

# CANADA'S GROUP OF SEVEN TOURISM PRODUCT

## ALGOMA PILOT PHASE

### *"A MASTER PLAN TO DEVELOP AND LAUNCH GROUP OF SEVEN TOURISM EXPERIENCES IN ALGOMA"*

#### *Part 3 of 3*

*Updated & Revised May 2013*



the Tourism Company

*In association with*

**BRAY**  
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Tourism Development, Management & Marketing

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## 1 ALGOMA'S GROUP OF SEVEN IN 2020

### Imagine....

Visitors arriving into Sault Ste. Marie's airport are wowed by seeing a reproduction of the iconic Group of Seven image that matches the site they will soon be paddling to on their four day excursion.

Families creating together at the annual *Visitor Contributed Landscape Painting Challenge* on the Group of Seven Touring Route.

Demand for *ACR's Group of Seven Tour Train Excursion*, (art kit included!) continues to grow.

Adventurers coming from the United Kingdom are returning for their annual quest seeking sites of specific paintings using the Algoma Group of Seven app to guide and inspire them.

Inspired by the 2012 "*Painting Canada: Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven*" exhibit, UK-based Dulwich Gallery hosts their fourth annual visit with members to visit the landscapes and vistas that inspired so much of their work.

Lodges, outfitters and guides busy with groups of amateur painters, sketchers and photographers, creating, fishing and soaking up the Group of Seven landscapes as their inspiration.

The media release announcing keynote speakers, performers and artists for the *Algoma Northern Landscapes 2020* event is generating buzz on social and travel media. Better yet, it is filling hotels, B&Bs, restaurants and attractions in Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma and the North Shore during a time that historically had been a challenge!

Read on to find out how this vision can be brought to life.



## 2 CONTEXT FOR THE MASTER PLAN

The national and international reputation of Canada's Group of Seven artists represents an asset of great and growing value. The Group of Seven's close association with Algoma and the North Shore of Lake Superior, position the tourism sector throughout Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma and the North Shore to use this asset to achieve economic growth.

A consulting team, led by <sup>the</sup> Tourism Company and including Bray Heritage and BC Hughes completed this two-stage pilot project on behalf of Tourism Northern Ontario (TNO).

The first stage has three parts and resulting documents as follows:

- The '*Foundations*' document completed extensive research to answer questions and provide information to understand the nature of the assets as a whole, to identify any limitations and to provide parameters for what is possible;
- The *Detailed Product Assessment* examined a long list of potential products in more detail to identify highest potential opportunities and gaps that need addressing; and
- This *Master Plan for Group of Seven Tourism Product Development* identifies actions and investments to support and facilitate the development and execution/delivery of a critical mass of Group of Seven offers in and around Algoma that generate sustainable economic activity.



The second stage, presents a more detailed outline of product development opportunities in a *Group of Seven Experience Development Guide* for reference and use by municipalities, public sector and private sector operators and tourism stakeholders. It provides inspiration and market intelligence to support development of new products and experiences.

Collectively these documents provide a combination of practical information and inspiration to support and facilitate the development of a set of new tourism experiences that ultimately contribute to the economic health and prosperity of the region. These are also living documents and as such require updating and refining as new information becomes available, market and economic conditions shift and experiences get introduced.

### 3 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Highlights from analysis of the opportunity and the implications for product development are outlined below.

**PRIVATE SECTOR AND PUBLIC SECTOR COMMITMENT AND PARTICIPATION WILL BE CRITICAL TO LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND SUCCESS IN ESTABLISHING ALGOMA AS DESTINATION FOR G OF 7 TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES.** The Master Plan and *Experience Development Guide* will provide information and action plans relevant to both private and public sector stakeholders.

**ALGOMA MUST DIFFERENTIATE ITS GROUP OF SEVEN TOURISM EXPERIENCES FROM OTHER REGIONS IN ONTARIO AND CANADA.** It is recommended that differentiation take a two-pronged approach. The first element is to focus only on Group of Seven artists that worked in and created works specific to Algoma. The second element is to offer visitors a range of general interest and specialized Group of Seven experiences supported by 'endorsed Algoma Group of Seven Knowledge Experts' committed to quality and authenticity.

**GROUP OF SEVEN EXPERIENCES LAY A FOUNDATION FOR AN ENRICHED ARTS & CULTURAL EXPERIENCE IN SAULT STE. MARIE AND ALGOMA** In addition to the tourism opportunities generated by the Group of Seven, the landscapes and coastlines that captivated and inspired the Group of Seven continue to capture the imagination of other artists that include artist Ken Danby, photographer Dr. Roberta Bondar, artist Robert Bateman and many others. In addition, a strong arts community is active in the region, with 38 local artists showcased in 'Arts & Culture Sault Ste. Marie and Area' publication. Linking current artists to historical assets and resources such as the Group of Seven builds a strong foundation for a rich arts and cultural experience in Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma and the North Shore of Lake Superior.

**PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IS NOT GENERALLY LIMITED BY SPECIFIC SITE LOCATIONS AND ACCESSIBILITY.** A number of Group of Seven Algoma and North Shore Lake Superior sites are located in or on Crown land (Provincial Parks) or on private land (CN) owned by a stakeholder/partner who is keen to explore the Group of Seven tourism opportunities. The possibilities are not, therefore, generally limited by knowledge of where sites are, or by land ownership or access issues.

#### FEATURES OF ALGOMA AND NORTH SHORE GROUP OF SEVEN TOURISM EXPERIENCES....

1. A continuum of offers ranging from 'inspired by' to those supported by site-specific and historically accurate details.
2. Delivered by operators committed to quality and authenticity.
3. Experiences centred on the artists, the landscapes and their works specific to the region.

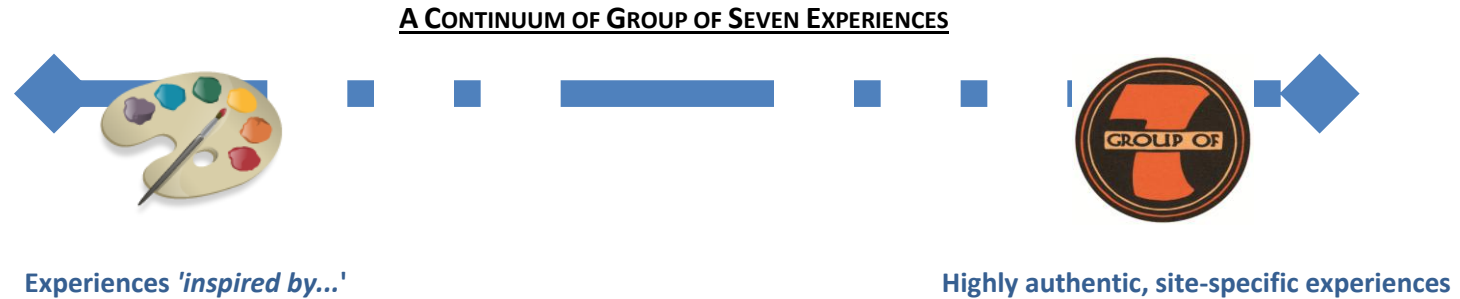
**SOME SITES MAY BE AT RISK.** Group of Seven experiences in the Algoma and North Shore region that rely on access to sites located on Crown or private land will be subject to some uncertainty over the longer term. Plans for land use may change. As well, forestry, other resource extraction, expansion of transmission corridors and/or the development or expansion of wind farms may also impact tourism offers. Until the exact location of painting sites and how they relate to planned developments of many kinds is known, it is unclear how tourism opportunities related to the Group of Seven will be impacted.

