



# IGNACE AREA TOURISM STUDY

PREPARED FOR:  
TOWNSHIP OF IGNACE AND AREA &  
NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION (NWMO)

November 25, 2022

PREPARED BY:

**URBAN**  
SYSTEMS

#300-123 Bannatyne Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 0R3 | T: 204-259-0094

**PREPARED FOR:**



#300-123 Bannatyne Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 0R3 | T: 204-259-0094

File: 4809.0003.01

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**CONSULTANTS**

**Dan Penner, MCP**

dpenner@urbansystems.ca

Handwritten signature of Dan Penner in blue ink.

**Mike Wakely, MCP**

mwakely@urbansystems.ca

Handwritten signature of Mike Wakely in black ink, enclosed in a circular scribble.

**J.P Raulot-Lapointe, MBA**

jp Lapointe@urbansystems.ca

Handwritten signature of J.P. Raulot-Lapointe in blue ink.

Revision History					
Rev	Issue Date	Description	Prepared By	Checked By	Approved By
1	July 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2022	Initial Draft Tourism Study	Mike Wakely	JP Raulot-Lapointe	Dan Penner
2	August 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2022	Second Draft Tourism Study	Mike Wakely	JP Raulot-Lapointe	Dan Penner
3	September 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2022	Final Tourism Study	Mike Wakely	JP Raulot-Lapointe	Dan Penner
4	November 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2022	Final Tourism Study	Mike Wakely	JP Raulot-Lapointe	Dan Penner

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Since 2010, the Township of Ignace (the Township or Ignace) has been involved in a process of learning about the Nuclear Waste Management Organization’s (NWMO) Adaptive Phased Management (APM) Project (the Project) for the long-term management of Canada’s used nuclear fuel. The two remaining siting areas in the process are the Ignace Area and the South Bruce Area. The NWMO plans to complete all preliminary assessment work and to select one siting area to host the APM Project by 2024. Preliminary studies suggest that the Project can be implemented safely in the Ignace Area for a repository that will contain, and isolate used nuclear fuel from people and the environment for the long timeframes required.

Studies have been ongoing since 2010; however, further studies are required to fully assess the potential socio-economic impacts of the APM Project. Building on previous work and engagement completed to date, the NWMO and the Township of Ignace are working together to prepare a suite of community studies that will be shared. The list of socio-economic community studies is included in **Appendix A**. The information acquired through these studies is expected to help the Township of Ignace leadership and residents make informed decisions about whether the Project is a good fit for their community, and if they are willing to consider hosting it and under what circumstances and terms.

Community studies will ultimately inform the Project hosting agreement between the NWMO and the Township of Ignace. As well, they will provide pertinent information for agreements with the City of Dryden and potentially other regional agreements.

## Note to Reader

This and other community studies are preliminary and strategic in nature, all intended to identify possible consequences (e.g., to vulnerable populations, to local business opportunities and for local and regional job creation) in the Township of Ignace, and other local and regional communities. Using information about the APM Project known at this point in time, these community studies will describe a range of possible consequences that are the subject of specific and separate studies. For each possible consequence, potential options and strategies will be offered to leverage opportunities and/or mitigate possible negative consequences/effects.

It is important to note that these community studies (developed collaboratively by NWMO and the Township of Ignace) being investigated at this time are not the formal or final baseline or effects studies that will be part of the Impact Assessment as conducted under the regulatory process for the APM Project governed by the Impact Assessment Agreement of Canada. Effects assessment will be undertaken at a later date following the conclusion of the siting process, and the initiation of the formal regulatory process.

Community studies will ultimately inform the APM Project hosting agreement between the NWMO and the Township as Ignace. As well, they will provide pertinent information for agreements with the City of Dryden and potentially other regional agreements. The study will:

- a) Explore in more detail the questions, aspirations and topics of interest expressed by the community through the Township of Ignace project visioning process;
- b) Assist the NWMO and the Township of Ignace in developing and identifying possible programs and commitments that ensure the Project will be implemented in a manner that fosters the well-being of the Township of Ignace and communities in the Ignace Area and the region;
- c) Advance learning and understanding on topics of interest to communities in the Ignace Area and the region; and
- d) Provide the community with information it has requested to help them make an informed decision in the case of the Township of Ignace and continue to inform dialogue with communities in the Ignace Area and region prior to the conclusion of the site selection process in 2024.

The NWMO is committed to working collaboratively to ensure questions, concerns, and aspirations are captured and addressed through continuous engagement and dialogue.

The NWMO will independently engage with Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and other Indigenous communities to understand how they wish to evaluate the potential negative effects and benefits that the Project may bring to their communities.

