



[destinationnorthernontario.ca](http://destinationnorthernontario.ca)

**2021-22**

# Annual Report

Ontario 





2021-22

# Annual Report

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



It is my honour to present this year's Destination Northern Ontario Annual Report. The tourism industry held fast and strong during the year of 2021-22. As we rounded the corner of what appears to be the darkest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, I could not be prouder of the tourism industry in Northern Ontario. Together, we looked for solutions that kept business doors open, diversified consumer bases and developed innovative tools to help with the labour crisis.

2021-22 saw the first year of Tourism SkillsNet North, a program designed to identify specific workforce labour gaps, and saw 112 participants trained and matched 101 of those participants with available job opportunities within Northern Ontario's tourism sector. Work continued through Tourism Excellence North's training programs including self-assessments, Fast Track to Success and best practice missions. The pandemic did not slow down our training efforts in the North; in fact, it accelerated them.

Our marketing partners, Destination Marketing Organizations and Travel Associations across the region, remain rock-solid connections to operations on the ground. Collectively, they put millions of dollars of investment into best bet markets attracting millions of visitors to the region during this unprecedented time. With Destination Northern Ontario's investment of \$2M across the region, we continued to diversify our marketing efforts and expand our consumer base domestically and internationally.

It is important at Destination Northern Ontario that we continue to serve the industry with holistic solutions that do not just rely on marketing. This is why we have 'upped the ante' on our Investment Attraction portfolio with the hiring of a Senior Coordinator. The addition of this role will allow the organization to dig deeper into the economic development challenges and opportunities facing the region, and ultimately, provide solutions to both communities and operators that will allow them to grow their own local tourism economies and the region as a whole.

We know that looking forward we must continue to be positive and learn from the unique set of circumstances and challenges the pandemic posed. We are moving into a new tourism landscape as we emerge from this global health crisis and now is time to push the envelope further. There is great promise in Northern Ontario. The momentum we have created together will lead to growth, prosperity and sustainability of our industry. Our deep history in collaboration and partnership will serve us well moving forward.

**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, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, 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.

## 2021-22 Board of Directors

NAME	POSITION	SECTOR
<b>Marty Kalagian</b>	President	Operator – Retired
<b>Gerry Webber</b>	Vice President	Public Service – Retired
<b>Betty McGie</b>	Treasurer	Watson's Algoma Vacations Ltd.
<b>Heather Gropp</b>	Secretary	Town of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls
<b>Ray Nadeau</b>	Director	Victoria Inn
<b>George Stivrins</b>	Director	Chief Commanda II
<b>Lori Branch</b>	Director	Seine River Lodge
<b>Tammy Frick</b>	Director	Cinéfest
<b>Guy LaMarche</b>	Director	Public Service - Retired
<b>Ian Wood</b>	Director	City of Greater Sudbury

## Government Advisors

NAME	POSITION	SECTOR
Laurie Brownlee	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, Marketing and Communications
Sara Currier	Senior Coordinator Product Development (resigned)
Gord Knowles	Senior Coordinator, Investment Attraction
Kathy Carlson	Senior Coordinator, Corporate Services
Karen Peacock	Senior Coordinator, Workforce Development and Industry Training
Gillian McCullough	Training Coordinator
Tiina Keranen	Visual Communications Designer
Karen Poirier	Office Administrator