**NEW OPPORTUNITIES WILL EMERGE AND EXPERIENCES WILL BE ENHANCED AS RESEARCH SPECIFIC TO THE GROUP OF SEVEN IN ALGOMA CONTINUES.** The team of Gary and Joanie McGuffin and Michael Burtch continue to research precise site locations and uncover new stories and facts relating to the Group of Seven in Algoma derived from archival material that is being reviewed for the first time. When this information is available, new tourism opportunities may be identified. For example, there are a cluster of sites in and around Rosspoint and Terrace Bay area that, when specifically located, may support development of trails and related hiking and interpretive opportunities. Similarly, the identification of sites from waterways will support guided and unguided canoe and kayak experiences and opportunities. In addition to this more formal research, there are many stories from area residents and the work of other professionals, including Sue and Jim Waddington, that will enrich the background.

**NEW OPPORTUNITIES WILL EMERGE AS THE DESTINATION AS A WHOLE EVOLVES.** Changes to communities, parks, transportation options, accommodation and new development in general will impact the opportunities and may support new, upgraded or refreshed experiences. In particular, the planned development of the Rivers Edge in Sault Ste. Marie, the increase in restaurants serving local cuisine throughout the region and the maturing of the broader cultural offer will enhance the overall experience. It will be important to inform and engage new stakeholders as they emerge.

**EACH STAKEHOLDER, COMMUNITY AND OPERATOR WILL PROCEED AT THEIR OWN PACE.** As a result, overall development and progress will not be under any one party's control and as a result may be uneven. It will be important to keep momentum going with an overall coordination function to pull pieces together as they become available.

**PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AT A DESTINATION LEVEL IS SUSTAINABLE WHEN VISITORS ARE PROVIDED WITH A CONTINUUM OF OFFERS.** The range of Group of Seven tourism possibilities includes intense, highly authentic experiences that will appeal to those avid about the Group of Seven and the arts in general to less intense offers that have a more passive interaction with the Group of Seven. Both ends of the continuum are important contributors to building a sustainable offer that provides a good balance to visitors and contributes to new or increased economic activity.



**SUCCESSFUL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES REQUIRE DEDICATED RESOURCES AND SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE.** Experience at supporting countless attempts to develop new tourism experiences reinforces the reality that an undertaking of this scope requires dedicated resources. These resources include volunteer time from engaged stakeholders, contracted specialized expertise at various stages as well as an overall coordination function to keep momentum going and to coordinate the many moving parts.

**INVESTMENT INTO PRODUCT AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT IS EXPECTED TO ATTRACT VISITORS WHO SPEND MORE AND STAY LONGER.** It is projected that collectively, every visitor who stays longer in Wawa, Marathon or Terrace Bay to experience the Group of Seven and for every new visitor who arrives into Sault Ste. Marie seeking a related cultural experience, average spending per trip in Algoma and area will increase over time.

AVERAGE SPENDING PER TRIP	
<i>Knowledge Seekers<sup>3</sup></i>	\$1,386
<i>Average Overnight Arts and Culture Trip Spending<sup>2</sup></i>	\$667
<i>Average Overnight Trip Spending All Visits to Ontario<sup>2</sup></i>	\$374
<i>RTO13B 2010<sup>1</sup></i>	\$244

Sources: 1: Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture, 2010; 2: Ontario Arts and Culture Tourism Profile, Research Resolutions & Consulting Ltd. November 2012; 3: Consumer Insight Research 13B, TNS Canada, December 4, 2012

The Master Plan that follows acknowledges and responds to these product development considerations.



## 4 A FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE DEVELOPMENT OF ALGOMA GROUP OF SEVEN EXPERIENCES

### 4.1 VISION

*The tourism sector in Algoma will invest in and facilitate the development of a range of new and enhanced tourism opportunities inspired by the Group of Seven's presence in the region to attract new visitors, extend stays and increase spending in the region.*

### 4.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Algoma will do this by:

- taking a long term view and phased approach to building sustainable products and experiences that showcase the areas Group of Seven assets: this approach includes regular updating and refreshing of available offers;
- working in close partnership with intra-an- inter-regional partners to design, deliver and market these experiences;
- adopting a 'portfolio approach' to product development that recognizes the value of investing into a mix of mainstream and specialized experiences;
- investing in tools and resources common to all; and
- developing and launching an overarching marketing campaign tying the various offers together.

Algoma will focus initial Group of Seven product development efforts on highest priority opportunities based on yield and ability to deliver as follows:

1. A suite of multi-day immersive, wilderness and lodge-based offers led by established high quality partners with a goal to be featured as CTC and Ontario *signature experiences*;
2. 'Always available offers' for the general public from communities, ACR, Ontario Parks and Parks Canada; and
3. Designing and hosting a multi-year created event with an overarching, but flexible theme or framework.

Initial efforts should concentrate on building a critical mass of offers for the summer and early fall season. Detailed recommendations for product development and marketing follow.

## 5 FOUNDATIONS FOR THE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

In addition to initiating specific action plans around the highest priority tourism experiences, it will be important to invest into and support a number of foundations as outlined below.

### 5.1 KEEP THE CORE ASSET AT THE CENTRE OF ALL EFFORTS

The Algoma Group of Seven tourism product has four basic elements – the landscapes, the paintings, the painters and the Algoma and North Shore region. The range of mainstream and more specialized offers that will be the focus of product development efforts will be strengthened by association with and endorsement of the official art institution in the area, the Art Gallery of Algoma (AGA). As the local 'keepers of the academically correct stories', the institution should be positioned as a key stakeholder and advisor as product and experience development evolves. The AGA can also provide links to art and art history faculties across the country and local art students who in turn may be trained to act as guides for some experiences.

The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is another interested party that is keen to play an advisory or support role as products and experiences are developed, as much of their mandate, expertise and collections are based on the Group of Seven. Association with or endorsement by the McMichael will increase credibility and reach in many areas.

- 1. Engage and reach out to art galleries as advisors, influencers, facilitators** to make connections or as partners in the delivery of some experiences. With their active and regular involvement, the four elements of the core product - the landscapes, the paintings, the painters and the Algoma and North Shore – will remain at the centre of all efforts.

## 5.2 INVEST IN PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TOOLS & RESOURCES COMMON TO ALL EXPERIENCES

The standalone *Experience Development Guide* provides a wealth of practical and useful information for adoption and use by individuals as well as communities. There are also a number of other tools, common to all, that should be developed and updated on a regular basis as detailed below. These tools should be made available to any interested parties.

- 1. List of local Group of Seven experts/resources to support a number of specialty, authentic offers to bring the stories to life.** Some of these will be more formal and include curators, historians, authors and university professors, while others will be local residents scattered throughout the region who have a personal connection to the Group. While the *Experience Development Guide* will provide a starting point, it is important that this resource remain as up to date as possible.
- 2. List of Group of Seven experts/resources from outside the region.** In addition to in-region resources, some experiences will benefit from the involvement of credible and endorsed experts from outside the region. The involvement of national and international curators and subject-experts will play a key role in attracting some affinity markets in particular, as these travellers will be motivated to travel to spend time with such these experts.
- 3. List of other experts to support delivery of experiences.** Many of the identified experiences would benefit from expertise in other areas that include for example photographers, artists of various mediums, historians and amateur theatre groups to bring characters to life.
- 4. Oral histories from local residents.** Collection and organization of these stories can be done using students from a local high school, college or university studying video production. A call-out to residents to be a part of this initiative and how they can be involved is recommended. The *Experience Development Handbook* provides guidelines on how oral histories can be gathered.
- 5. Catalogue of 'speaking notes' and scripts customized by sub-area of region for local use and knowledge.** Use of this type of tool will be useful when training and orientation for seasonal front line staff takes place at lodges, hotels, restaurants, retail outlets and outfitters.
- 6. Technology to enrich the experience.** While some travellers will use hard copy resources, many will use technology-based tools to enrich and guide their experience. For example, an Algoma Group of Seven application or 'app' for hand-held devices could be developed and distributed to showcase the sites, the landscape and the stories. Additional detail on an app is presented later in this report for consideration.

