



destinationnorthernontario.ca

2022-23

Annual Report

Ontario 

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Message from the President

It is my pleasure to present you, the reader, with Destination Northern Ontario's 2022-23 Annual Report.

This document outlines the successes and challenges the organization experienced over the past fiscal year. It also summarizes our work as it relates to our key activities outlined in our Transfer Payment Agreement with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

2022-23 saw the continuation of key programming which supported the industry into recovery including Tourism Skills Net North, Tourism Excellence North, priority product development programs including Experience Fishing and World's Best Snowmobile Destination, and our core sub-regional and pan-northern marketing programs. This year saw the introduction of new programming including our new investment attraction podcast series and the Tourism as a Career awareness campaign.

We strive to stay grounded in our connection to the industry through integral partnerships and investments across the region. By supporting core marketing programs in four sub-regional Destination Marketing Organizations, we were

able to invest in marketing activities in key travel corridors. Partnerships with urban communities are at an all-time high seeing our marketing partnership dollars leveraged by approximately 200%.

The needs of our industry are now more complex than ever. Our post-pandemic realities and shifting consumer expectations demand we look at the tourism ecosystem holistically, taking into consideration all of our mandated pillars including marketing, investment attraction, product development and workforce development. This means investing in meaningful ways across all areas of focus as we continue to align with our provincial partners and their strategic initiatives.

Now is the time for us to think boldly about who, as an industry, we want to be as we continue the road to recovery. Together, we are an economic powerhouse and possess all the resources, talent and potential to emerge bigger and better than we ever have before.



**Yours in tourism,
Marty Kalagian, President**

Destination Northern Ontario Board of Directors & Staff

Destination Northern Ontario is governed by a pan-Northern Ontario Board of Directors who are recognized industry leaders and collectively provide vast knowledge, experience, and insight as they set the strategic directions for the organization.

The Board of Directors regularly consults with and is counselled by an advisory group comprised of key government officials in tourism-related ministries and agencies. The advisory group provides critical support to the Board of Directors in their strategic planning and consultation processes. The advisory group representatives are from the Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Tourism Culture and Sport Industries (MHSTCI), the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation, FedNor, Ontario Parks and Parks Canada while sub-regional Destination Marketing Organizations and industry stakeholders make up the Board.

NAME	POSITION	SECTOR
Marty Kalagian	President	Private Sector – Retired
Gerry Webber	Vice President	Public Service – Retired
Betty McGie	Treasurer	Private Sector
Ray Nadeau	Director	Victoria Inn
George Stivrins	Director	Big Sound Marina
Lori Branch	Director	Seine River Lodge
Tammy Frick	Director	Cinéfest
Guy LaMarche	Director	Public Service
Ian Wood	Director	City of Greater Sudbury - Retired
Shannon McMullan	Director	Private Sector
Heather Gropp	Secretary	Town of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls

Government Advisors

NAME	POSITION	SECTOR
Jim Antler	Advisor	Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Laurie Ypya	Advisor	Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines
Melanie Robert	Advisor	Destination Ontario
Nancy Rosset	Advisor	FedNor Canada
Shannon Lawr	Advisor	Ontario Parks
Chad O'Halloran	Advisor	Parks Canada

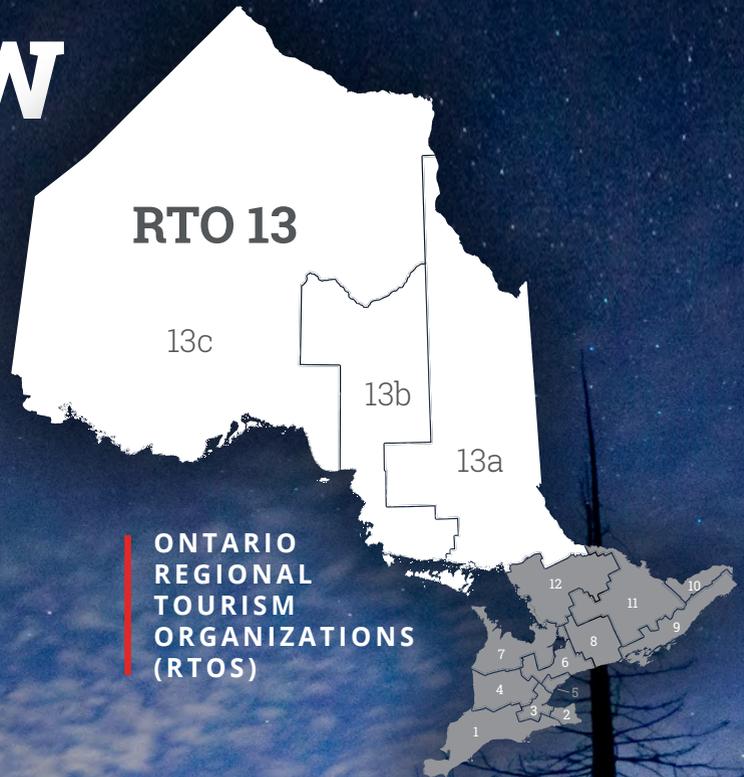
Destination Northern Ontario Staff

NAME	POSITION
David MacLachlan	Executive Director
Stephanie Hopkin	Senior Coordinator, Product Development, Marketing and Communications
Tiina Keranen	Visual Communications Designer
Sara Currier	Coordinator, Industry Communications
Megan Boyd	Product Inventory Intern
Gord Knowles	Senior Coordinator, Investment Attraction
Karen Peacock	Senior Coordinator, Workforce Development and Industry Training
Gillian McCullough	Training Coordinator
Kathy Carlson	Senior Coordinator, Corporate Services
Karen Poirier	Office Administrator

A COMMITMENT TO ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE,
 PROFESSIONALISM AND QUALITY PROGRAM DELIVERY.