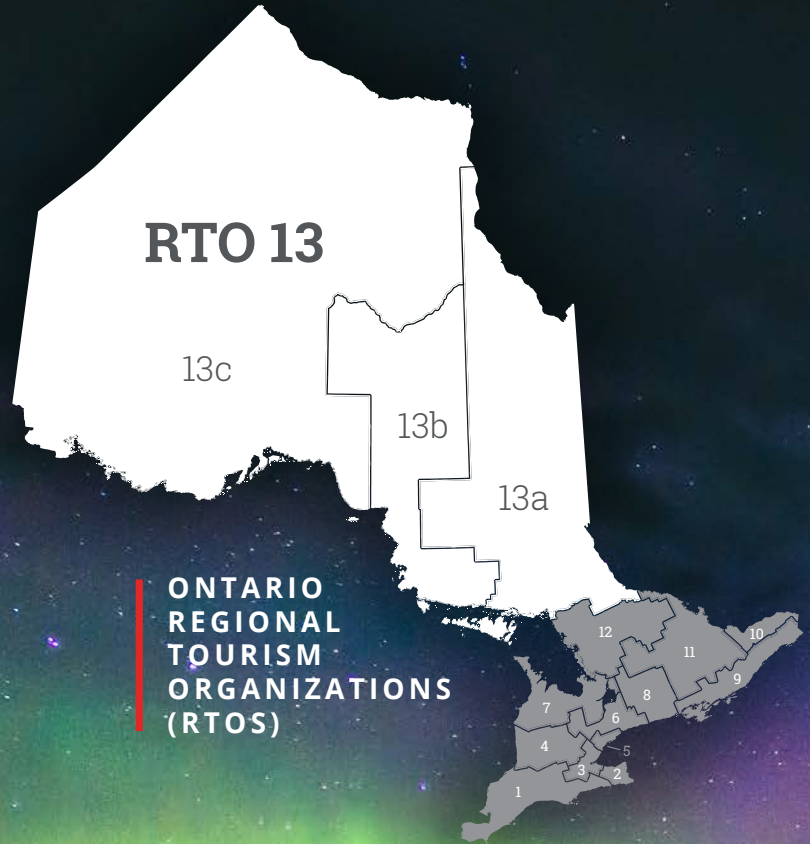




A COMMITMENT TO ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE,  
PROFESSIONALISM AND QUALITY PROGRAM DELIVERY.

# 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.

Ontario 

Destination Northern Ontario continues to align with the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture 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 ten 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 2021-22 was 86%. 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

- › **For the past three years, industry communications have been intentionally created, curated, and directed to three audience streams:** government and economic development professionals, tourism operators and owners, and municipalities and communities. This approach has allowed the organization to communicate relevant content on programs, events, and industry news to those most likely to engage with it. Traditional communication tools were used including monthly newsletters, press releases and social media.



**16,000**  
FOLLOWERS  
ON SOCIAL MEDIA



**40+**  
INDUSTRY  
NEWSLETTERS



**18,000**  
VISITS  
TO CORPORATE  
WEBSITES

Destination Northern Ontario (DNO) website traffic attracted approximately **18,000 visitors** to corporate sites combined. **Over 40 newsletters** were sent out to industry focusing on Destination Northern Ontario programming, training weeks, ADAPT2021 webinar series and success stories. Destination Northern Ontario's social media following reached upwards of **16,000 followers**, an **increase of nearly 1,000** followers from 2020-21. When it comes to traditional methods of communication, Destination Northern Ontario has an extensive database with approximately **4000 listings** including operators, attractions and municipalities.

Currently, Destination Northern Ontario communicates with its stakeholders through four websites, Destination Northern Ontario, Tourism Excellence North, Northern Ontario Tourism Summit and NorthernOntarioITT.com.

The Destination Northern Ontario Communications Strategy was revised during the 2020-21 fiscal year and led corporate communications until the end of 2022. A new strategy is set to be completed for 2022-25, which will guide corporate communications for the next three years.



# Marketing

The way in which Destination Northern Ontario implements annual marketing programs and investments into the region has significantly evolved since its establishment in 2011.

With the ever-increasing importance placed on return on investment, Destination Northern Ontario has shifted its priorities into increased leveraging of marketing partnerships, alignment with the provincial brand architecture and streamlining tactical programming across the region.

4 MILLION+  
VISITS



[northernontario.travel](https://northernontario.travel)



# Marketing

Lessons learned from the 2020-21 tourism season in Northern Ontario during the COVID-19 pandemic helped to provide a framework for marketing activities in 2021-22. Staying agile and flexible on marketing campaigns was key as we monitored the travel restrictions between Canada and the United States. Significant work has been done to track travel patterns and trends of the domestic market over the past year and will help to inform marketing decisions throughout the fiscal year.

Understanding that the needs of Destination Marketing Organizations and other tourism marketing organizations are evolving within the context of a global pandemic, Destination Northern Ontario strived to make the most fiscally responsible investments with high return on investments depending on current travel situations. Destination Northern Ontario invested with its traditional marketing partners across the north in 13A, 13B and 13C sub-regions and extended its investment to new partners including communities like Kenora, Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls and Blind River. Destination Northern Ontario worked with rural and urban leads alike to execute their media fam program with **ten** familiarization trips occurring in the fiscal year **leveraging over \$60,000** in activity.

Destination Northern Ontario will continue to partner with communities collecting the Mandatory Accommodation Tax to strategically take part in large scale pan-northern marketing partnerships that benefited all communities across the North under a regional banner including a multi-million dollar partnership with USA Today led by Destination Ontario.

Research, reporting and technology are recognized as instrumental pieces to successful marketing initiatives. Our flagship consumer site, NorthernOntario.Travel, has pulled its weight over the past several years in generating **more than 4 million visitors** in 2021-22 to northern content with a click-thru rate to partners of **18%**. Reporting, monitoring and tools have been taken completely in-house. E-Commerce is still supported by way of investment to Algoma Kinniwabi Travel Association and their work with the Simple Res platform which saw **\$2 mil in sales annually**.

In 2021-22, extra investment was provided by Destination Canada through Destination Ontario to support domestic marketing to mitigate the damage done to traditional markets through the pandemic. With **\$500,000 in investment**, Destination Northern Ontario **leveraged an additional \$160,000** to invest over **\$650,000** in **19 domestic marketing recovery projects** with **over 40** partners across the region.