- 7. Design guidelines for interpretive and identification signage to be used at designated scenic lookouts.** Designation of a limited number of sites along the Highway 17 corridor and in related Provincial and National Parks in particular, will play a role in establishing a Group of Seven Tour Route. Other locations most suitable to interpretive signage include the Agawa Canyon and related trails as well as specific locations within communities to support their initiatives. In order to build a brand, a common design should be developed and implemented. Ideally, these design guidelines should build on or tie into interpretive panels recently installed in Algoma.
- 8. Image bank to be featured in marketing materials.** As new experiences are introduced, it will be important to collect professional-level images and video footage to be used in marketing efforts.

### 5.3 DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT AN INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION MODEL

In order to be sustainable and build a critical mass of quality offers and experiences, it is important to work with industry and community partners who are able to commit to this initiative over a number of years. Clarity around who does what will be an important factor to gaining support and participation.

**1. Screen interested suppliers for tourism market-readiness.** By using a self-assessment screening tool, interested suppliers will understand what expectations are for their involvement in designing and delivering Group of Seven tourism experiences. If they meet minimum requirements of the screening criteria they should then invest into gaining endorsement as a Group of Seven Knowledge expert. If they do not meet minimum screening criteria and are interested in delivering Group of Seven experiences, they should address any gaps in a timely manner prior to undertaking development of Group of Seven offers.

**2. Encourage operators to become an "endorsed Algoma Group of Seven Knowledge Expert".** Designation as an 'endorsed Algoma Group of Seven Knowledge expert' will elevate the range of experiences offered and also add credibility in the eyes of those visitors that seek a highly authentic and academically correct experience. While the process to become designated as an 'endorsed Algoma Group of Seven Knowledge expert' requires development, it is an important element to ensure authenticity and commitment to the artists and their work specific to the Algoma and North Shore area.

**3. Implement a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for signature by TNO and industry partners to guide efforts.** Some investment has already taken place to support this initiative and ideally will continue with support and investment of time and financial resources by a number of partners. Development of an MOU that outlines responsibilities of both TNO and individual industry partners whether it be a community or individual operator should address such items as financial commitments, product development initiatives, marketing support and timelines. This MOU can be multi-year, with annual review and renewal based on agreed-to criteria and considerations. Specific requirements for market readiness and Group of Seven knowledge should be included in the MOU as one means of building authentic and credible experiences.

#### **Sample of Market Readiness Screening Criteria**

1. Do you have a history of at least three (3) years of successful operation?
2. Do you maintain good standing of all applicable business licenses, insurance, legislative requirements, health and safety certification standards?
3. Can you take advanced registrations?
4. Do you accept credit cards or on-line payments?
5. Do you respond to consumer inquiries within 24 to 48 hours by phone or email?
6. Do you provide confirmation of bookings within 24 hours?
7. Are there satisfactory on-line reviews by customers?
8. Do you have a customer complaints process in place?
9. Do you have a cancellation policy in place?
10. Do you maintain a current web presence through a dedicated website and/or social media?

Source: <sup>the</sup> Tourism Company

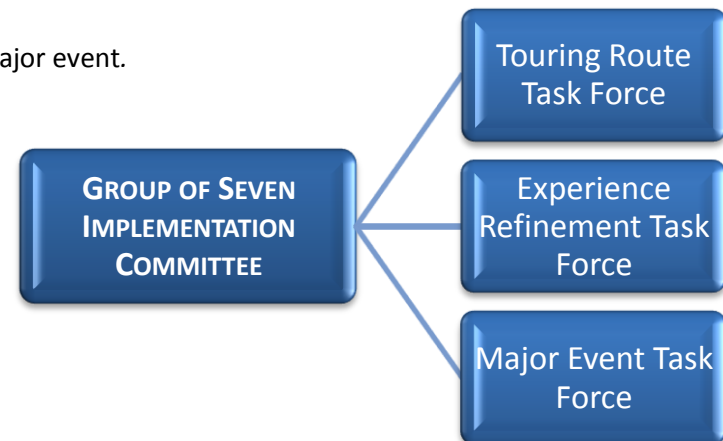
## 5.4 PROVIDE LEADERSHIP AND DEDICATED RESOURCES

This is a large, complex and multi-layered initiative that requires leadership and dedicated resources to bring the vision to fruition. More specifically, the development and launching of a suite of Algoma Group of Seven experiences requires both oversight through designated champions to advance Algoma's Group of Seven experience development on a regular basis and paid professionals to advance specific initiatives. Both will be most active and relevant in the next three years.

1. **Establish an Algoma Group of Seven Implementation Committee and related Task Forces.** This committee will be made up of volunteers that act as community and stakeholder champions to keep momentum on this project going. Their role would be to continue to coordinate and share relevant initiatives as well as acting as a sounding board for individual initiatives. Members should bring a range of skills to the table as well as good geographic diversity. While time commitment does not need to be (nor should it be) onerous, participants should have some knowledge of and commitment to implementation of this plan as presented and the priorities identified. This is not intended to create a new organization but rather is an action-oriented committee that should be wound down once momentum has been established and results are being seen.

A number of Task Forces should also be established to support specific initiatives that could include for example:

- *Touring Route Task Force* leading initiatives that include community-based offers and successive and coordinated offers along the Route;
- *Experience Refinement Task Force* to provide oversight to all initiatives including screening and endorsing of 'Algoma Group of Seven Knowledge Experts'; and
- *Major Event Task Force* to plan and execute the recommended major event.



- 2. Determine what can be supported by partners within current capacity.** A range of skill-sets are required to advance initiatives that include for example, support for event management, marketing execution and tourism experience development. Any paid positions must have the ability to work with public and private sector, urban and rural partners of varying sizes throughout Algoma who each target various niche and general interest markets. Successful coordination also requires developing relationships with recognized experts and resources outside the region that include the McMichael Canadian Collection and the National Art Gallery.

TNO should first consider a model or range of options on how best to proceed under current operating parameters. For example, some product development tasks could be done by OTMPC Northern Partnership staff, while others could be contracted on a part or full-time basis, an approach that has been successfully used in other Ontario tourism regions. Other functions could be positioned within Tourism Sault Ste. Marie (TSSM) or Algoma Country. Ontario's Product Facilitator model, using dedicated contracted expertise to support product initiatives such as Arts in the Wild and Paddling Ontario Alliance, is worth consideration and lends itself to the partnership model identified previously.

- 3. Invest in a coordination function to manage this initiative.** Discussions with the Steering Committee indicate that current capacity of tourism organizations is stretched. Therefore, investment into a coordination function is required to support the Implementation Committee and its various Task Forces to produce results. The need for the coordination function will be highest in the start-up phase in the next two years as this Master Plan is advanced. It is anticipated that the function of this position, at a minimum, would be as follows:
- Convene and coordinate Committee and Task Force meetings;
  - Coordinate industry information meetings and opportunity workshops;
  - Maintain and update resources for industry that include current listings of experts, etc;
  - Educate and inform area travel counsellors and staff at Information Centres about the offers once ready for market; and
  - Measure and report progress and results.
- 4. Invest in specialized and dedicated skill-sets to advance select product development priorities.** The most successful product development initiatives are a result of many one-on-one meetings, support, cajoling and mentoring with front line operators and other stakeholders. This level of effort acts a catalyst, making action a priority. To be effective, it is recommended that TNO:
- Engage contracted product facilitator(s) dedicated to working with operators to design and deliver intensive experiences that include multi-day, lodge-based and wilderness offers; and
  - Engage one or two generalist 'experience developers' to work with stakeholders/operators to support and guide the development of general-type offers that include, for example, coordinated activities along the touring route, community-led events and art in the park.