## 1.2 LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*It is acknowledged that the lands and communities discussed in this report are primarily situated on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe people of Treaty 3, and the Métis Nation.*

## 1.3 IGNACE PROJECT VISION

Ignace residents undertook a visioning engagement process to identify what the community's priorities and objectives are for the APM project if Northwestern Ontario is chosen as the site for the facility (InterGroup, 2020). The priorities identified in relation to Economic and Finance, which included tourism, included the following:

- Increase business activity and employment opportunities through the project in the community;
- Enhance strategies to sustain and support local businesses;
- Grow tax base through managed population growth to fund community services and facilities;
- Enhance local training programs to maximize participation in project opportunities;
- Increase household income through project employment, contracting, and associated opportunities;
- Develop strategies to enhance participation in project opportunities to diminish the need for social assistance; and,
- Support the growth of tourism through community enhancements.

## 1.4 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The Tourism Study is one of a number of community studies being undertaken. The Tourism Study will be context sensitive and focused on providing complete and reliable information tailored to the Ignace Area. In addition to research building on previous work, the Tourism Study will be informed through engagement with stakeholders involved in the tourism sector.

The outcomes of the Tourism Study will be to provide valuable information, options and possible strategies which will be considered by the Township and NWMO when finalizing partnerships and possible commitments covered in a future hosting agreement.

The purpose of this study is to:

- Describe key characteristics of the tourism industry in the local and regional study areas, including the following categories:
  - Tourism operators and related businesses
  - Existing attractions and recreation areas
  - Indigenous communities and tourism
- Describe tourism trends characterizing the industry today and in the years to come;
- Develop profiles of visitor and cultural centres from other projects of similar impact to provide ideas and options for the Centre of Expertise, which will operate as an important facility to the APM project, the community of Ignace and tourism alike;
- Research and present findings from three benchmark communities with comparable contexts to Ignace, focussing on tourism and visitor centre facilities;
- Identify and describe the potential changes that may occur to tourism during the different APM phases;
- Provide options for the Centre of Expertise as they relate to the following:

- Purpose of the Centre of Expertise;
  - Types of spaces, uses and attractions;
  - Target users and audience;
  - Revenue sources;
  - Exterior landscaped spaces and considerations for integration into surrounding environment and Township; and,
  - Tourism support options.
- Identify and describe future tourism growth potential and new opportunities in the Ignace Area that could be supported by or result from the APM project, including opportunities to leverage existing and underutilized amenities and adding new tourism services.

## 1.5 SPATIAL BOUNDARIES

Two study areas have been used to frame the study geographically:

- Regional Study Area
- Local Study Area

The extent of the Regional Study Area is illustrated in Figure 1 as the red outlined box representing a 2-hour driveshed. Within this bounded box are the Township of Machin, the City of Dryden, and the Municipality of Sioux Lookout. The Local Study Area (LSA) focusses primarily on the Township of Ignace (LSA) but also includes Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation. The original intent was to limit the study's focus on tourism businesses, attractions and the pool of potential interviewees to within the Regional Study Area, however, due to low response rate, interviewees were accepted from outside the boundaries of the Regional Study Area, as far south as Atikokan and as far north as Ear Falls.