# Product Development

**160+** INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES

**18** PRODUCT TEAMS, WORKING GROUPS & STEERING COMMITTEES



# Product Development

Wawa Icefishing Derby - Destination Ontario

## Northern Ontario's Priority Experiences

Over 160 industry representatives continue to serve on 18 Destination Northern Ontario product teams, working groups and steering committees through identified product plans to develop and/or enhance Northern Ontario's priority experiences. 2SLGBT+, angling & hunting, culture and heritage, gateway and destination communities, nature and adventure and touring. Sixteen product team meetings were held throughout the year with additional Northern Border Working Group meetings held throughout the fiscal to focus on the important issue of border restrictions and vaccine mandates.

Destination Northern Ontario's product development research and inventorying continued throughout the year; the operator database was fully updated in Q1 and monthly subscriptions and one final year-end report of hotel and occupancy trends for RTO13 were broadly circulated to partners.

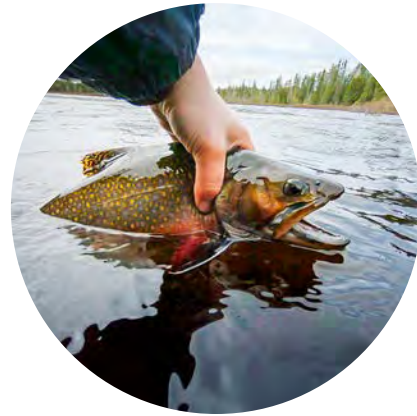
The 2SLGBT+ Product Team and product development strategy was created and unanimously approved by the team. In Q2, a Perceptions of Northern Ontario as a Destination for 2SLGBT+ Travellers Survey was launched to help determine, and ultimately enhance, Northern Ontario's status as a destination for 2SLGBT+ travellers. Over 225 responses were received which ultimately informed the product strategy for 2SLGBT+ in the North.



The execution of major product development initiatives was undertaken in the following areas:

## Angling

**Experience Fishing:** The Experience Fishing Program finished its third and final year under the DNO umbrella. With COVID-19 still impacting the tourism industry, lodge operators are starting to shift their focus and expanding their efforts to cater more to the domestic travellers. A successful virtual fish derby was executed in August 2021. Marketing efforts and the live event reached approximately **40,000** people on Facebook. A total of **40 operators** were involved in the program by year end.



## Culture and Heritage

**Work continued on the Francophone initiative through a contract with Destination Northern Ontario's Francophone Tourism Specialist, with support from FedNor and the NOHFC. Activities to date include:** Itinerary Development for Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Temiskaming Shores, Hearst, Kapuskasing, Dubreuilville, North Bay and West Nipissing. All content is completed and itineraries in both English and French have been published and are public.

**101 Experiences:** Through the 101 experiences project, Destination Northern Ontario in partnership with Centre culturel ARTEM trained 101 people to become "micro-entrepreneurs" offering individual tourism experiences that will permit individuals to discover other culture and help reduce racism in their communities. Through this process, ten trainers were trained to support participants in developing their experience by using the 10-step Tourism Experience Incubator which has been tested during the first phase of the project. Current experiences developed are **24 in person** and **six virtual**.

## Gateway and Destination Communities:

Destination Northern Ontario partnered with Superior Country and 11 North Shore communities and First Nations with support from Parks Canada, NOHFC and FedNor to implement the Lake Superior North Shore Tourism Plan.







## Nature and Adventure

The Northern Ontario Trails Tourism Strategy was finalized providing a strategic and integrated approach not only in identifying trails that have the potential to become economic drivers for the region, but also in how the communities they are connected to can ensure that they are providing the goods and services required to serve the trail tourist. A Trails Strategy Steering Committee was established along with “Ten Essentials of Successful Tourism Trails” for use by partners. In addition, a Group of Seven and Indigenous Group of Seven Tourism Product Development Strategy, Culinary Tourism Product Development Strategy (Culinary Tourism Alliance), Great Lakes Waterfront Trail Lake Superior Expansion Feasibility and Marketing Study, Lake Superior North Shore Trails Assessment Guide (developed by Parks Canada/ Superior Country) were completed. A North Shore Accommodations Investment Attractions Brochure was also developed as well as the Superior Picnic Adventures program pilot was developed in the summer of 2021. All of these documents and programs will guide the project into next fiscal and beyond.