## 5.5 KICKSTART LOCAL INTEREST, KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION AMONG THE REGION'S TOURISM SECTOR

There has been widespread interest in this project throughout the region. In order to share the Master Plan and to motivate participation and involvement, it is recommended that TNO and its partners host a series of information sessions as outlined below.

- 1. Host information meetings for key community stakeholders, facilitators and funders** that include NOHFC, municipalities, First Nations, economic development and tourism community leaders, Ontario Parks and Parks Canada. These two-to-three hour information meetings should provide highlights of the Master Plan and inspiration on how stakeholders can get involved.
- 2. Host a series of 'Opportunity Workshops' to be directed at industry partners most likely to take leadership role in highest priority opportunities.** These full-day workshops, building on information from this initiative, will inform the tourism sector and community leaders about the highest priority opportunities, the Group of Seven assets in and around their immediate area and the broader region, target markets, their needs and how to reach. Ideally, these workshops would include working sessions around specific types of offers as outlined in the *Experience Development Guide*. These workshops should be held at a time of year and in locations suitable to the operators' needs and availability. In-person workshops are recommended in order to build relationships and synergies around specific types of offers.



## 5.6 STRENGTHEN THE 'ARRIVAL' EXPERIENCE

Visitors to Algoma tend to arrive in two main ways: by car or by plane. In both cases, their primary entry point is Sault Ste. Marie. The current arrival sequence, whether in from the airport or along one of the main highways, is uninspired at best and provides little indication of the tourism experiences that Algoma offers. However, by grouping and enhancing the existing attractions within the city's downtown core, this arrival experience can be substantially improved and become a fitting introduction to the region and, specifically, to the experiences related to the Group of Seven's activities there.

This theme can be introduced, but not until visitors reach the downtown core. The drive into the downtown core cannot be easily upgraded, since it is a typical sequence of automobile-oriented housing and commercial structures. There are also no alternative routes to the downtown that have a more scenic character. However, signage at the airport and at the city limits can direct visitors to orientation points in the downtown. Once there, further improvements can be made that take full advantage of the cultural attractions now present.

The most significant grouping of attractions includes the following: Ermatinger House National Historic Site; the Bush Plane Museum; the active marine port; the public library; and the Algoma Art Gallery. These sites are all located within a block of each other and have direct access to the linear waterfront park, and to views across the river. In this way, they offer a summary of the history of the city as well as an introduction to the character of the region. To the west, along the waterfront, are a series of attractions in parkland, culminating in the Algoma Central Railway terminus. Further west are more attractions with potential to be linked into this sequence: the Sault Locks National Historic Site, Whitefish Island and the St. Mary's Paper property redevelopment.

If the core attractions centred on the Art Gallery could be better linked, both functionally and thematically, then visitors could be oriented to the Group of Seven tourism experiences using existing facilities. The domestic, technological and economic aspects of Algoma's past and present are interpreted in the attractions adjacent to the Gallery, providing a context for the Gallery's potential focus on artistic interpretations of the region, with an emphasis on the Group of Seven. Improvements to the ACR terminus, potentially by integrating it with the future St. Mary's site redevelopment, the Locks (and future Gateway), would provide further orientation and interpretation, especially important for those visitors preparing for, or departing from, the train tour.

Any expansion of the Art Gallery of Algoma, the establishment of a permanent Group of Seven Gallery and implementation of higher museological standards that supports expanded types of exhibits would further strengthen the overall offer.

## 5.7 FACILITATE CONNECTIONS

Current and future Algoma Group of Seven tourism products and experiences are positioned throughout a broad geographic region. In order to build a stronger set of experiences, it will be important to ensure that 'connections' are nurtured and facilitated as follows:

- Connecting SSM as the gateway to wilderness and rural experiences in order to generate overnight stays both before and after visits to the region;
- Connecting arts and cultural offers with Algoma Group of Seven offers, to extend stays in cities and towns;
- Connecting the broader tourism sector (that includes accommodation, restaurants, parks and attractions for example), with Algoma Group of Seven offers, to assist the visitor in building multi-day experiences in the region, as part of packages or as independent travellers; and
- Connecting opportunities to leverage partner priorities and funding programs.

These connections should happen at two levels – product development and sales. The connections for product development should be the responsibility of the Implementation Committee. Building connections for the sales function is well-suited to the on-line booking capacity of TSSM and the planned reservation system being implemented across Northern Ontario.

## 5.8 PROVIDE A CENTRAL REGISTRY FOR GROUP OF SEVEN PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES

Once there is momentum, operators who have not been engaged will start to take notice. As a result, products and experiences will evolve and emerge without any specific investment. In order to gather a complete inventory of offers that are available to the consumer, a 'central registry' of sorts should be provided for operators to submit for marketing purposes. This type of registry would also be the place where communities, parks and other operators share their offers. Ideally, offers should be gathered twice annually, after a concentrated effort in the next six-to-nine month window.

Action plans for highest priority experiences follow.

## 6 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLANS FOR HIGHEST PRIORITY EXPERIENCES

Review of market interests and priorities, aligned with the possibilities in Algoma, Sault Ste. Marie and the North Shore of Lake Superior identified a number of high priority experiences for development as follows:

- Lodge-based experiences;
- Guided wilderness experiences;
- More departures of the Group of Seven Train Event;
- ACR Group of Seven Tour Train and Experience;
- Multi-day immersive in-the-field experiences;
- Group of Seven Touring Route; and
- Created multi-day event.

The chart to the right presents a likely scenario for product development and sales activities for each of these priority experiences, as well as when the experience is anticipated to be available to consumers. Each of the priority experiences requires some degree of product development – some more than others and will be somewhat dependent upon the interest and engagement of the tourism stakeholder offering the experience. The sales and marketing cycle differs by priority experience as well, influenced by the nature of the offer (general interest or niche) and lead time required to be effective.

Product Development Action plans for each high priority experience are presented in the pages that follow.

Group of Seven Master Plan Implementation Plan								
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>LODGE BASED EXPERIENCES</b>								
<i>product development</i>	■							
<i>sales and marketing initiated</i>		■						
<i>available to consumers</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>GUIDED WILDERNESS EXPERIENCES</b>								
<i>product development</i>	■							
<i>sales and marketing initiated</i>		■						
<i>available to consumers</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>MORE DEPARTURES GROUP OF SEVEN TRAIN EVENT</b>								
<i>product development</i>	■	■						
<i>sales and marketing initiated</i>		■						
<i>available to consumers</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>ACR GROUP OF SEVEN TOUR TRAIN &amp; EXPERIENCE</b>								
<i>product development</i>	■	■	■					
<i>sales and marketing initiated</i>		■						
<i>available to consumers</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>MULTI-DAY IMMERSIVE IN THE FIELD EXPERIENCES</b>								
<i>product development</i>	■	■	■					
<i>sales and marketing initiated</i>		■						
<i>available to consumers</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>GROUP OF SEVEN TOURING ROUTE</b>								
<i>product development</i>		■	■	■				
<i>sales and marketing initiated</i>		■						
<i>available to consumers</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>CREATED MULTI-DAY EVENT</b>								
<i>product development</i>		■	■	■	■			
<i>sales and marketing initiated</i>		■						
<i>available to consumers</i>			■	■	■	■	■	■

## 6.1 SHORT TERM: ACT AS CATALYST FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A SUITE OF SPECIALIZED, MULTI-DAY WILDERNESS/LODGE BASED AND TRAIN-BASED OFFERS

Three broad areas of opportunity have been identified as shorter-term in nature due to their capacity and general readiness to design and deliver new or enhanced experiences:

- Lodge-based experiences;
- Guided wilderness tours and experiences; and
- Train-based offers to include more departures of Group of Seven Train event and enhanced and specialized ACR Tour Train offers.