Overview

Geographically, Destination Northern Ontario (RTO13) is the largest tourism region in Ontario. The region spans from the French River in the south including Manitoulin Island, the Ottawa River in the east, west to the Manitoba border and north to the saltwater coast. The region is divided into three sub-regions: Northeastern Ontario (13A), Algoma-Sault Ste. Marie (13B) and Northwestern Ontario (13C). Destination Northern Ontario's role in the tourism industry is to strategically guide and champion growth in Northern Ontario through strong communication, collaboration, and partnerships with industry.



**8.2
 MILLION
 VISITS**



**\$1.6
 BILLION
 TOURISM
 RECEIPTS**



**+\$500
 MILLION
 GENERATED
 IN TAX
 REVENUES**

ANNUAL STATISTICS FOR NORTHERN ONTARIO

Organizational Excellence

100% of planned initiatives completed on-time.

Destination Northern Ontario has exercised administrative diligence on both planning and adhering to reporting deadlines with 100% of planned initiatives being completed on-time. Guided by a strategic implementation plan, a dedicated staff person is responsible for each of the four priority pillars with support staff as needed. Partnership projects also align with mandated pillars and each staff person works on partnerships related to their portfolio.



Destination Northern Ontario continues to align with the Ministry of Heritage, Tourism, Culture and Sports Industries in both its programs and coordination of staff.

Developed as a tool to help the Destination Northern Ontario Board of Directors track the organization's performance each year, this annual report is aligned with the Ministry's Regional Tourism Organizations Guide which recognizes the following five pillar areas:

5 CORE PILLARS

- 01 Product Development
- 02 Investment Attraction
- 03 Workforce Development & Industry Training
- 04 Marketing & Communications
- 05 Partnerships

Vision

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.