## Touring


- Working with the lead route partner, Superior Country, Destination Northern Ontario partnered to complete CTODs signage along the Lake Superior Circle Tour (Canadian Side), identified and installed tourist information centre and gateway signage and identified the need for a signage style guide moving into next fiscal.
- Working with community and destination partners with support from NOHFC and FedNor to implement Year 3 priorities for World’s Best Snowmobile Destination. During the third year, a safety manual, sustainability plan, consumer and industry facing websites and training materials were completed. The project will be taken over by the 13A rural DMO in 2022-23.
- In partnership with Destination Ontario, Destination Northern Ontario connected the Northern Ontario RV Touring Routes with Southern Ontario through itinerary development. This included vetting routes, gathering digital assets and creating custom content to promote the routes.
- The Winnipeg to Thunder Bay touring route, also known as the Heart of Canada route, was uploaded to the Northern Ontario Trip Planner and was featured in the Northern Ontario RV Guide which was a key collateral piece at Rendez-vous Canada.








## Wayfinding / Travel Information Centres

Destination Northern Ontario continued to invest in wayfinding and Northern Travel Information Centres.

Destination Northern Ontario applied to FedNor for funds in support of a Northern Ontario bilingual community wayfinding program. Approved and underway in June 2017, the partnership enabled Destination Northern Ontario to work with municipalities to provide 2/3rds of the costs associated with the development of bilingual signage strategies, manufacture, and installation of wayfinding signs. To date more than **\$1,275,000** has been made available to transform **19 communities** in Northern Ontario. The program was so successful it has been extended into the first six months of 2021-22.



The graphic features the Nipigon logo at the top left. Below it, a blue box contains the word "Waterfront" and a grey box contains "Secteur Riverain". At the bottom, there are seven icons representing different waterfront amenities, each with a corresponding label in English and French.

						
Marina	Boat Launch	Hiking Trails	Lagoon Viewing Platforms	Picnic Area	Paddle Dock	Campground
Marina	Rampe de mise à l'eau	Sentiers de randonnée pédestre	Plates-formes d'observation du lagon	Aire de pique-nique	Bassin à avirons	Terrain de camping







Destination Northern Ontario continued to support Travel Information Centres (TICs) in 2021-22 by working with **19 TICs** to administer visitor surveys which resulted in **369 responses** received. Due to COVID-19 and travel restrictions, several TICs were not open, and it was once again challenging this year to engage visitors to complete surveys, however **over 1000 responses** were collected. Information was consolidated and shared with industry and other relevant tourism organizations. Destination Northern Ontario developed and delivered four online TIC Summer Student Training workshops supporting customer service provided to **31 partner TIC staff** and enrolled **27 TIC staff** in OTEC's Customer Service Excellence Program. DNO provided resources to **18 TICs** required to operate safely during COVID-19 including screens, masks, signage, bags, and cleaning supplies. Brochure placement could not take place due to COVID-19.





## Northern Ontario Border Working Group

### Mandate

*In response to the closing of the border for tourists due to COVID-19 over two years ago, Destination Northern Ontario (DNO) took the lead and together with Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario (NOTO) and the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO), formed the Northern Ontario Border Working Group (NOBWG). The group also included representatives from Sunset Country, Superior Country, Algoma Country, Northeastern Ontario Tourism, the Great Lakes Cruise Association and others. The mandate of the working group was to represent the tourism industry by working with the public and private sector to address and resolve the issues of a restricted border due to the pandemic.*

*Over the past two years, the NOBWG has continuously met and liaised with government officials and tourism stakeholders providing advice, developing proposals, offering solutions, and supplying market data to assist the federal government to move to an unrestricted border for international tourists.*





**The NOBWG Offered Information and Solutions**

While the government continued to keep the border closed, the NOBWG lobbied and pressed hard while developing a proposal and brief, which highlighted the economic impact of the loss of tourism due to a closed border and presented options to open the border with a few workable restrictions. As vaccination occurred and the pandemic waned, NOBWG efforts increased with meetings and lobbying, research, information sharing, news releases and communiques. When the border eventually opened to tourists with restrictions, the process and restrictions required by the federal government were the same ones the NOBWG proposed.

The three co-chairs, David MacLachlan (DNO), Laurie Marcil (NOTO) and Chris Bloore (TIAO), continue to be absolutely relentless in their lobbying efforts to force the continued easing of border restrictions. Led by the co-chairs, members of the NOBWG have also contributed to the many discussions and meetings with federal and provincial MP's, cabinet ministers, mayors, border service officials, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada and other stakeholders.

**NOBWG Efforts Recognized with TIAO Collaboration Award**

The collaborative efforts by the NOBWG are well appreciated by our operators and stakeholders. These outreach activities were provincially recognized as the NOBWG won the TIAO 2021 Ontario Tourism Resiliency Award for Collaboration in the Regional Tourism Organization category.

**Continue to Monitor**

The work of the NOBWG is not complete as they will continue to be diligent to a fully open border, address new issues and ensure an ongoing open border for our international tourists in the future.

# 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, Workforce Development & Industry Training Intern and the Workforce Development Advisor.