Action plans for lodge-based experiences and guided wilderness tours/experiences are presented under one plan due to the synergies and few number of operators that are likely to be involved.

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### 6.1.1 LODGE-BASED EXPERIENCES & GUIDED WILDERNESS TOURS AND EXPERIENCES

- 1. Host invitation-only opportunity workshops** for market-ready lodge owners/operators, area outfitters and guides who meet screening criteria and have an interest in being part of this initiative. During these meetings, gather insights on what experiences are currently being offered that can be positioned under the Algoma Group of Seven banner. The goal of these meetings is to generate interest and commitment to develop and offer new experiences for 2014 and beyond and to provide linkages to other experts who may be a part of these experiences. These workshops are best held in late September/early October in order to have time to develop and market new experiences for the 2014 season.
- 2. Offer 'how to develop authentic experience' workshops.** The CTC is currently revamping their Signature Experiences Collection and related industry materials, workshops and facilitator training. When complete, anticipated later in 2013, the Algoma Group of Seven project should engage a certified trainer to lead workshops with selected lodge and wilderness tour operators to enhance and enrich experiences under development. Ideally, an Algoma Group of Seven tourism experience will join CTC's Signature Experiences Collection.

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### 6.1.2 MORE DEPARTURES OF GROUP OF SEVEN TRAIN EVENT

1. **Convene a meeting with organizers of the Group of Seven Train Event** to explore options to support expansion of the number of annual departures and to further refine and enhance the experience. Timing of this meeting ideally would be prior to the September 2013 event to establish some momentum for 2014.

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### 6.1.3 ENHANCED AND SPECIALIZED ACR TOUR TRAIN GROUP OF SEVEN TOUR AND EXPERIENCES

There are a number of enhancements and new investments that the ACR Tour Train can consider specific to this initiative and within context of the ACR Revitalization Plan.

1. **Convene a meeting with ACR representatives to present the broader context and more specific ACR opportunities** that have been identified to assist the organization in evaluating their capacity and interest to pursue.
2. **Engage ACR representatives in the development of a standardized design for trail markers** in the Agawa Canyon to support an expanded and specialised Group of Seven experience in the Canyon. These trail markers should relate and tie into any interpretive signs to be installed throughout the region.
3. **Encourage and support development of a visitor centre in the Agawa Canyon to support Group of Seven experiences.** The proposed upgrading and refreshing of a visitor centre in Agawa Canyon as noted in the *Agawa Canyon Tour Train 2009 Revitalization Plan* can play a role in the delivery of Group of Seven-related workshops, lectures and a range of hands-on sessions. The space should be flexible enough to support delivery of experiences for large and more intimate groups, both inside and outside. The style and theme would ideally also include a strong Group of Seven storyline and design elements.



Algoma Central Railway  
Credit: ACR/CN

## 6.2 MEDIUM TERM: SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF 'ALWAYS-AVAILABLE OFFERS'

A set of 'always available offers' have been identified as medium-term in nature due to the lead time required to design and deliver new or enhanced experiences. Product development can and should start now. Action plans for each follow, with plans for a touring route, destination-specific experiences and 'art in the park' combined under one plan due to synergies between products and stakeholders involved.

### 6.2.1 MULTI-DAY IMMERSIVE ART GALLERY/IN-THE-FIELD EXPERIENCES

This type of experience is the most significant gap in current offers and the most complex to organize and deliver due to the number of suppliers that should be involved to deliver a high quality, academically-endorsed offer. Ideally the experience should combine a gallery experience with in-situ experiences. It is also one of the most lucrative.

1. **Develop and host a pilot experience** to be delivered in the late summer/early September period. Test with an affinity group. Once refined, the offer can be marketed to a variety of affinity groups at various times of the year, with a particular focus on Art Gallery patrons and members and Canadian University Alumni travel groups. The development of this offer requires a particular skills-set and dedicated resources to coordinate the experience.

### 6.2.2 GROUP OF SEVEN TOURING ROUTE, DESTINATION-SPECIFIC EXPERIENCES, STORIES AND EVENTS & ART IN THE PARK

As noted in the more detailed product assessment, there are a number of general and specific touring opportunities that involve many communities and other stakeholders.

1. **Host a series of Opportunity Workshops for community leaders, municipal staff, Parks Canada and Ontario Parks** to outline the potential, build a plan and get commitment and estimated timing for community-led experiences and offers.
2. **Initiate planning and coordination for a three-year series of created mini-Group of Seven experiences for touring visitors** between SSM and Terrace Bay along with supporting consumer materials available on-line and in hard copy:
  - o 2015: *Visitor-contributed Landscape Painting Challenge*; resulting landscapes highlighted in 2016;
  - o 2016: *Look-See-Paint Challenge* with works displayed in communities in 2017; and
  - o 2017: *Landscape Photography Challenge* with on-line submissions entered into contest for judging by experts; winning submissions would be part of 2018 anniversary celebrations.

### 6.3 LONG TERM: DESIGN AND HOST A MULTI-YEAR CREATED EVENT

The goal for this event is to establish Algoma as the home of a one-of-a-kind event that is a 'must go to event' that generates visits at a time of the year that business is needed and the broader community has capacity and interest in hosting.

#### 1. Convene an '*Algoma Group of Seven event steering and advisory committee*'

to develop and deliver this new event. The role of the committee is to identify ideal timeframes, content and funding sources to support more detailed design. Ideally this committee should have representation from the following stakeholders:

- Tourism and community leaders from SSM, Algoma and the North Shore;
- Art Gallery of Algoma and/or McMichael Canadian Collection;
- Ontario Parks;
- Parks Canada;
- ACR Tour Train;
- Other tourism sectors such as accommodation, attractions and restaurants; and
- Algoma University.

#### RECOMMENDED COMPONENTS AND FEATURES OF THE EVENT

- *Start small* with plans to expand over time if market supports;
- *Consider a bi-annual event* rather than annual event;
- Consider *programming in both urban and rural centres that is linked through themes and schedules*. For example, rural elements could be in weeks or months ahead of a large capacity urban offer, or conversely, an urban event could be a kick-off for rural-based offers;
- *Include programming that has a technical component* to attract academics and curators that will in turn add credibility as well as programming for the general public; and
- *Work under an overarching theme that is broader than the Group of Seven* but that can embrace or support a Group of Seven element each year. A theme that has been suggested by more than one stakeholder in the arts community is 'northern landscapes'.

## 7 MARKETING ALGOMA'S GROUP OF SEVEN EXPERIENCES

When mature, the Group of Seven experiences will appeal to a wide range of types of visitors, many of which will be a new type of visitor for Algoma Country, Tourism Sault Ste. Marie and TNO. Marketing and selling to this new type of visitor will require investments into refined tactics, visuals, copy and messaging that appeal to them. Recommendations for marketing Algoma's Group of Seven experiences follow.

