadian tourism businesses and destinations through consulting, training and certification based on its Global Sustainable Tourism Council recognized sustainable tourism criteria. GreenStep helps tourism businesses and organizations identify opportunities to increase sustainability while at the same time saving money and improving credibility, helping to meet the growing consumer and stakeholder demand for more responsible tourism practices and experiences. <https://greenstep.ca/>