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**MEDIA RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **DESTINATION NORTHERN ONTARIO CONGRATULATES WINNERS AND FINALISTS OF ONTARIO TOURISM AWARDS**

(Sault Ste. Marie, ON) – On Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, as many as 800 tourism professionals and operators took part in the Ontario Tourism Summit’s annual awards gala where the best and brightest from across the province are celebrated for their achievements in the tourism industry. Northern Ontario showed up in multiple award categories, winning in three.

Destination Northern Ontario wishes to congratulate Pat Forrest on her Lifetime Achievement Award presented to an individual that has made significant contributions to the development and promotion of Ontario’s tourism industry, and established a visible, long-term record of accomplishment that merits special attention. Pat has been a long-time employee of Destination Northern Ontario.

In addition, awards were taken home by Indigenous Tourism Ontario and Destination Ontario for the Culinary Tourism Leadership Award (awarded by the Culinary Tourism Alliance of Ontario). This partnership developed a strategy and tools that will lead the way for culinary tourism product development and tourism experiences in Northern Ontario. It has been recognized by the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada and other provincial and federal tourism organizations for its ground-breaking work.

Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung Historical Centre was awarded the Indigenous Tourism Award. Previous Executive Director of Science North and long time Northern Ontario tourism advocate, Jim Marchbank was awarded the Tourism Champion of the Year award.

Northern Ontario finalists included;

- Destination Northern Ontario – Rendez-vous Canada 2019 - Tourism Marketing Partnership Award
- Destination Northern Ontario – Northern Ontario Wayfinding – Tourism Innovator of the Year
- Fort William Historical Park – Indigenous Tourism Award
- Science North – Ontario’s Choice – Attraction of the Year Award
- Gary Crallé – Aubrey Falls, Montreal River, Algoma - Travel Media Photography Award
- Great Lakes Cultural Camps - Indigenous Tourism Award
- West Nipissing Chamber of Commerce - Ontario Culinary Tourism Event of the Year

“Congratulations to all award winners and finalists. Northern Ontario continues to produce strong tourism products and partnerships and will use this positive momentum to continue addressing the ever-changing needs of our industry in the face of our new challenges and reality”, said David MacLachlan, Executive Director of Destination Northern Ontario.

*Working Together to Build A Stronger Tourism Industry*



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“ITO would like to wish congratulations to all winners and nominees. Especially Pat Forrest on her Lifetime Achievement Award. We are very proud to have partnered with Destination Northern Ontario on the Northern Ontario Indigenous Food Tourism Strategy. This work is the first of its kind anywhere in the world and we look forward to growing this work to include all of Ontario. This work will benefit the entire industry and we could not have done it without having a mutually beneficial relationship with Destination Northern Ontario and all our valued partners”, said Kevin Eshkawkogan, President and Chief Executive Officer, Indigenous Tourism Ontario

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

*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](http://www.destinationnorthernontario.ca). Follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/DestNorthernOnt](https://www.twitter.com/DestNorthernOnt) or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/DestinationNorthernOntario](https://www.facebook.com/DestinationNorthernOntario) for the most up to date news and information.*

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