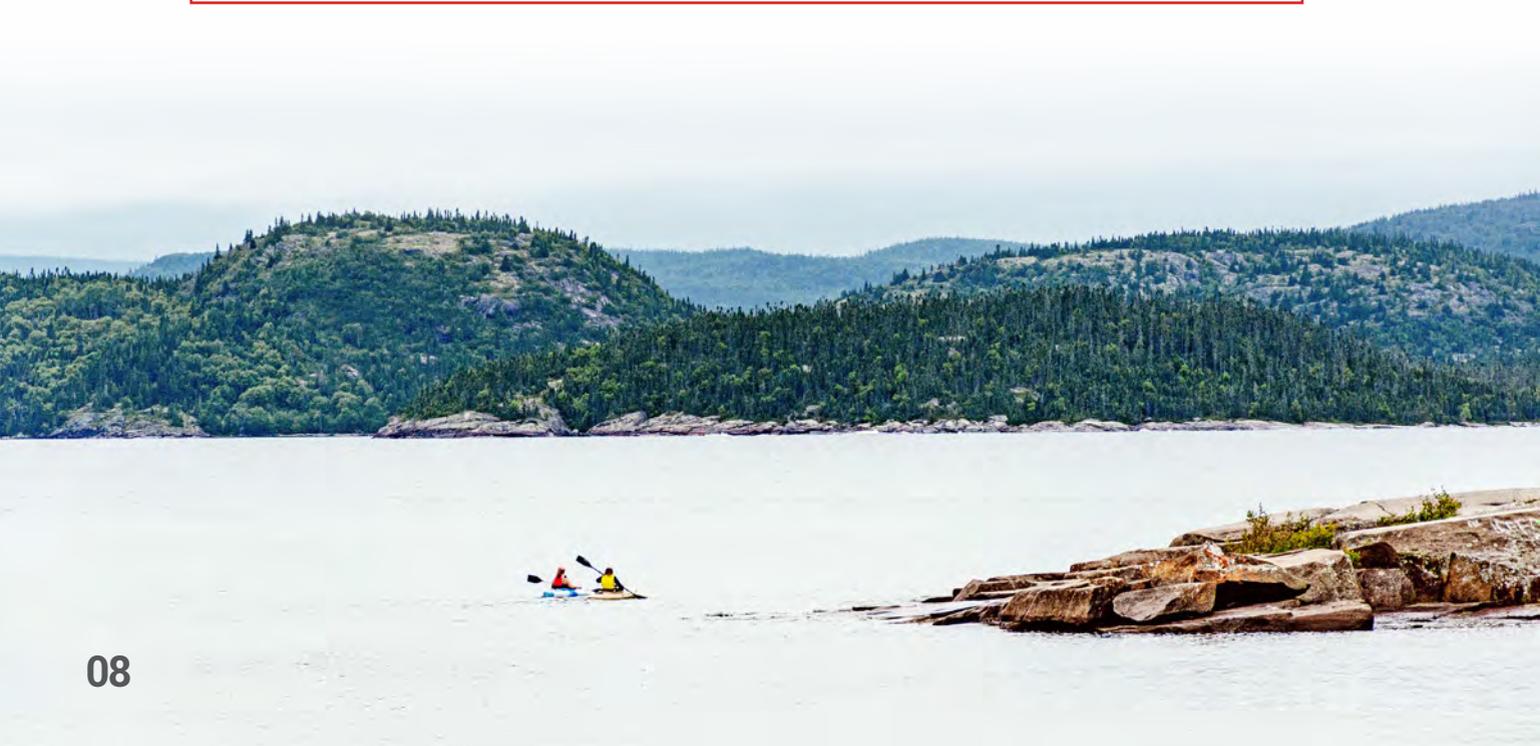
Mission Statement

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.

Values

Destination Northern Ontario's Board is committed to focusing on the vision in an "innovative, results-based, effective and fiscally responsible manner, with a foundation of strong governance and management leadership." Destination Northern Ontario's Board also recognizes the following values as important aspects of the strategic plan:

- **Accountability**
- **Leadership**
- **Collaboration**
- **Integrity**
- **Transparency**
- **Innovation**
- **Teamwork**





Business Development Goals

- > **Generate** industry research and monitor industry performance to continually improve products and experiences and evaluate the success of Destination Northern Ontario programs to ensure a “visitor first” approach.
- > **Implement** a strategic approach to bring high quality products and experiences to market through strong partnerships and workforce training.



Governance

- > **The Board of Directors** met eight times this past fiscal. To keep attendance at acceptable levels, meetings via GoToMeetings enabled the Board to travel less, while still sharing resources and weighing in on decisions from their respective locations. Board attendance in 2022-23 was 70%. The Board monitors organizational performance through oversight of the various strategies in the business and marketing plans through the review of detailed performance reports.



Corporate Communications

- > **Year one of a new three-year Destination Northern Ontario Communication Plan was implemented this past fiscal.** The strategy focuses on operators, communities, and tourism advisors through the lens of the 2023-25 Industry Digital Strategy.

26 industry facing newsletters were distributed in 2022-23, focusing on Destination Northern Ontario (DNO) programming, the Northern Ontario Tourism Summit, ADAPT2022 webinar series and success stories. DNO's social media following reached over 16,000 followers, an increase of nearly 1,000 followers from 2021-22. When it comes to traditional methods of communication, DNO has an extensive database with approximately 4000 listings including operators, attractions, and municipalities.

In addition to these communication efforts, Destination Northern Ontario also updated its resource library online, ensured 100% logo compliance with the Ministry of Heritage, Tourism, Culture and Sport Industries, and partners, and executed a Staycation Tax Credit campaign in the spring of 2022.



16,000
FOLLOWERS
ON SOCIAL MEDIA



DATABASE OF
4000+
CONTACTS



26
INDUSTRY
NEWSLETTERS

3.5 MILLION+
USERS



> northernontario.travel

Marketing



The Great Lakes Cruise Industry has bounced back after the unfortunate hiatus caused by the Pandemic. We had experienced challenges with coach transportation due to some shortages in selected communities, but other than that, our supply base has remained intact. Once cruising resumed, the previous pattern of a well-oiled marine industry took over. Ports were able to receive ships with minimum fuss and guests were happy with every shore excursion experience. The Great Lakes Cruising



organisation started to focus on Destination Development and with the help of Destination Northern Ontario, we were able to offer a scouting trip along the Lake Superior North Shore Inside Passage. This unique cruise route between Thunder Bay and Terrace Bay attracted planners from several world class cruise lines, who thoroughly enjoyed and were surprised with this unique (and new) cruise route. As a result of this Superior Country and the ports along this route became members of the GLCA and are now poised to offer shore excursions to ships cruising in the region.

— **Stephen Burnett, Executive Director,
The Great Lakes Cruise Association**



2022-23 saw the return of a relatively normal year in the marketing pillar since the onset of COVID-19. Tactical contracts with rural leads returned to an annual investment, as opposed to a bi-annual or quarterly basis as we saw throughout the pandemic, and marketing partnerships were fully subscribed by mid-year.

The organization continues to work towards research-based, consumer-first marketing investments which include key activities at the sub-regional levels (urban and rural) and in pan-northern activities such as northernontario.travel, the Northern Ontario Trip Planner and pan-northern campaigns.

It was clear by the numbers on the Meridian e-commerce platform, SimpleRes, that visitation was up during the 2022 season. Online reservations went from approximately **\$900,000** in 2021-22 to **\$1.5 million** this past fiscal.

Thanks to a big boost to Avid traffic from some high-performing paid campaigns, we easily surpassed **3.5M** users on northernontario.travel. Organic traffic has leveled out to pre-pandemic numbers and the portal migration was completed successfully. All **5,136** stories were successfully updated and migrated for northernontario.travel 2.0. We are well set up for big success in 2023/24 in content delivery and management. The Northern Ontario Trip Planner is beginning to pay big dividends with itinerary downloads up **50%** year over year.

