

## Knowledge Synthesis

### Tourism Part I: Tourism Opportunities and Tourist Motivations

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#### INTRODUCTION

*This knowledge synthesis is part of The Monieson Centre's Knowledge Impact in Society (KIS) Project, a three-year endeavour to connect academic knowledge with economic development needs in Eastern Ontario. The synthesis is an accessible presentation of the latest research on issues affecting rural Eastern Ontario. The knowledge synthesis topics were determined through information gathered at 15 community workshops run in partnership with the Eastern Ontario Community Futures Development Corporation network. The KIS Project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. For more information, visit [www.easternontarioknowledge.ca](http://www.easternontarioknowledge.ca).*

Tourism is an important sector in Ontario's economy, contributing approximately \$22 billion in revenue in 2007 alone. Composed primarily of small and medium-sized enterprises, the tourism industry is the largest employer of the province's youth. Investments in tourist attractions pay off not only in terms of direct employment and revenue, but also indirectly in terms of supporting the growth of associated industries, such as transportation, and the construction of vital infrastructure. In acknowledgment of the tourism industry's significance to the province, the Ontario government released a tourism competitiveness study in 2009, entitled: *Discovering Ontario: A Report of the Future of Tourism*. Based on this 2009 report, the Ontario government is considering the implementation of a number of key recommendations, including:<sup>1</sup>

- **Creating Tourism Regions:** The intent behind this is to enhance the coordination of tourism marketing and management. Each region would work towards creating a unique brand and experience within a broader provincial brand, and there would be one destination marketing and management organization for each region, hopefully providing more voice and resources to local tourism initiatives. Two regions would represent most of Eastern Ontario: Algonquin-Kawarthas (also encompassing Northumberland) and St Lawrence-Rideau (including Quinte, Prince Edward County, and Lennox-Addington County).
- **Helping Operators Access Capital:** Ontario would help support loans and/or loan guarantees to small and medium-sized tourism operators working with existing lenders.
- **Improving Way-Finding:** Ontario would install better signage to help make the province more welcoming, safe, and comfortable.
- **Increasing E-Marketing and Online Booking:** Ontario would work with the industry to make it easier for consumers to book accommodations and visit attractions.

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<sup>1</sup> Greg Sorbara, et. al., *Discovering Ontario: A Report of the Future of Tourism* (Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Tourism, 2009), [http://www.tourismstudy.ca/en/report\\_en.pdf](http://www.tourismstudy.ca/en/report_en.pdf) (Accessed May 19, 2009).

This two-part Knowledge Synthesis series highlights many initiatives that regions and local communities can carry out to take advantage of these new provincial opportunities. Part I examines how you can identify tourism opportunities, particularly year-round opportunities, that exist in your region, as well as what tourists are looking for in a vacation. Part II, also available at [www.easternontarioknowledge.ca](http://www.easternontarioknowledge.ca), explores how communities can effectively target key tourist markets.

## TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES: YOUR RESOURCES

While some regions are fortunate enough to possess natural wonders and fascinating historical sites, others are not so privileged. Regardless of which category your region may fall into, a key aspect of tourism is making the most of your resources and presenting them to potential tourists in a compelling, differentiated way.

### *Regional Resources*

An important first step in identifying tourism opportunities in your region is performing a resource inventory. This entails accounting for natural (lakes, trails, etc.), physical (lodging, restaurants, historical sites, etc.) human (artists, guides, etc.), relational (community linkages, business associations, etc.) and other potentially relevant resources that may play a role in the delivery of a tourist experience. As a part of this process, you will need to define who and what constitutes your “region.” Is this a tourism initiative for your town, your county, or a more broadly defined area? Who can contribute resources, and who hopes to benefit?