### 7.1 DEVELOP 'NAME' , LOGO AND BRAND TOOLKIT FOR THE COLLECTION OF OFFERS

In order to establish presence and awareness in a busy marketing landscape, it is recommended that a 'name' and logo/image for a branded collection of Algoma Group of Seven experiences be developed. To be used consistently across all marketing platforms including Algoma Country, Tourism SSM, Tourism Northern Ontario, OTMPC and CTC, the name and logo/image would establish credibility and awareness with consumers and travel trade partners over time. Included in this naming should be a distinct marker for those experiences being delivered by endorsed '*Algoma Group of Seven Specialists*'. In order to ensure this consistency create a Brand Toolkit that specifies proper use of these Algoma Group of Seven marketing assets.

### 7.2 OBTAIN RIGHTS TO USE A SELECT NUMBER OF GROUP OF SEVEN IMAGES

As part of the naming and branding the collection of offers, it is also recommended that TNO adopt one or two iconic Group of Seven images in all marketing materials. The use of a limited number of images will play a role in establishing the region as home to these types of landscapes and works and also reinforce the commitment to the works specific to the region. Sudbury has laid claim to Carmichael and the A.Y. Jackson Lookout located in Onaping thirty minutes northwest of Sudbury, takes visitors to the site of *Spring on the Onaping River*. Thomson is associated with both Owen Sound and Algonquin Park. The self-guided A.Y. Jackson Trail is located in the Ottawa Valley, where Jackson lived and painted for 16 years.

Based on research completed for this assignment, it is suggested that iconic images from both Harris and MacDonald may be the most appropriate for use in marketing the Algoma Group of Seven tourism experiences as presented on the next page. Paintings selected for inclusion in marketing and branding should ideally be located on protected public lands in order that visitors will have access to these sites in perpetuity.

Images from paintings associated with MacDonald are in the public realm while images from paintings associated with Harris do not enter the public realm until 2020. Therefore, permission would need to be secured for use of Harris images, but not for MacDonald images. The use of specific images associated with these artists to represent this area should be further confirmed by curators and Group of Seven experts. Once confirmed, it is recommended that the sites of these few iconic images be clearly marked with interpretive signage.



**ICONIC PAINTINGS, ALGOMA**



*The Solemn Land, MacDonal*



*Algoma Waterfall, Harris*

**ICONIC PAINTINGS, NORTH SHORE**



*North Shore, Lake Superior Harris*



*Above Lake Superior, North Shore, Harris*



*Pic Island, Harris*

## 7.3 ADOPT MARKETING TACTICS TO REACH TARGET VISITORS

Due to the number and diversity of offers and types of visitor they will appeal to, a multi-pronged approach is required that will get the right message to the right audience using the right medium at the right time for each market segment. Much of this can be done working in partnership with OTMPC Northern Partnerships, OTMPC Corporate and CTC. Operators, Parks, TSSM and Algoma Country must all embrace the commitment to marketing these experiences. General marketing considerations are outlined below and should be considered as more detailed marketing plans are developed and implemented for each experience.

### 7.3.1 MARKETING IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

- Build awareness through on-line tools (blogs, posts, videos, etc.) and traditional media targeting the arts and cultural traveller, using search terms, images and content that will appeal to them;
- Integrate a dedicated Algoma Group of Seven theme into TNO digital strategy and tools;
- Leverage relevant OTMPC marketing tactics to reach arts and cultural travellers;
- Build an email database of parties interested in new offers by adding 'arts or Group of Seven' as a sign up option;
- Develop tour operator and media contacts that reach adult learning groups and organizations, affinity groups and art galleries/museums;
- Join newsletters for art groups, art galleries and related organizations to gain insights into partnership opportunities; and
- Submit media releases to newsletters for art groups, members of art galleries, etc.

### 7.3.2 MARKETING GENERAL INTEREST EXPERIENCES

- Fully integrate into existing marketing tools and tactics, highlighting what is new annually; and
- Work with OTMPC media relations to submit stories and blog posts to general interest publications and websites, matching offer to readership – family, train travel, auto touring, etc.

### 7.3.3 MARKETING THE TOURING ROUTE AND RELATED EXPERIENCES

- Integrate Group of Seven experiences, interpretation and vistas into Ride Lake Superior materials as they emerge.
- Coordinate efforts with area Ontario Parks, Parks Canada and 'Friends of' Groups to integrate Group of Seven offers into their 'Art in the Park' offers.
- Once the touring route is more fully developed:
  - erect signage on highways and gateways/points of arrival that include Terrace Bay, Sault Ste. Marie from the US and within Ontario and the airport to note "You are entering the Algoma Group of Seven landscapes" or similar;
  - showcase on all area DMO sites that include Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma Country and communities along the North Shore;
  - showcase the Group of Seven Touring Route on interactive maps on Provincial website and on the GoTourOntario.ca web-based mapping system.

### 7.3.4 PRODUCE A GROUP OF SEVEN 'MAP GUIDE'.

The intent of this visitor's guide as map guide is to highlight self-guided touring routes to accessible and known sites or areas visited by the Group of Seven which in turn will support independent exploration of Group of Seven sites. Ideally, the map guide would not have commercial advertising to use limited space for listing and some lure content. There may be the opportunity to have the map done in partnership with private sector partners, but any partnership must keep the 'visitor first' lens in place. The physical size of the map guide should be pocket-sized for use while exploring the area. The type of paper should be heavy enough that it can withstand multiple uses. Once designed and produced, these map guides should be made available for download as well to be viewed on tablets and other mobile devices used by visitors and travel counselors alike.

*The sign of a well-designed 'map guide' is one that has lots of wrinkles, some personal notes on it and is kept as a souvenir to share with family and friends back home.*

## 7.4 DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH THIRD PARTY PARTNERS SERVING TARGET SECTORS

In order to attract long haul travellers and the tour operators that sell to them, Algoma must position the destination and experiences so they resonate with visitors who typically have a closer affinity with and knowledge of the key tourism focal points of Toronto and Niagara Falls. This will require a complete destination sell and showcasing of only the very best suppliers and experiences, particularly in initial years. This will also require developing relationships with new third party sellers and working closely with them to increase their knowledge and awareness of the collective offer.

Travel trade is more than motor coach tours. Travel trade, defined as third party sellers of travel experiences, includes tour operators, travel agents, wholesalers and in-bound tour operators. These travel trade partners sell destinations and itineraries to pre-formed groups, individuals who buy group travel and fully independent travellers (FIT) who may be on a fly/drive type of vacation in either a car or RV. Tour operators serving the RV and car rental market often provide itineraries and maps for both domestic and international travellers and, so, are an important link to the independent traveller.

Group leaders can be formal or informal. Group organizers work with social, affinity and special interest groups or organizations that may have special interest in Algoma's Group of Seven experiences due to the nature of their work. Marketing to affinity and special interest groups requires direct sales/contact and messaging as well as programming specific to that sector.

Due to the fact that group and travel trade sales are through third parties, the decision-making cycle can be as high as 18 months, particularly for overseas and long haul travel. There are, however, groups and some trade partners with shorter decision-making cycles who sell day trips to shorter haul travellers.

- Work only with TICO licensed tour operators.
- Build relationships with major art galleries to customize travel programs for members and patrons.
- Build relationships with Canadian Alumni travel organizations using direct sales activities to build relationships. Within this university community, those institutions in a city with an art gallery with Group of Seven works are a higher priority and include University of Toronto, McMaster University and Western University for example.