Destination Northern Ontario also successfully leveraged **\$60,000** plus an additional **\$40,000**



in-kind to support seven media familiarization tours in the region ranging from Great Lakes Cruising to broad outdoors. Marketing partnerships were very successful and for the

first time, the organization carved out

\$100,000 in investment to invest in the Resource Based Tourism sector.

This partnership resulted in **\$350,000** of marketing activity.

International marketing continued to build this past fiscal with a strong presence at RVC in Toronto. Through the work of our International

Marketing Specialist, one new

international itinerary was developed as well as attendance at three virtual and four in person marketplaces covering key markets. Two international travel trade familiarization trips were completed in the region.

Destination Northern Ontario continued to partner with communities collecting the Municipal Accommodation Tax to strategically take part in large scale pan-northern marketing partnerships that benefited all communities across the North under a regional banner. This year's projects included a pan-northern marketing campaign with Porter Airlines and several campaigns led with Destination Ontario in key target markets.



48

OPERATORS CERTIFIED THROUGH EXPERIENCE FISHING PROGRAM

26

PRODUCT TEAMS & WORKING GROUP MEETINGS HELD

Momentum continued to build in the product development pillar for Destination Northern Ontario in 2022-23. Product teams have evolved over time to address ongoing needs within the industry including the amalgamation of several product teams, the introduction of new product teams and the phasing out of teams as work is completed.

Product Development

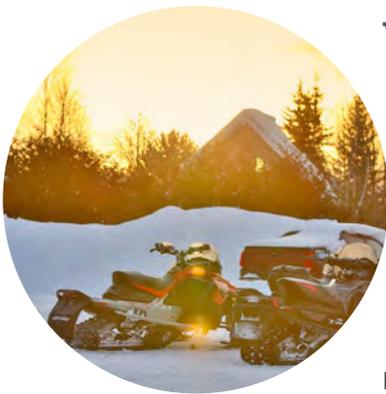


Twenty-six product team meetings were held in 2022-23 with an additional 26 working group meetings for **2SLGBTQ+, rail, Heart of Canada** and **Northern Ontario Border working group**. Multi-year product development projects continued including Experience Fishing, World's Best Snowmobile Destination, and the Heart of Canada tour loop. Some of these projects were officially "handed-off" to outside organizations to ensure sustainability and growth.



Experience Fishing

The **Experience Fishing** program was officially transferred to Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario. **48 operators** were certified through the program in 2022-23. Through regular training opportunities and a growing social media presence, this program will remain an important component of bringing new visitors to the Resource-Based Tourism (RBT) sector.



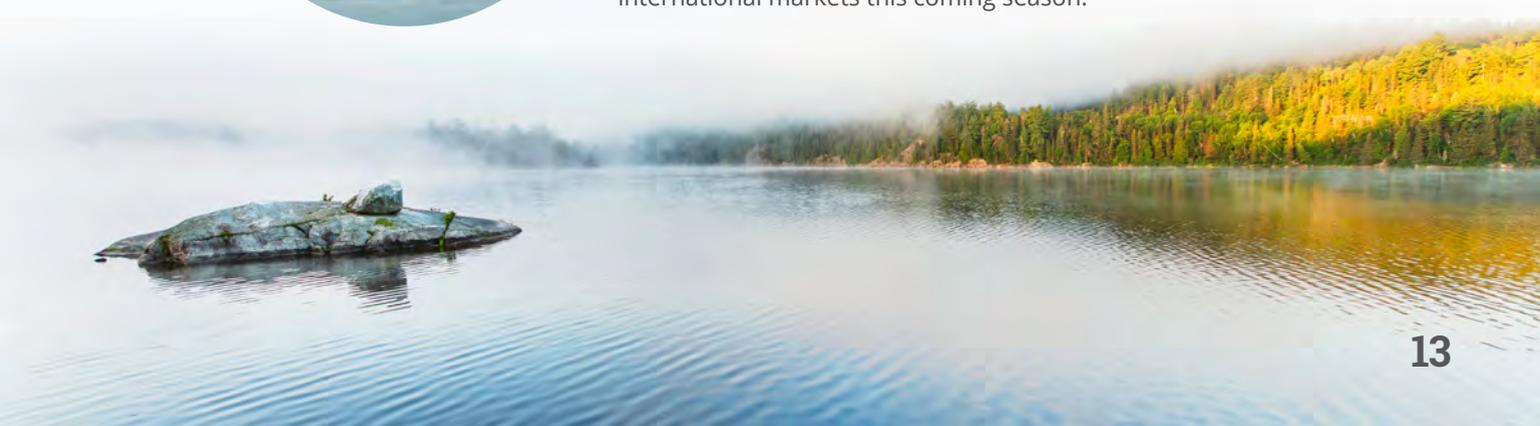
World's Best Snowmobile Destination

Another program that was successfully passed on to an outside organization is **World's Best Snowmobile Destination**. Northeastern Ontario Tourism has taken the reigns of said program and is currently applying for additional funding to add two more pilot loops to the program including the **Lumber Jack Loop** and the **Gold Rush loop** bringing the total new number of snowmobile products to market to three. Destination Northern Ontario remains a resource for Northeastern Ontario Tourism as they continue to build the program.