In its third of its Five-Year Workforce Development & Industry Training Strategy, work continues by building upon current training solutions, addressing labour shortages and skills gaps and 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



# Workforce Development & Industry Training

In light of COVID-19, TEN moved some training solutions online and responded to Ontario's three phases of mitigation, recovery and rebuild. A highlight of this includes the launch of ADAPT 2020: A Webinar Series for Tourism created in direct response to COVID-19 pandemic.



Launched in April 2020 and continued into 2021-22, the webinar series provided participants with not only up to date COVID-19 information and resources, but also provided a sense of community, which was incredibly meaningful considering the pandemic-related stressors. 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 2021-22, there were 13 ADAPT 2020 webinars hosted with **937 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.

Destination Northern Ontario also introduced a virtual training week in lieu of our traditional Northern Ontario Tourism Summit, due to COVID, to engage with industry across the North. Highlights from the four-day training week included the SPARK finalist pitch session launch of Becoming the World's Best Snowmobile Destination training videos and **13 training sessions** on a variety of industry topics. For a second year in a row, registration was free, and training ran from November 16th – 19th and had **520 registered participants**. The training week was a success with a jam-packed agenda and greater than expected turnout. The audience was engaged with interactive content and excellent speakers and attendees responded with overwhelmingly positive feedback.





**Tourism Excellence North saw the successful delivery of its training solutions including:**

- ✓ **Over 748** operators, communities and destinations are enrolled with TEN to make use of the Self-Assessments and Case Studies online tools. All TEN videos have been opened for viewing a total of **1,533 times**. Two additional online self-assessment learning tools were developed and implemented.
- ✓ Destination Northern Ontario launched **Tourism SkillsNet North** – a \$2M new initiative designed to provide support to the hard-hit tourism sector in collaboration with OTEC and Nature Outdoors Tourism Ontario (NOTO) as well District Social Services Administration Boards, Northern Ontario Workforce Planning Boards and Employment Service Providers. This partnership represents more than **62 organizations** working together including six education and training providers. The initiative identified workforce labour gaps specific to northern Ontario, designed responsive customized training to meet these specific needs, identified and trained **112 participants** and **matched a total of 101** of those participants with available job opportunities within Northern Ontario's tourism sector. Qualified employers whose businesses have been negatively impacted by the pandemic benefitted with a 30 per cent wage subsidy up to \$3,000 per employee.
- ✓ Continuing to expand training delivery through online training tools the **Workforce Development and Industry Training Recovery Project** has been approved for a total of **\$990,000** with support from FedNor and NOHFC and DNO leveraging its MHSTCI funding. The Workforce Development and Industry Training program will address the skills gap in our workforce, business management benefits will include 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.



**748+**

**OPERATORS, COMMUNITIES  
& DESTINATIONS ENROLLED  
WITH TEN**



- ✓ Partnering with Lakehead University and College Boreal to develop a bilingual micro-credential program called Ontario **Professional Tourism Industry Specialist (OPTIS)/Northern Ontario Professional Tourism Industry Specialist (NOPTIS)**. 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.
- ✓ Delivered TEN training solutions with update focus on Covid-19 recovery and online delivery.
- ✓ Two group learning workshops were delivered for operators and facilitated online with live virtual experiences and **18 participants** in attendance.
- ✓ In collaboration and partnership with other organizations, **25 additional training sessions** were delivered with **142 participants**.
- ✓ **Three workshops** were developed and **eight** delivered online to **437 participants** including Improve Your Online Marketing - Digital Success for Tourism Businesses and Organizations; Beyond the Backyard – Enticing the Ontario Drive Market; Experience Fishing; and FrenchItUp! for the Quebec Market.

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 to **1,468 training participants** through its ADAPT 2020: A Webinar Series for Tourism, Pandemic Recovery: Expand Your Client Base and Grow Revenues Through Overseas Market Development workshop and Fast Track to Success program. Post-training resources were also made available on the TEN web portal to visitors, through links to upcoming educational sessions, COVID-19 resources and on TEN's Resources page.





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 effects COVID-19 has had on its effectiveness in tourism development; 2022 municipal elections will surely bring 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.



# Investment Attraction



# Investment Attraction

Destination Northern Ontario has taken the lead on a pan-northern Accommodation and Complementary Services Gap Analysis, with assistance from FedNor. The analysis will be 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. Karen Jones Consulting, with Deloitte, are working with northern stakeholders, accommodators and government officials at the provincial and national levels to move this project forward in 2022, and Destination Northern Ontario has secured additional funding to digitize and move forward a digital investment attraction component to assist in promoting key opportunities and reducing red tape for those looking for information on investing in Ontario's north.

Destination Northern Ontario continued to build its existing investment attraction resources such as the resource centre on [destinationnorthernontario.ca](http://destinationnorthernontario.ca) and the inventory of funding sources.