### SELECT UNIVERSITY ALUMNI TRAVEL PROGRAMS CANADA

- Alumni Travel Program University of Toronto
- Alumni Travel Program, Concordia University
- McGill Alumni Friends and Travel Program
- Alumni Western – Discover the World Travel
- McMaster Alumni Travel Program
- Queen's Alumni Travel

- Work with tour operators servicing the alumni travel market in Canada that include:
  - Alumni Holidays (AHI)
  - Gohagan & Company
  - Worldwide Quest International
- Explore the US Educational Travel Conference as a means to build relationships that will generate business. This is a crowded market place with a focus on the US alumni market in particular. Efforts in the US market will be more successful if working with a group with particular affinity to and interest in Canada's Group of Seven.

## 7.5 EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MARKETING AND INTERPRETATION USING APPS

Apps, or computer programs designed to run on mobile devices and tablet computers, offer an excellent way of providing visitors with high quality information. Because they run on mobile phones and tablets, they offer portability; in addition, because they do not always rely on internet access, they are useful in remote areas where internet access is either spotty or unavailable. For the Group of Seven tourism development process, creation of apps that offer visitors self-guided tours of the area is an attractive and cost-effective tourism product.

What would a Group of Seven app do? First, it would provide mapping that guides visitors to the general areas within which the Group painted, and then it would direct visitors to specific, accessible sites from which specific paintings were made. Second, it would provide background information on the artists, on the creative process for the paintings themselves, and describe critical reactions to each painting, much the way a gallery tour would do. Once visitors reached each painting site, images on the app could provide visitors with the ability to make comparisons between the painted image (on screen) and the setting today (note: should the McGuffin images become available, then their careful re-creations of the paintings, in the correct lighting and seasons, could be another image for comparison). Third, the app can provide visitors with the ability to customize their tour, from the quick visit to a prolonged stay, with appropriate orientation and interpretation for each level of interest. Fourth, apps can be created and customized to fit the precise needs of the Group of Seven tourism initiative, and can be updated to stay current, providing links to other opportunities in the area such as accommodation, dining and attractions. Finally, apps can be a component of a welcome package used to promote visitation to Algoma, offered upon arrival or beforehand, on line.

In whatever investment is made into technology, ensure that the technology used will be adopted by the target end-user and that it will not be an end unto itself but, rather, a useful and relevant tool to enhance the experience.

## 7.6 EDUCATE AND ENGAGE VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES ON THE FRONT LINE

As Group of Seven experiences and products become more available, it will be important to keep tourism information centre staff at local, regional, provincial and national levels informed. Make a concentrated effort to invite travel counselors and other influencers to experience as many offers as they can so that they can speak about them from personal experience when responding to inquiries from visitors.



Lake Superior Provincial Park  
Photo Credit: Ontario Parks

## 8 PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

Successful implementation of this master plan requires commitment to the long term vision, as well as action in the short term to establish momentum. The long term vision and short term plans are outlined in this section.

### 8.1 LONG TERM PLAN

The timelines on the chart to the right table, presented earlier in this report, provides a snapshot of when product development is most active, when sales and marketing is initiated and when the experience should be ready for visitors provides the long term plan. Ultimately, the timing will respond to resources and interest of the many parties involved and is not set in stone.

Group of Seven Master Plan Implementation Plan								
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>LODGE BASED EXPERIENCES</b>								
<i>product development</i>	█							
<i>sales and marketing initiated</i>		█						
<i>available to consumers</i>		█	█	█	█	█	█	█
<b>GUIDED WILDERNESS EXPERIENCES</b>								
<i>product development</i>	█							
<i>sales and marketing initiated</i>		█						
<i>available to consumers</i>		█	█	█	█	█	█	█
<b>MORE DEPARTURES GROUP OF SEVEN TRAIN EVENT</b>								
<i>product development</i>	█	█						
<i>sales and marketing initiated</i>		█						
<i>available to consumers</i>		█	█	█	█	█	█	█
<b>ACR GROUP OF SEVEN TOUR TRAIN &amp; EXPERIENCE</b>								
<i>product development</i>	█	█	█					
<i>sales and marketing</i>								
<i>available to consumers</i>		█	█	█	█	█	█	█
<b>MULTI-DAY IMMERSIVE IN THE FIELD EXPERIENCES</b>								
<i>product development</i>	█	█	█					
<i>sales and marketing initiated</i>		█						
<i>available to consumers</i>		█	█	█	█	█	█	█
<b>GROUP OF SEVEN TOURING ROUTE</b>								
<i>product development</i>		█	█	█				
<i>sales and marketing initiated</i>					█			
<i>available to consumers</i>				█	█	█	█	█
<b>CREATED MULTI-DAY EVENT</b>								
<i>product development</i>		█	█	█				
<i>sales and marketing initiated</i>					█			
<i>available to consumers</i>					█	█	█	█

## 8.2 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN FOR JUNE TO DECEMBER 2013

It will be important to initiate work on this opportunity in the next 6 to 9 months in order to capitalize on the interest, show momentum, but most importantly to support the development of buyable product for the visitor. A recommended short term action plan and estimated budget for initiatives required is outlined below. **Note that budget estimates are just that – estimates and will be influenced by many factors.** Many of these initiatives can be supported through shared investment by a variety of partners.

	RECOMMENDED TIMING	RATIONALE	ESTIMATED BUDGET REQUIRED
<b>Establish Algoma Group of Seven Implementation Committee</b>	As soon as possible.	This Committee is needed to direct all future initiatives recommended in this Master Plan.	minimal; travel and communication costs; meeting logistics support
<b>Implement Coordinator Function</b>	As soon as possible.	Whether full-time, part-time, contracted or assumed within current operating parameters of one of the partners, a coordinator who will focus on this project is required.	up to \$40,000 annually for 2 years; dependent upon model selected
<b>Meet with Train partners</b>	As soon as possible	With these meetings, both train partners (ACR and Group of Seven Train event) can initiate their own action plans.	minimal
<b>Host Community Information and Opportunity Meetings</b>	Start planning June 2013 for delivery of meetings late summer or early Fall 2013.	These meetings require advance planning and development of materials. If planning is delayed until Fall momentum is lost.	one-time investment of up to \$20,000 to include communication tools and design and delivery of up to 6 two-hour meetings
<b>Complete Brand Toolkit</b> <i>(see 10.1.1 for more detail)</i>	For completion by September 2013	If initiated in July/August, draft direction for a Brand Toolkit can be shared with industry and stakeholders in Information and Opportunity meetings in the Fall, building buy-in and support over the long term.	one-time investment of up to \$15,000
<b>Host Invitation-only Industry Opportunity Workshops</b>	Start planning June 2013 for delivery in early Fall 2013; repeat next year	Operators use the Fall period to evaluate their season and to prepare for the next. These meetings require advance planning and development of materials based on the Experience Development Guide. If planning is delayed until Fall momentum is lost.	one-time investment of up to \$40,000 to include design and delivery of up to 6 full-day workshops and related materials; second year lower
<b>Contract Generalist Experience Facilitator</b>	As soon as possible	Specialized skills are required to support both niche and general interest experiences.	up to \$25,000 per facilitator each of 2 years
<b>Contract Experience Facilitator</b>	As soon as possible	Dedicated to supporting development of multi-day intensive experiences	up to \$25,000 for each of 2 years



### 8.3 OTHER INVESTMENTS BY TOURISM NORTHERN ONTARIO

A number of other costs and new investments to be assumed by TNO and or partners have been identified throughout this Master Plan. In order to facilitate implementation and planning, order of magnitude costs for common items are included in this section by broad level of cost. Please note: these are order of magnitude only and are based on the consulting team's experience. It is anticipated that members of the Steering Committee and other stakeholders will add their knowledge and experience to further refine cost estimates.