Auto & RV Touring

Five new routes were developed for the Auto and RV product program throughout the 2022-23 fiscal. These routes were vetted through a third-party contract with asset development completed directly through the Visual Communications Designer at Destination Northern Ontario. The Heart of Canada RV route was also developed in partnership with Travel Manitoba and will be a key product going into international markets this coming season.



Great Lakes Cruising



Great Lakes Cruising remains a crucial growth product for Northern Ontario. In the summer of 2022, a select group of planners from **six Expedition Cruise Lines** took part in a historic exploration of the Lake Superior North Shore Inside Passage. This destination research was originally conceived in 2009 but was postponed by the pandemic until July 2022. This extraordinary and historic navigation exercise took five days to complete and was the first time that a formal commercial investigation has been made of the northern Lake Superior shoreline. This tour exposed five cruise line representatives to north shore cruising products with hopes of increasing the number of cruise lines and stops in the coming years.

Additional Partnerships



Other priority products including **Indigenous tourism, touring and nature and outdoors** were supported through individual projects. Destination Northern Ontario was proud to partner for The National Day of Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous Tourism Ontario as well as continue its support on the Northshore Project with Superior Country, sponsor the Culture ON Symposium and support rainbow registered training for tourism businesses in the region.

I admire project officers like you Stephanie who are caught between the exigencies of handling public money while finding ways to get the job done. Destination Northern Ontario is proving to be a real friend of the Moose River Heritage and Hospitality Association and the Northern Cree people, as exemplified in how [the organization] has been so supportive. We are grateful.

— **Daniel Berg, Manager of Fundraising & Partnerships,
Moose River Heritage and Hospitality Association**

Travel Information Centres (TICs)

Destination Northern Ontario continued to support **Travel Information Centres (TICs)** in 2022-23 by working with **19 TICs** to administer visitor surveys which resulted in **171 responses** received. Due to ongoing labour shortages, there are some who struggled once again this year to be open but were eventually able to find staff. With TICs opening later that summer due to COVID-19 and some not at all, the collection of data this year was less than pre-pandemic but nonetheless provided valuable information.



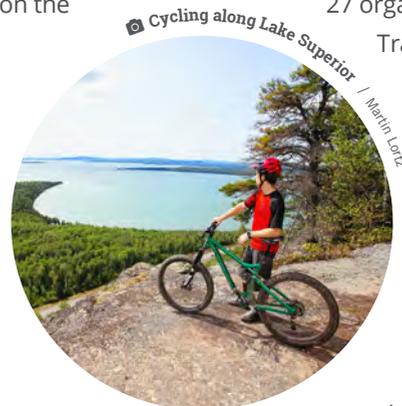
Information was consolidated and shared with industry and other relevant tourism organizations.

With a return to in-person training, Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO's) didn't engage in the online customer service training this year. However, two online Tourism Information Centre training workshops were held for Northeastern Ontario, Algoma Country, Superior Country and Sunset Country with **19 participants**. These were provided by OTEC and included Service Excellence and Service Excellence with De-escalation Training.

Destination Northern Ontario wins EDCO'S Prestigious Award of Excellence for Tourism

The Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) Presents an annual tourism award to a recipient that is extraordinarily successful and contributes to the economic growth and well-being of the province. Destination Northern Ontario, partnering with Waterfront Regeneration Trust, won the **2022 EDCO Award of Excellence – Tourism Attraction and Tourism Product Development**.

This award was for the "Northern Ontario Cycling Route/Trail Expansion Initiative". This 1,000 km route from Sault Ste. Marie to Thunder Bay and the U.S. Minnesota border, features the shoreline of Lake Superior, the Canadian Shield, Boreal Forest, the region of the Group of Seven artists and takes similar routes as the French and British explorers did over 350 years ago.



The initiative includes 24 GIS based sub-maps, Drive-and-Ride itineraries and will be officially designated as the terrestrial part of the 28,000 km Trans Canada Trail hiking network. This initiative included the participation of 11 communities and 27 organizations including Trans Canada Trail, Superior Country, Algoma Country and FedNor.

Furthermore, this project also won the **2022 Tourism Industry Association of Ontario – Ontario Tourism Resiliency Award for Collaboration: Cycling**.

Winning tourism and economic development awards clearly demonstrates that DNO's product development in Northern Ontario is not only good for tourism, but good for economic development in Ontario as well.

Workforce Development & Industry Training

Under the Tourism Excellence North (TEN) banner, workforce development and industry training is overseen by the **Senior Coordinator for Workforce Development and Industry Training** with support from the **Online Learning Coordinator**, **Workforce Development Coordinator** and the **Workforce Development & Industry Training Intern**.

In the third of its Five-Year Workforce Development & Industry Training Strategy, work continues by building upon current training solutions, addressing labour shortages and skills gaps with e-learning opportunities while looking through the lens of COVID-19 to assist with mitigation, recovery and rebuild phases.

Strategic action areas support workforce development and industry training from three perspectives:

“Defend and maintain shift” aimed at increasing the overall visitor appeal of Northern Ontario’s tourism products and experiences, **“inspire and grow shift”** to increase the capacity of industry as it applies to priority tourism products and experiences, and finally a **“rise and shine shift”** focused on increasing overall excellence for tourism operators, employees, communities and educators in Northern Ontario, and ultimately increasing a positive visitor experience in the region.