The "Reopening Northern Ontario Toolkit" was developed as a tool to help operators navigate their way through the pandemic including health and safety protocols and funding opportunities. 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.

# Partnerships



**60+**  
INDUSTRY  
PARTNERS = **\$1.4**  
MILLION  
LEVERAGED

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 twelve partnered initiatives working with over **60 partners** and leveraging the province's investment three times over, resulting in **\$1.4 million** of partnered activity.





**Tourism Counts Campaign**

A \$56,000 radio and social media campaign with **13 partners** across Northern Ontario was implemented. The campaign included, newsletter messaging, social media, Ontario Experience opening narrative revisions and aligned it's with Public Health recommendations.

#TourismCounts

Now more than ever!



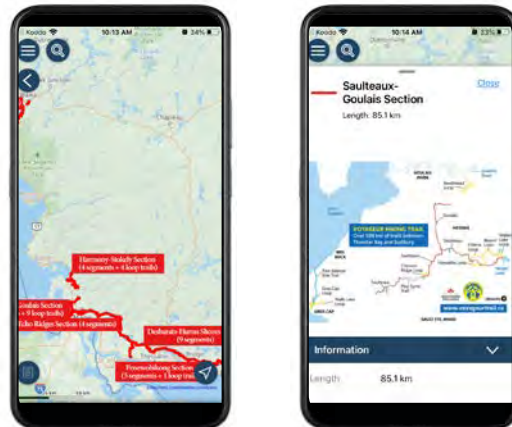
**The Great Ontario Get-Away Give-Away**

Partnership with Fish'n Canada, Rogers Media and in consultation with Destination Northern Ontario, Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario, Sunset Country, Superior Country, Algoma Country and Northeastern Ontario Tourism to develop and implement a promotion to create awareness of Northern Ontario's resource-based tourism sector. A total of five monthly winners were chosen over the course of five months.

**Trails Wayfinding**

Signage replaced in **14 locations** for Sault Ste. Marie and the North Bay Mountain Biking Association. **Four new trail signs** in Atikokan area, and creation and distribution of regional snowmachining maps. **16 trail signs** created for Spanish River Snowmachine Club.

Destination Northern Ontario also partnered with the Voyageur Trails Association to complete **10 demonstration (beta-version) maps** in the Ondago app, including graphic images of map icons depicting the geographical extent of each trail.



# Success Stories

*“The City of Temiskaming Shores has had a long standing and beneficial relationship with Destination Northern Ontario. Your programs, funding support and enthusiastic staff have assisted us to support business growth through tourism initiatives and marketing programs since your organization was developed. Without the financial support and partnerships, our community could not afford to lead some of the marketing and product development projects that we have. Our annual tourism budgets are just too small to enable any significant campaign or project, but with your partnership dollars, we have been able to lead many great projects within our region that have served to drive new visitation dollars into our community and businesses.*

*Another great value to our area is the time and resource capacity that your staff bring to the table. We have benefited on many occasions from programs and projects that your staff have lead that we ourselves would not have had the time or capacity to pull together on our own. In many cases, your organization has brought together several communities to pool financial resources and develop a project that benefits all of the partners. These partnered programs have enabled our small community to be seen in marketplaces that we could never access on our own.*

*Thank you again for all that Destination Northern Ontario does to support communities across the North and we look forward to many years of ongoing partnerships to benefit the region.”*

**— James Franks Economic Development Officer, City of Temiskaming Shores**





*"The Municipality of Central Manitoulin as the lead applicant is pleased to have received Destination Northern Ontario support and funding on behalf of Manitoulin Island wide partners for the Manitoulin Island/Mnidoon Mnisig Culinary Tourism Strategy. Destination Northern Ontario has been exceptional in providing guidance and vision for this combined Indigenous and Non-Indigenous community wide project. Food and drink play a major role in the way our community expresses itself through tradition and culture. We are encouraged that our combined cultures will be displayed through an organized culinary tourism effort. With Destination Northern Ontario's guidance our communities will work and prosper together now and into the future."*