As you catalog your resources and answer these questions, reflect upon the non-exhaustive set of potential tourist activities identified in Appendix A. These activities may be segmented as follows:

Culture and Entertainment	Outdoor and Activities
Historical Sites, Museums, and Art Galleries	Golfing
Shopping and Dining	Hunting
Aboriginal Cultural Experiences	Fishing
Fairs and Festivals	Wildlife Viewing
Science and Technology Exhibits	Hiking, Climbing, and Paddling
Theme Parks and Exhibits	Boating, Swimming and Other Beach Activities
High Art Performances	Sailing and Surfing
Pro, Semi-Pro, International Sporting Events	Exercising and Jogging
Live Theatre	Cycling
Literary or Film Festivals	Motorcycling
Tastings	Horseback Riding
Spas	Snowmobiling and ATVing
Casinos	Skiing, Snowboarding and Snowshoeing
Participatory Historical Activities	Wilderness Activities
Equestrian and Western Events	Skating
Agro-Tourism	Team Sports
Garden Theme Attractions	Sports and Games
Amateur Tournaments	
Musical Concerts, Festivals and Attractions	
Comedy Festivals and Clubs	

Considering your region's resources, can you deliver any of these possibilities, or variants of them? Can you deliver something entirely different? What are you most uniquely able to offer? Determining this may require some additional research to identify the tourist attractions available elsewhere in the province and immediately beyond. If there is one activity, or grouping of similar activities, which your region can uniquely offer to tourists, it may serve to become an important part of your branding strategy. For example, the town of Almonte promotes itself as Canada's Festival Capital, while Lennox and Addington County touts itself as having some of Eastern Ontario's most spectacular views. While the two communities surely have other tourist attractions, these specific features are made salient in their branding efforts because they present a relatively differentiated image. As you progress to thinking about what cohesive image you want to convey, you may want to refer to the *Community Branding Knowledge Synthesis* available at [www.easternontarioknowledge.ca](http://www.easternontarioknowledge.ca).

### *Off-Season Opportunities*

One factor to consider when performing your resource inventory is seasonality. Are your resources accessible year-round, or only in the summer or winter? Attracting tourists throughout off-peak and shoulder seasons may be a challenge, but the creative leveraging of resources and the intentional construction of off-peak attractions, even if they are only one-off events, may help. If your region is home to a lake, can it serve as a site for a 'golden years' pond hockey tournament, outdoor curling bonspiel or a Polar Bear club swim? Look to your community for ideas. Events that your community has an interest in supporting, perhaps an amateur animal tracking competition or a weekly improvisational show, will have greater potential to blossom into off-season tourist attractions for the region.

As idea starters, some examples of all-season or off-season tourist attractions include:

- Niagara's Ice Wine Festival (Jan.)
- Friends of Frontenac Provincial Park Winter Camping and Wilderness Skills Program (Jan./Feb.)
- Belleville Kids' Ice Fishing Day (Feb.)
- Ontario Science Centre's Family Day Sleep-Over (Feb.)
- Bronte Creek Provincial Park's Maple Syrup Festival (Mar.)
- Cross Quetico Lakes Skiing, Mushing, Skijoring Tour (Mar.)
- Welland's Little NHL Hockey Tournament (Mar.)
- Swiss Hill Inn's Gem and Hard Rock Tour (Year-Round)
- Ste. Anne's Spa Girlfriends Getaway (Year-Round)

More creative idea starters for your community can be found at [www.ontariotravel.net](http://www.ontariotravel.net).

## **TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES: THEIR DESIRES**

### *Tourists' Motivations*

In addition to thinking about what your region can offer, you should also consider the needs and wants of your target; unfortunately, the expression 'if you build it, they will come,' does not always reflect reality. Depending upon one's life stage, ambitions, peer group, etc., each individual may have a variety of reasons for visiting a particular tourist site or region. A recent government-sponsored study identified

tourists' general motivations for taking a vacation; these motivations are listed in order from most to least frequently cited:<sup>2</sup>

- Get a break from your day-to-day environment
- Relax and relieve stress
- Enrich relationship with spouse/children
- Create lasting memories
- Keep family ties alive
- Have a life with no fixed schedule
- See or do something different
- Enrich your perspective on life
- Gain knowledge
- Renew connections with people
- Stimulate your mind
- Be physically challenged
- Have stories to share back home
- Be pampered
- Seek solitude and isolation

These motivations are what tourists hope to derive from their experience – they go to museums to gain knowledge and spas to be pampered. As such, it is important to keep your target's desires in mind when planning, promoting, and executing your tourist experience. However, the same experience (e.g. a winter wilderness skills course) may provide different benefits to different target groups. For example, a single, middle-aged man may enroll in a winter wilderness skills course to take a break, gain knowledge and be physically challenged, while a family may enroll in a similar course to enrich intra-family relationships, create memories, and obtain stories to share back home. One risk in branding is that if you try to be all things to all people you end up appealing to no one. Recognizing this, it is important to have a clear idea of who you are targeting with your tourist initiative and what their motivations are for coming to your region. This subject is covered in greater depth in Part II of this Knowledge Synthesis series.