Adapt 2020: A Webinar Series

TEN has continued to offer its very successful ADAPT 2020: A Webinar Series for Tourism created in direct response to COVID-19 pandemic. Launched in April 2020, the webinar series provides participants with ongoing relevant training and information. While specifically designed for Northern Ontario tourism business owners and operators, communities, destinations and industry stakeholders, the series was open to all who wished to attend and was free of charge. Throughout 2022-23, there were 12 ADAPT 2020 webinars hosted with **468 total participants**. Considering all the repeat participants, we know that the webinar series has become a 'go-to' resource for those involved in tourism throughout Northern Ontario and broader Ontario.

468+ PARTICIPANTS IN
ADAPT 2020
WEBINAR SERIES



Northern Ontario Tourism Summit

Destination Northern Ontario's Northern Ontario Tourism Summit returned to an in-person event co-hosted with Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario. Highlights from the three-day Summit included the SPARK finalist pitch session, launch of the "Tourism Rocks" campaign, and **27 sector training and information sessions** on a variety of industry topics. The Summit ran from November 21st – 23rd in Thunder Bay and had **203 registered participants**.

27 SECTOR TRAINING
& INFORMATION
SESSIONS DELIVERED

203 REGISTERED
PARTICIPANTS



Workforce Development and Industry Training saw the successful delivery of its training solutions and programs including:

Tourism SkillsNet North

✓ Launched in April 2022, the **Tourism SkillsNet North Round 2 initiative**, in partnership with Nature & Outdoor Tourism Ontario (NOTO) and The Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC), identified workforce labour gaps specific to Northern Ontario, designed responsive customized training to meet these specific needs, identified and fully trained **216 participants** surpassing the goal of **200 employees** and

matched a total of **269 participants** with available job opportunities within Northern Ontario's tourism sector. The \$1.8M project, supported by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, supports qualified employers whose businesses have been negatively impacted by the pandemic with a 50 per cent wage subsidy up to \$5,000 per employee.



269

**PARTICIPANTS
MATCHED WITH JOB
OPPORTUNITIES**

"Thank you and your team again for the training, coordination and funding contributions that allowed us to hire some great students and assist with our organizational events this summer. We lucked out with a great crew of youth."

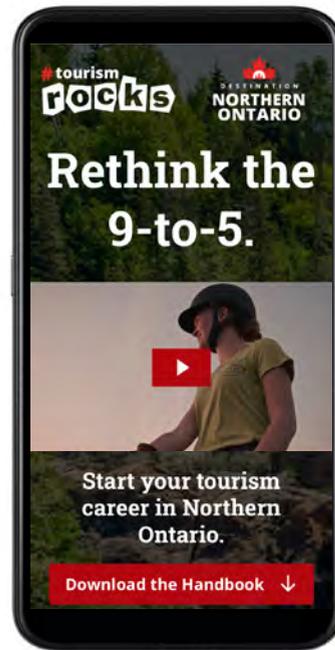
— TSNN Employer



Tourism Rocks

- ✓ **The Tourism SkillsNet North program** also launched a Tourism as a Career Awareness Campaign called “Tourism Rocks” with **142 toolkits** distributed to secondary, post-secondary and employment service provider programs throughout Northern Ontario. Two videos were created, designed to inspire and educate youth on potential lifestyle and career highlights available in the tourism industry and were viewed **2,722,844** times on social media. A new tourismrocks.ca website was also created.

> tourismrocks.ca



142 TOURISM ROCKS
TOOLKITS
DISTRIBUTED



TOURISM ROCKS VIDEO
TOTAL VIEWS =
2,722,844



TEN Training Tools

- ✓ Continuing to expand training delivery through **online training tools** the Workforce Development and Industry Training Recovery Project implemented its Year Two strategy. It addresses the skills gap in our workforce, business management benefits of how to change and adapt to a new world post-pandemic and includes a digital transformation of current TEN tools, learning management system and blended online learning. The Recovery Project has already updated some of TEN's curriculum to an online delivery format and produced two E-Commerce animated videos in partnership with Algoma Country (Algoma Kinniwabi Travel Association).
- ✓ Partnering with Lakehead University and College Boreal to develop and deliver **TEN's Experiential Travel Training for Operators** workshop into an asynchronous six-module online course for students, employees, and operators. The bilingual micro-credential program is for students (i.e., operators/ employers, employees, students) interested in the theory, practice, and design of Experiential Travel Tourism within the unique Northern Ontario setting. The micro-credential will include a mentorship component.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF TEN TRAINING TOOLS



- ✓ Developed and delivered **45 training solutions** including workshops, Best Practice Mission: Building a Quality Touring Route, Fast Track to Success, self-assessments, and case studies.
- ✓ **TEN Studio** has been installed and will build TEN's internal capacity to provide high-quality audio/visual assets for the TEN learning community and TEN's online learning products. With the staff trained, the studio has been utilized for several purposes including:
 - Voiceover recording in Whisper Room
 - Online meetings
 - Shooting video and recording sound
 - Video editing
- ✓ Developed **Creating Memorable Experiences Workshop**, a 2SLGBTQ+ focused workshop. The workshop included four (4) e-modules (for online learning) with a PowerPoint presentation, digital workbook, advance questionnaire, additional learning aids, handouts and templates, facilitator guide and notes to accompany the workshop.
- ✓ Delivered **three 2SLGBTQ+ training workshops** for 13 a, b and c with **33 participants** in collaboration with CGLCC (Canada's 2SLGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce).