	<i>Less than \$20,000</i>	<i>\$20,000 to \$50,000</i>
<b>Design and Produce Map Guide</b> Note: size, format and materials used will influence the design and production costs.		■
<b>Design Guidelines for Interpretive and Identification Signage</b>	■	
<b>Install Interpretive Panels</b> <i>(see 10.1.2 for more detail)</i>		■

### 8.4 INVESTMENTS BY OPERATORS, MUNICIPALITIES AND LANDOWNERS

It is anticipated that investments of varying order of magnitude will be made by a range of tourism partners that include Ontario Parks, Parks Canada, municipalities and individual tourism operators. Investments will be into such initiatives as development or enhancement of trails and related infrastructure, development of experiences to be hosted at/by their operation or building of new structures to support experiences. Each stakeholder is advised to include estimates and plans in strategic plans to ensure they get implemented in a timely manner.

## 9 IMAGINE.....ALGOMA'S GROUP OF SEVEN IN 2020

Visitors arriving into Sault Ste. Marie's airport are wowed by seeing a reproduction of the iconic Group of Seven image that matches the site they will soon be paddling to on their four day excursion.

Families creating together at the annual *Visitor Contributed Landscape Painting Challenge* on the Group of Seven Touring Route.

Demand for ACR's *Group of Seven Tour Train Excursion*, (art kit included!) continues to grow.

Adventurers coming from the United Kingdom are returning for their annual quest seeking sites of specific paintings using the Algoma Group of Seven app to guide and inspire them.

Inspired by the 2012 "*Painting Canada: Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven*" exhibit, UK-based Dulwich Gallery hosts their fourth annual visit with members to visit the landscapes and vistas that inspired so much of their work.

Lodges, outfitters and guides busy with groups of amateur painters, sketchers and photographers, creating, fishing and soaking up the Group of Seven landscapes as their inspiration.

The media release announcing keynote speakers, performers and artists for the *Algoma Northern Landscapes 2020* event is generating buzz on social and travel media. Better yet, it is filling hotels, B&Bs, restaurants and attractions in Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma and the North Shore during a time that historically had been a challenge!

Commitment to and successful implementation of this Master Plan will make this vision a reality.



## 10 APPENDICES

### 10.1.1 BRAND TOOLKIT

The purpose of a brand toolkit is to create a Group of Seven tourism product logo and brand for use in all future tourism marketing of the experiences developed and delivered in the Algoma and North Shore. Ideally this logo and brand would have the flexibility to be customized to other areas in Northern Ontario to provide a unified theme, customized by area of interest.

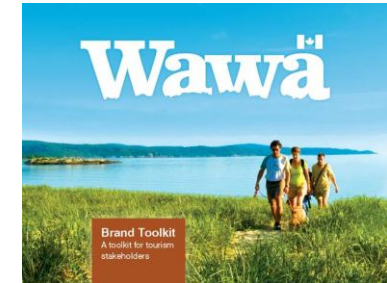
A process to develop a brand toolkit typically follows a number of steps as outlined below:

- Survey steering committee and up to five key art community connections for input into development of Group of Seven tourism product brand through a 5 to 10 question survey to determine the elements that should guide the brand development;
- Outline creative brief for logo & brand development;
- Create Group of Seven tourism product logo concept and tagline for review; and
- If required, refine Group of Seven tourism product logo and tagline in conjunction with discussion with Steering Committee & key art community connections.

The brand toolkit is then written and designed for use by a variety of parties as they market Group of Seven Algoma experiences and includes

- Logo and tagline;
- Colour schemes; how and when they are used;
- Font; and
- Collateral design for up to five concepts.

*NOTE: Images are used with permission of clients.*



### 10.1.2 INTERPRETIVE PANELS

Estimate: \$4,000 per panel

- 2' x 3' interpretive panel
- Assumes bulk purchase of interpretive panels (10-20 panels)

*Includes:*

- Interpretive planning (site visit, research and write interpretive text for panel)
- Panel design
- Panel photography (research, source and pay licensing for photography)
- Coordinate approvals and permissions with land manager
- Panel fabrication
- Panel installation

*Note: panels require ongoing maintenance/repair to address the effects of weathering, vandalism and accidental damage. Responsibility for maintenance will need to be confirmed and a maintenance budget and schedule determined.*



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### 10.1.3 A PRIMER ON APPS

*This section provides an overview of the world of apps, various factors and details that lead to their finalization and production, and specifically how they can improve and provide cultural tourism interpretation of the Group of Seven tourism experiences in Algoma, Ontario.*

#### **1. Definitions**

An "App" (short for *Application*) is a computerized program that runs on mobile devices and tablet computers. Apps allow devices to do almost anything that the programmers can imagine, within the limitations of the specific device they run on.

#### **2. A Brief History**

Starting with the introduction of the famed Apple iPhone in 2007, apps were essentially an easy way to bring a toned-down version of computer applications you would find on your computer and allow you to carry them with you on a mobile device. Since the launch of the App Store on iOS (Apple's mobile software), the variety and complexity of apps has grown drastically, with the App Store providing almost 1 million options. Since then, Apps have become available and popular on many other mobile platforms – specifically Android (Google), Blackberry (RIM), and Windows Phone (Microsoft), and billions have been downloaded. As it stands today, iOS and Android are the biggest, most expansive marketplaces, with Windows Phone and Blackberry slightly behind in numbers.

#### **3. The Process – Development and Production**

Apps can be developed in a variety of fashions. On each Mobile Operating System (OS), Apps have an integrated development environment, which provides tools to allow a developer to write, test, and deploy apps into the targeted platform environment.

Either produced individually or by a professional App Developer, one must first go to the company(s) that runs the specific OS(s) and receive a Software Development Kit (SDK). This kit provides the tools needed to write and create the App. It contains Application Programming Interface Libraries (API's) that allow developers and individual's access to a variety of kits and sections that allow optimization and integration with the platform. Examples of these could be Social Integration (Facebook, Twitter), In-App purchasing, access/modified use of various native pre-installed Apps on the device (e.g. Camera), Cloud Services (e.g. iCloud, Skydrive), and Map Integration (e.g. Google Maps, iOS Maps, Bing Maps etc.).

The next step is to submit the App to the specific company(s). The company then reviews it and assures it is debugged and secure. If the App passes the test, the company will allow it to be put on their App Store Market.

#### 4. Costs/Revenue

The cost to create, develop and market Apps greatly varies depending on the platform and App Store that it is made for and provided on. While some Apps can cost as little as \$1,000 to create can make millions, another could cost up to \$250,000 and never turn a profit. It all depends on what type of App it is, the demand for Apps in it's category, and the cost to purchase and download it, among others. The following bullets provide a general summary of potential costs:

- Set up account with company (\$0-\$99)
- Pay Developers (usually between \$100-200/hour)
- Software Development kit (usually around \$100)

Costs for app development and marketing are highly variable, and the financial return on investment is very difficult to gauge. However, it is likely that the app, or apps, most suited to the Group of Seven project would have the following characteristics, and associated costs:

- Database app with mapping capability (off-line GPS navigation), with images and links; GPS set up by off-line map apps developers (e.g. Garmin, TomTom)
  - Development costs: \$40-50,000, potentially including design costs (\$5-10,000) but with additional costs for in-app purchasing and share capabilities and any patent acquisition; and
  - Sale price: variable, but probably in the \$50/unit range; separate download codes would be needed for each purchase.
- Rights to images – variable.

An app recently developed in southwestern Ontario to showcase Route 1812 ([www.westerncorridor1812.com](http://www.westerncorridor1812.com)) that includes music, images and video accompanied by narration, guiding the user along paths used during the war in a loop from Toronto to Amherstburg was produced for under \$50,000.