### *Destination Characteristics*

Destination characteristics also play a role in tourists' decisions on where to vacation. As such, it is relevant to understand which characteristics are most important to your target group(s), and enhance alignment between their desires and your offerings. Some destination characteristics include:<sup>3</sup>

- Feeling safe
- No health concerns
- Convenient access by car, train, bus, etc.
- Lots for adults to see and do
- Information about the destination online
- Low cost package deals

<sup>2</sup> TNS Canadian Facts, *Loyalty Segmentation of the Canadian Travel Market* (Toronto: Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp. and Ontario Ministry of Tourism, 2007)

[http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/research/travel\\_activities/TAMS%202006\\_Canadian%20Loyalty%20Segmentation.pdf](http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/research/travel_activities/TAMS%202006_Canadian%20Loyalty%20Segmentation.pdf) (Accessed May 19, 2009)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

- Lots for children to see and do
- Familiar with the culture and language
- Great shopping opportunities
- Having friends or relatives there
- Disabled person friendly
- Very different culturally than yours

While some of these characteristics may fall outside of your realm of influence (i.e. culturally different), others may be addressable, potentially making your initiatives more appealing to tourists. Can you increase perceptions of safety with riskier activities (e.g. whitewater rafting)? Can you improve access by offering shuttle buses for a winter festival? Can you offer pre-arranged value packages, such as horseback riding, dinner at a farm, and lodging at a bed-and-breakfast? Can you accept online reservations? Taking care of these details will not only enhance the attractiveness of your destination, but will also increase the likelihood that tourists will experience their desired vacation benefits.

## CONCLUSION

Successful tourism initiatives effectively leverage local resources in a way that meet the needs and wants of visitors. As many vacationers' destination options are boundless, it is important to think about what makes your offering different and to whom this point of difference might be compelling. As such, this process involves not only reflecting on local assets, but also on other destinations' offerings, as well as consumers' desires.

## REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX A – POTENTIAL TOURISM ACTIVITIES/OPPORTUNITIES<sup>4</sup>

Potential Tourism Activities/Opportunities: <b>Culture and Entertainment</b>		
Segment	Activities/Opportunities	
<b>Historical Sites, Museums, and Art galleries</b>	Historical Sites, Monuments or Buildings	Well-Known Natural Wonders; Paleontological/Archaeological Sites
	Historical Replicas of Cities or Towns With Historic Re-Enactments	Strolling Around to Observe Buildings and Architecture
	Art Galleries	Museums: General History or Heritage; Military / War Museums
<b>Shopping and Dining</b>	Shop/Browse: Book/Music Stores; Antiques; Clothing, Shoes, or Jewelry; Gourmet or Local Foods Store; Local Arts and Crafts Studios or Exhibitions; Greenhouse or Garden Centres	Dining: Restaurants Offering Local Ingredients and Recipes; High End Restaurants with a Reputation; Local Outdoor Cafes
<b>Aboriginal Cultural Experiences</b>	Aboriginal Cuisine (Tasted or Sampled)	Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Shows
	Aboriginal Heritage Attractions (e.g., Museums, Interpretive Centres)	Aboriginal Cultural Experiences in a Remote or Rural Setting
	Aboriginal Festivals & Events (e.g., Pow Wows)	Aboriginal Outdoor Adventure and/or Sports
<b>Fairs and Festivals</b>	Farmers' Markets or Country Fairs	Firework Displays
	Carnivals	Ethnic Festivals
	Exhibition or Fairs	Local Food/Drink Festivals
<b>Science and Technology Exhibits</b>	Science or Technology Museums	Children's Museums
	Science & Technology Theme Parks	Planetarium
<b>Theme Parks and Exhibits</b>	Amusement, Water/Movie Theme Park	Aquariums and Zoos
	Entertainment Farms (e.g., Corn Maze, Petting Zoo)	Wax Museums
<b>High Art Performances</b>	Classical or Symphony Concert	Opera
	Ballet or Other Dance Performances	
<b>Professional, Semi-Professional, International Sporting Events</b>	Games of Hockey, Soccer, Baseball, Football, Basketball, Etc.	Tournaments of Golf, Curling, Billiards, Track & Field, Bowling, Figure Skating, Etc.
<b>Live Theatre</b>	Live Theatre (with dinner)	Theatre Festivals
<b>Literary or Film Festivals</b>	Literary Festivals or Events	Local, Regional, or International Film/Documentary Festivals
<b>Tastings</b>	Winery Day Visits and Tasting	Cooking / Wine Tasting Courses
	Brewery Day Visits and Tasting	Visits to Food Processing Plants (e.g., Cheese Factory)
<b>Spas</b>	Day Visit to a Health & Wellness Spas while on an Overnight Trip	
<b>Casinos</b>	Casino or Charity Casino	
<b>Participatory Historical Activities</b>	Historical Re-Enactments (as an Actor)	Interpretive Program at a Historic Site or National /Provincial Park
	Curatorial Tours	Archaeological Digs
<b>Equestrian and Western Events</b>	Equine (Horse) Competitions	Western Theme Events (e.g., Rodeos)
	Horse Races	
<b>Agro-Tourism</b>	Fruit Picking at Farms or Open Fields	Dining at a Farm
	Harvesting and/or Other Farm Operation Tours	
<b>Gardens Theme Attractions</b>	Garden Theme Park	Botanical Gardens
<b>Amateur Tournaments</b>	Amateur Sports Tournaments and	Amateur Tournaments and Competitions

<sup>4</sup> Lang Research Inc., *Culture & Entertainment Activities While on Trips of One or More Nights: Overview Report* (Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Tourism, 2008)

[http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/research/travel\\_activities/CDN\\_TAMS\\_2006\\_Culture\\_and\\_Entertainment\\_Activities\\_Overview\\_Report\\_Feb2008.pdf](http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/research/travel_activities/CDN_TAMS_2006_Culture_and_Entertainment_Activities_Overview_Report_Feb2008.pdf) (Accessed May 19, 2009).