33 PARTICIPANTS IN 2SLGBTQ+ TRAINING WORKSHOPS

45 TRAINING SOLUTIONS DEVELOPED & DELIVERED



Micro-credential Program

✓ Launched in October 2022, in partnership with Lakehead University and College Boreal the bilingual micro-credential program called **Ontario Professional Tourism Industry Specialist (OPTIS) /Northern Ontario Professional Tourism Industry Specialist (NOPTIS)** hosted two cohorts with **14 learners**. The program areas are upskilling existing employees within their current job, in addition to supporting the

tourism sector to scale up in post-COVID recovery. The objective of the OPTIS micro-credential is to provide a credential that will lead to a more knowledgeable and skilled professional tourism workforce that is enabled to advance, support, and grow the tourism sector. A seventh module focused on the geographic region of Northern Ontario will provide an option to obtain a NOPTIS micro-credential.

[> Learn More](#)



OPTIS / NOPTIS PROGRAM HOSTED:



2

COHORTS



14

LEARNERS





Continuing to work on the 5-year strategic plan, TEN is working to increase the effectiveness of training activities through the development of customized training tools to support Northern Ontario's tourism industry. This includes training delivery being expanded through on-line training tools in the following ways:

- ✓ Continued work to facilitate a **blended learning environment, aggregation of data, track progress** and **interphase** with Destination Northern Ontario website, all from a learner-first focus.
- ✓ Maintained and delivered **post-training resource guides** from its **ADAPT 2020: A Webinar Series** on Tourism for participants and visitors through the TEN web portal, through links to upcoming educational sessions, COVID-19 resources and on TEN's Resources page.
- ✓ Staff have updated and refreshed TEN's branding and a Marketing and Communication Plan has been developed.

The Tourism Innovation Lab is a proud partner of Destination Northern Ontario and Tourism Excellence North. Since 2019, we have collaborated on a number of workforce development and industry training initiatives and events with the DNO team, sparking new tourism ideas and supporting tourism entrepreneurs across the North.

— Justin Lafontaine, SPARK Program

Investment Attraction



"The Atikokan SnoHo Club was fortunate to be able to fund our map project through a partnership with DNO. The advisor we worked with helped to make the project run smoothly and was there to advise on and answer any process related questions we might have...This project would not have been possible without the DNO partnership."

— Atikokan SnoHo Snowmobile Club

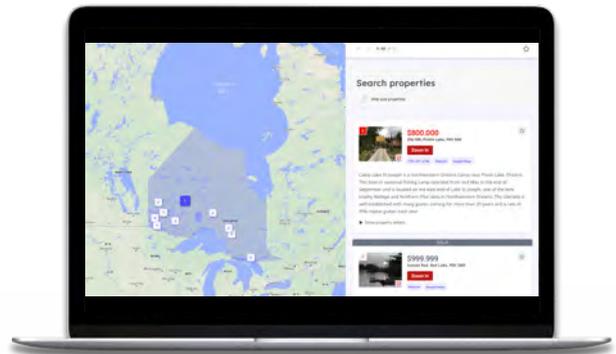
Investment Attraction priorities were managed by the Senior Coordinator of Investment Attraction and Economic Development through the fiscal year.

As part of the Investment Attraction strategy, Destination Northern Ontario continues to monitor the implementation of the Municipal Accommodation Tax and the post-pandemic effects on the effectiveness in tourism development and sector recovery; wholesale changes to municipal council after the 2022 elections have brought renewed calls to implement these revenue generators, especially in rural areas.



Additionally, Destination Northern Ontario works with data analysis companies to get key data on the accommodations sector, adding pan-northern AirBNB and VRBO data scraping to its urban KPI data to give a full picture of occupancy and highlighting areas of potential for sector growth. Relevant research pieces continue to be a central focus of the pillar, to aid DNO's stakeholders in making key decisions for their communities/clients.

Destination Northern Ontario was proud to launch its pan-northern Accommodation and Complementary Services Gap Analysis and Investment Attraction sub-portal (invest.destinationnorthernontario.ca), with assistance from FedNor. The gap analysis is part of a multi-faceted approach to cataloguing deficiencies, highlighting potential areas of growth, and creating a database of investment-ready properties and opportunities to be targeted at new investors to the area, with an emphasis on new and underemployed Canadians.



> [Visit the portal](https://invest.destinationnorthernontario.ca)

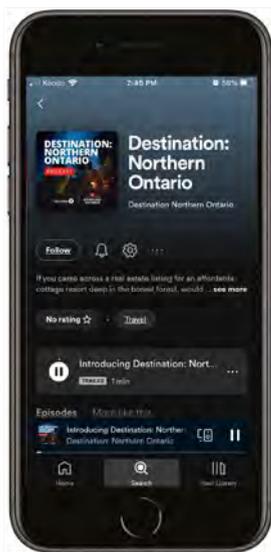


The IA Pillar also launched **Destination: Northern Ontario**, the premier Northern Ontario investment attraction podcast to facilitate business succession and promote opportunities for business purchase to those outside of the region. Destination Northern Ontario continued to build its existing investment attraction resources such as the resource centre on destinationnorthernontario.ca and the inventory of funding sources. Support was provided through virtual methods to facilitate succession planning for tourism industry partners across Northern Ontario including webinars as a part of the Northern Ontario Tourism Training Week.