**— Marcus Mohr, Community Development and Outreach Coordinator, Municipality of Central Manitoulin**



# THE GREAT ONTARIO

**GET-AWAY GIVE-AWAY**

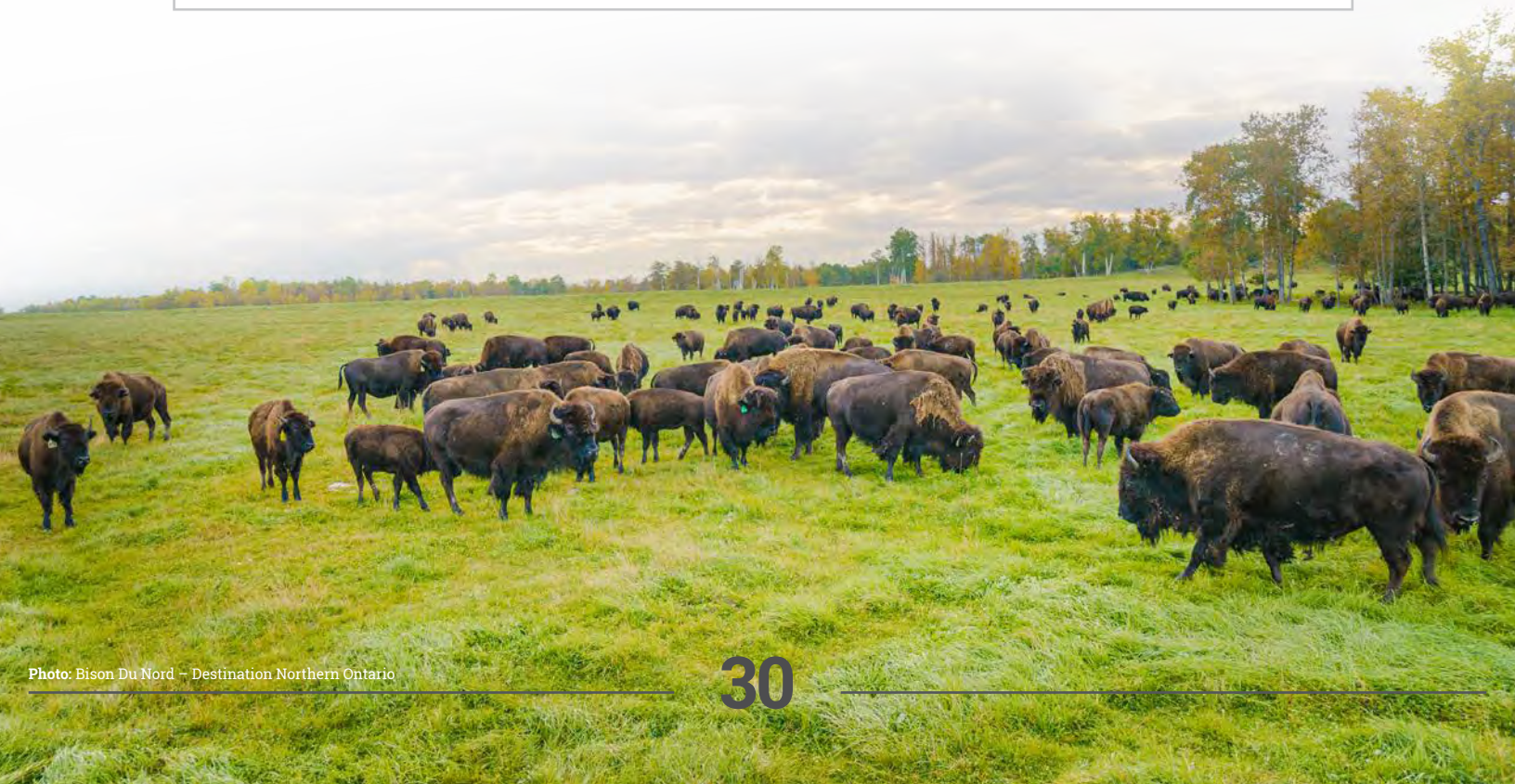
*"We wanted to take a moment to extend our thanks for your part in putting together the Great Ontario Getaway Giveaway contest. It has been a very difficult and uncertain season for tourist camps in our region, and every bit of advertising and revenue that is made possible is appreciated. It is a hard sell to get people to travel such a great distance from southern Ontario to NW Ontario, so a free stay made for a good incentive. The prize winners to Rainbow Point Lodge were Mr. & Mrs. Ian Lee. They truly enjoyed their trip here and are talking about making a return visit next year. Whether it happens or not, at least the good word is out there amongst their family and friends, and perhaps a future guest will come out of this some day."*

**— Bob & Gale Extence, Rainbow Point Lodge**

# Financial Plan 2021-22

Destination northern Ontario successfully leveraged its budget **by 76%, 26% more** than its forecasted 50% established at the beginning of the fiscal.