	Competitions	other than Sports-related (e.g. Chess, Etc.)
<b>Musical Concerts, Festivals and Attractions</b>	Music Festivals	Musical Attractions
	Jazz/Rock & Roll/Country & Western/Popular Music Concerts	Free Outdoor Performances (e.g., Theatre, Concerts) in a Park
<b>Comedy Festivals and Clubs</b>	Comedy Festivals	Stand-up Comedy Clubs & Other Variety Shows
<b>Potential Tourism Activities/Opportunities: <u>Outdoor and Activities</u></b>		
<b>Segment</b>	<b>Activities/Opportunities</b>	
<b>Golfing</b>	Games During a Stay at a Golf Resort with an Overnight Stay	Occasional Games While on a Trip
	Golf Tour Package to Play on Various Courses	
<b>Hunting</b>	Hunting for Small/Big Game or Birds	
<b>Fishing</b>	Fresh-Water Fishing	Ice Fishing
	Trophy (Tournament) Fishing	
<b>Wildlife Viewing</b>	Viewing Land Based Animals	Bird Watching
	Visiting National, Provincial, Local Park	Wildflowers/Flora Viewing
	Viewing Stars or Northern Lights	
<b>Hiking, Climbing, and Paddling</b>	Mountain Climbing/Trekking	Fresh Water Kayaking/Canoeing
	Rock Climbing	White Water Rafting
	Same-Day Hiking Excursion While on a Trip of 1+ Nights	Hiking/Backpacking in Wilderness Setting With Overnight Camping or Lodging
<b>Boating, Swimming and Other Beach Activities</b>	Motorboating	Swimming in Lakes or Rivers
	Waterskiing or Tubing	Scuba diving and Snorkelling in Lakes or Rivers
	Sunbathing, Sitting on a Beach	
<b>Sailing and Surfing</b>	Sailing	Parasailing
	Wind Surfing	Kite Surfing
<b>Exercising and Jogging</b>	Working Out in Fitness Centre	Jogging or Exercising Outdoors
<b>Cycling</b>	Overnight Touring Trip	Mountain Biking
	Recreational Same-Day Excursion	
<b>Motorcycling</b>	Overnight Touring Trip	Same-Day Excursion
<b>Horseback Riding</b>	With an Overnight Stop	Same-Day Excursion
<b>Snowmobiling and ATVing</b>	All Terrain Vehicle - Overnight Touring Trip	Snowmobiling As an Overnight Touring Trip
	All Terrain Vehicle - Same Day Excursion	Snowmobiling Day Use on Organized Trail
<b>Skiing, Snowboarding and Snowshoeing</b>	Downhill Skiing	Snowboarding
	Cross-Country Skiing	Snowshoeing
	Cross-Country or Back Country as an Overnight Touring Trip	
<b>Wilderness Activities</b>	Wilderness Skills Courses	Dog Sledding
	Ice Climbing	
<b>Skating</b>	Ice Skating (Indoor or Outdoor)	In-Line/Rollerblading
<b>Extreme Air Sports</b>	Parachuting	Hang Gliding
	Hot Air Ballooning	
<b>Team Sports</b>	Ice Hockey	Curling
	Football	Basketball
	Baseball or Softball	Soccer
<b>Sports and Games</b>	Board Games	Badminton
	Volleyball	Tennis
	Beach Volleyball	Mini-Golf
	Bowling	

## APPENDIX B – RESOURCES

Both the federal and provincial government offer resources that may be of assistance in developing local and regional tourism programs and opportunities.

### **Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance**

Website: <http://www.savourontario.org>

This alliance provides a number of resources related to the complete culinary tourism supply chain including research, best practice summaries and case studies.

### **Ontario Ministry of Tourism Research**

Website: [http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/research/travel\\_activities/index.html](http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/research/travel_activities/index.html).

The research section in the Ontario Ministry of Tourism’s website contains tens of reports (and executive summaries) profiling travel segments, tourist activities, and more. If you want to find out more about Canadian or U.S. travelers to Ontario, or particular activities, such as agro-tourism, canoeing or shopping, that may be relevant to your region, this is a tremendous resource to access.

### **Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp.**

Website: <http://www.tourismpartners.com/TcisCtrl?site=partners&key1=home&language=EN>.

The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp (OTMPC) offers a wide range of programs that may be available to assist your region in developing tourist attractions. These programs include: advertising, product development, consumer information services, as well as access to travel publications, travel trade and media relations. Partnering with OTMPC may enable you to reach broader markets that would otherwise be too difficult or expensive to target. The goal through the partnership is to “bring ‘top-of-mind’ awareness to your product or service while positioning Ontario as a premier four-season travel destination.”

### **Ontario: Yours to Discover**

Website: <http://www.ontariotravel.net>.

The provincial tourism website has sections on a number of regions in Ontario. Within Eastern Ontario, it hosts information on attractions along the St. Lawrence Seaway, as well as in the Quinte region and Prince Edward and Lennox-Addington Counties. This section of the website also links to a few other sites, including [www.realontario.ca](http://www.realontario.ca), which profiles some additional regions and attractions within Eastern Ontario, as well as sites for Prince Edward County’s and Quinte West’s Chambers of Commerce. While it would be ideal to promote your tourist offerings on as many relevant websites as possible, obtaining a posting on an ‘aggregator’ site (such as Ontario’s official website), which tourists are more likely to visit, should be a priority.

### **Rural Economic Development Data and Intelligence (REDDI).**

Website: <http://www.reddi.gov.on.ca/index.htm>.

From the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, this website is designed to help you identify local priorities and carry out strategies that will achieve your community's goals. It includes a “Making the Case for Tourism – Toolkit” document, which may assist you in gathering information and creating a PowerPoint presentation that you can use in promoting local tourism initiatives.