A new iteration of the very popular 'Spark' program continued, with mentorships and investments awarded to individuals, entrepreneurs, small businesses, and non-profits to develop their new innovative tourism ideas in Northern Ontario.

Destination Northern Ontario remains present and engaged with organizations such as the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, the Community Futures network, the Economic Developers Council of Ontario, key provincial and federal ministries and other important industry organizations to ensure collaboration on investment attraction initiatives remains at the forefront of Northern Ontario's post-pandemic recovery.

The pillar remains focused on direct work with local and regional organizations – in collaboration with parallel pillars - to build community economic development initiatives that create sustained growth and promotes organic investment attraction opportunities.



[> Listen to the podcast](#)



"In partnership with Destination Northern Ontario, the Atikokan Economic Development Office and the Town of Atikokan has been able to make significant upgrades from the existing Welcome billboard to an official Welcome Sign in the community of Atikokan. Without the partnership program these upgrades would have not been completed and the community would have been left with a fading and worn out billboard to greet tourism visitors."

**— Katie Hannon, Community Development Advisor,
Atikokan Economic Development Corporation**

📍 Voyageur Wilderness – Atikokan / Destination Ontario





83+
INDUSTRY
PARTNERS = **\$1.9**
MILLION
LEVERAGED

Partnerships

Fulfilling its partnership mandate, Destination Northern Ontario reached out across the North to identify potential initiatives that aligned with its business plan and pillar strategies.

Destination Northern Ontario implemented **38 partnered** initiatives working with over **83 partners** and leveraging the province's investment three times over, resulting in **\$1.9 million** of partnered activity.

"Destination Northern Ontario and its valuable programming have been critical to Blind River's tourism development. We are grateful to work with an organization that is on the same page and understands the importance of attractive and sustainable wayfinding.

Our municipality has worked tirelessly to form a year-round circuit of the highest quality; recreation, culture, and sport-based activities are thoughtfully enhanced to ensure each area appeals to a broad number of users.

— Karen Bittner, The Town of Blind River

Destination Northern Ontario's partner funding has, in many cases, allowed our community to consolidate 10 years of projects into 3. DNO's flexibility and keen understanding of rural municipal challenges make it a top-tier organization to collaborate with.

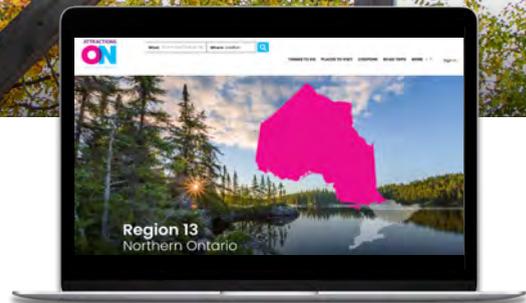
We are proud of the accomplishments to date, and can not wait to complete our next initiative that will undoubtedly develop Blind River, Algoma, and Northern Ontario."



© Boom Camp Trail – Blind River / Algoma Country – Martin Lortz

Attractions Ontario

For the third year in a row, Destination Northern Ontario continued its partnership with Attractions Ontario and the Northern Ontario DMOs and sub-regions to increase the number of Northern attractions who were members of Attractions Ontario. In the past, Northern Ontario was considerably underrepresented from an attractions perspective, however with the introduction of this program on a 3 year commitment, there were **45 new Northern Ontario attractions** that participated and became members of Attractions Ontario. Partners also leveraged over **\$60,000** in advertising dollars with Attractions Ontario over three years.



NEW NORTHERN ONTARIO MEMBERS IN THE ATTRACTIONS ONTARIO PROGRAM

[> Learn more](#)



Financial Report 2022-23

Area of focus	Actual	Budget	%
Governance & Administration	\$ 425,514.00	\$ 425,235.00	11%
Product Development	\$ 318,978.00	\$ 350,000.00	8%
Investment Attraction	\$ 281,411.00	\$ 300,000.00	7%
Workforce Development & Industry Training	\$ 512,496.00	\$ 500,000.00	13%
Marketing & Communications	\$ 1,745,399.00	\$ 1,750,000.00	43%
Partnership	\$ 592,214.00	\$ 605,000.00	15%
Provincial LGBT Initiative	\$ 159,586.00	\$ 160,000.00	3%
Total MHSTCI Allocation	\$ 4,035,598.00	\$ 4,090,235.00	100%
Ontario Skills Development Fund	\$ 1,659,700.00	\$ 1,819,250.00	41%
Leveraged Contributions	\$ 1,517,602.00	\$ 2,000,000.00	38%
Total \$	7,212,900.00	\$ 7,909,485.00	179%



Destination Northern Ontario / destinationnorthernontario.ca

Tourism Excellence North / tourismexcellencenorth.ca

Domestic Marketing / northernontario.travel

International Travel Trade / northernontarioitt.com



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THANK YOU



DESTINATION
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