Area of focus	Actual	Core budget	%
Governance & Administration	\$ 381,140.00	\$ 390,235.00	-2%
Product Development	\$ 520,371.00	\$ 500,000.00	+4%
Investment Attraction	\$ 201,700.00	\$ 200,000.00	+1%
Workforce Development & Industry Training	\$ 456,896.00	\$ 500,000.00	-9%
Marketing & Communications	\$ 1,761,551.00	\$ 1,735,000.00	+2%
Partnership	\$ 605,000.00	\$ 605,000.00	-
Covid Recovery	\$ 228,716.00		
Provincial LGBT Initiative	\$ 129,456.00		
Supplemental Workforce Development	\$ 425,455.00		
Interest	\$ 591.00		
<b>Total (MHSTCI Allocation)</b>	<b>\$ 4,710,876.00</b>	<b>\$ 3,930,235.00</b>	<b>+20%</b>
Ontario Skills Fund	\$ 495,588.00		
Leveraged Contributions*	\$ 1,714,369.00	\$ 2,000,000.00	
<b>Total \$</b>	<b>6,920,833.00</b>	<b>\$ 5,930,235.00</b>	<b>+17%</b>



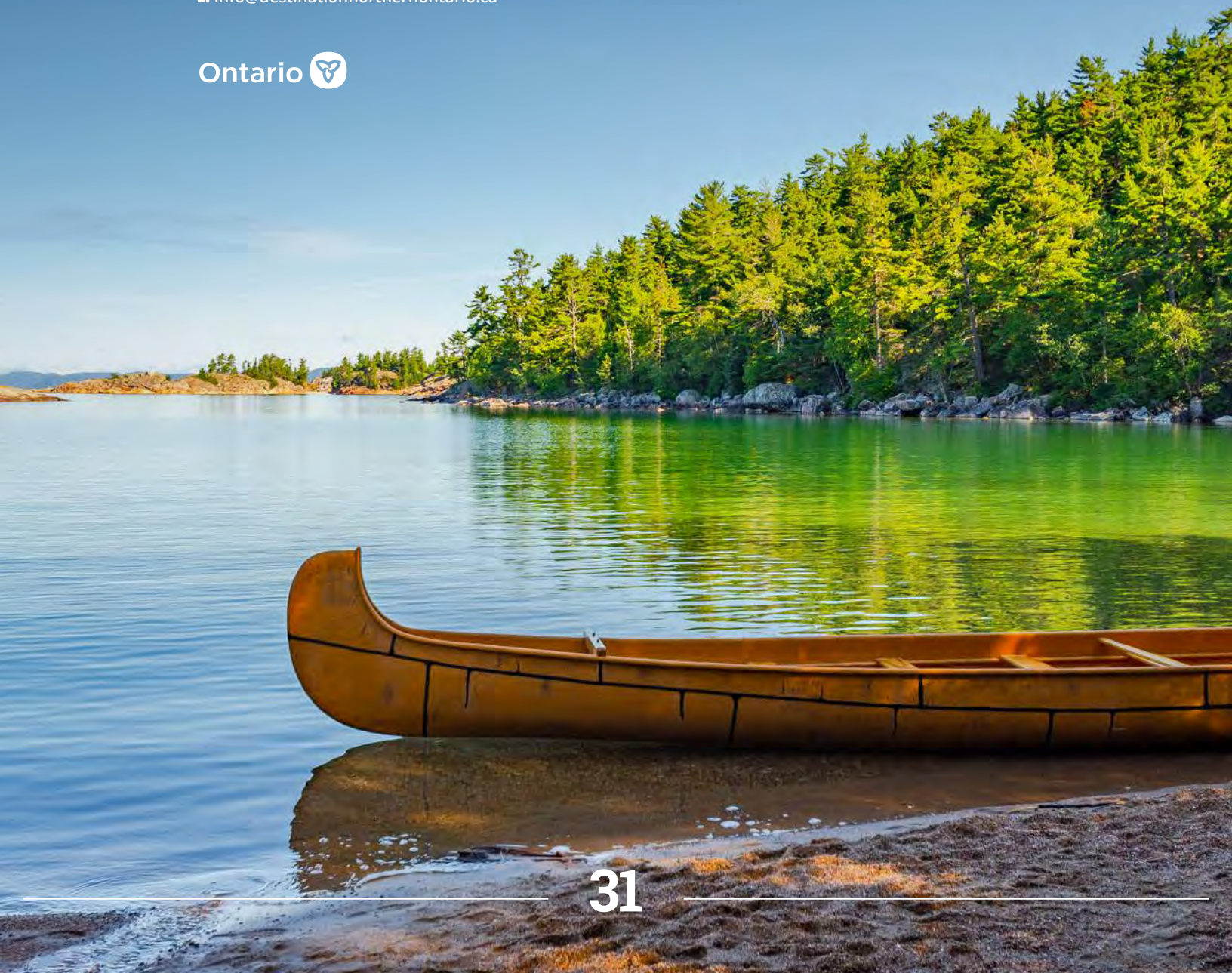




**Destination Northern Ontario** / [destinationnorthernontario.ca](https://destinationnorthernontario.ca)  
**Tourism Excellence North** / [tourismexcellencenorth.ca](https://tourismexcellencenorth.ca)  
**Domestic Marketing** / [northernontario.travel](https://northernontario.travel)  
**International Travel Trade** / [northernontarioitt.com](https://northernontarioitt.com)



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THANK YOU



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