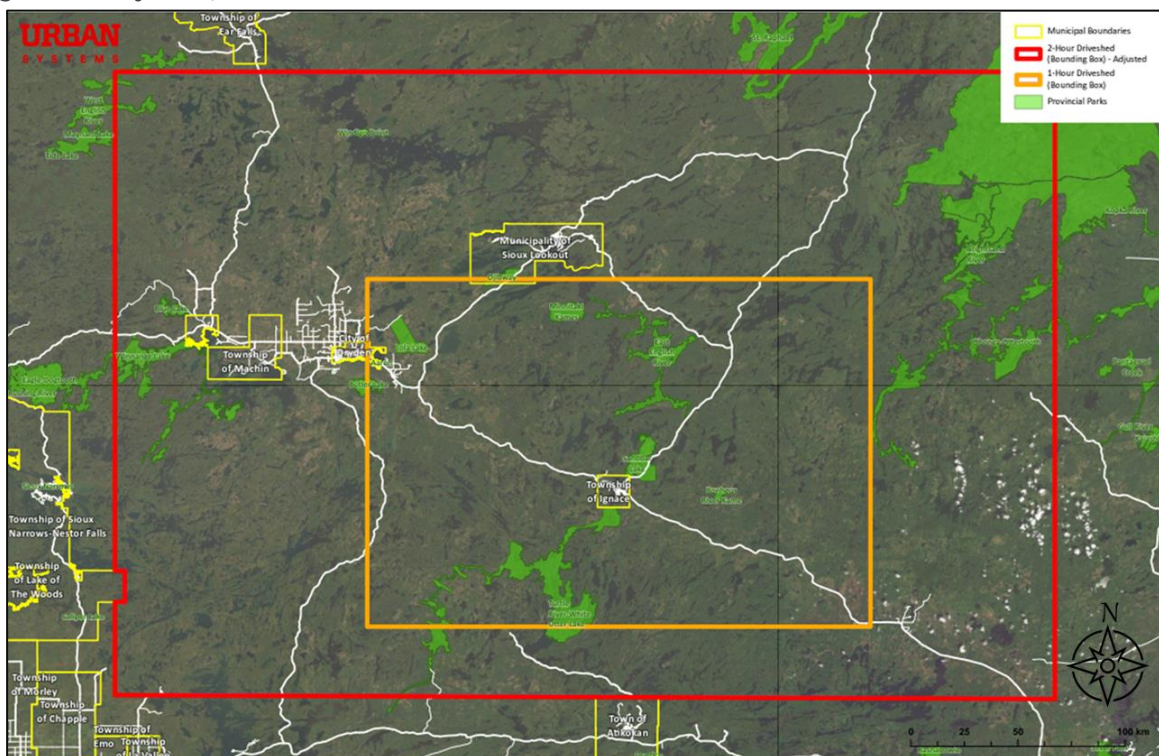


Figure 1: Regional & Local Study Areas

In addition to the Regional Study Area described above, this tourism study will be referring to provincial tourism data for Tourism Region 13c: Northwest Ontario. Tourism in Ontario is divided into 13 regions that are each led by regional tourism organizations. The intent of establishing this regional approach was to support a stronger and more competitive tourism industry across the province. Northern Ontario is Region 13, geographically the largest tourism region, and is further divided into three sub-regions: 13a, 13b and 13c. As indicated, the subregion relevant to the tourism study is Region 13c: Northwest Ontario. Figure 2 illustrates the division of tourism regions in Ontario<sup>1</sup>.

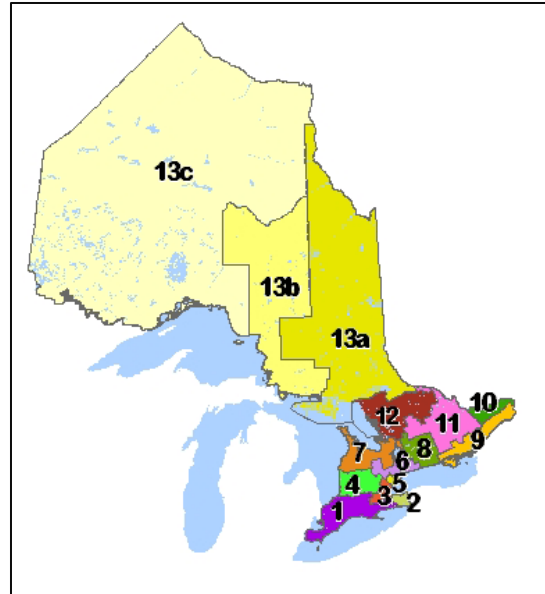


Figure 2 Ontario Tourism Region 13c

The benchmarking components of the study were not limited by the two study areas described above. Instead, examples from other regions of Canada, the United States and further abroad were examined based on their value as precedent examples in relation to tourism within the context of a project similar in scale and impact as the proposed APM.

## 1.6 TEMPORAL BOUNDARIES

Three temporal boundaries define the phases of the APM Project for this study.

1. Pre-Construction – 2024 to 2032
2. Construction – 2033 to 2042
3. Operations – 2043 to 2088

Pre-Construction is denoted by the in-moving of NWMO staff to Ignace and working from the Centre of Expertise (COE) which will be built and operational by 2028. This phase of the project will be closely associated with permitting and licensing activities and it will also involve both on-site and off-site initiatives. Various site preparation activities will be performed prior to construction.

The Pre-Construction period during which the COE will be built will be an important transition period for Ignace as it will require ramping up of the labour pool for construction of the COE as well as housing, in addition to filling positions for the various amenities and services needed for the influx of new residents, both short term and long term.

The Construction phase of the project will begin in 2033 once permits and licenses have been obtained. It will run for 10 years. This phase of the Project is comprised of surface and underground facility construction, involving about 450 trades who are expected to be temporary to the project and will live on site in a camp-style facility.

<sup>1</sup> Province of Ontario: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/tourism-regions>

Following the completion of construction, site operations will commence in 2043 and continue to 2088. During this phase underground excavation will continue in conjunction with waste container emplacement activities.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 GENERAL APPROACH

The Tourism Study workplan was developed by Urban Systems and subsequently reviewed and approved by the Township of Ignace and the NWMO. The workplan outlines the study's purpose, scope of work, key assumptions, the intended general approach and process of the study, and intended outcomes and deliverables.

The general approach of the tourism study is summarized by the following steps:

- Background review of existing plans and strategies from each of the communities, regional organizations and other related tourism organizations
- Data collections and analysis to identify trends
- Develop an inventory of tourism related amenities, attractions, businesses and services
- Outreach to owners, operators and representatives involved in tourism and conduct interviews/focus groups
- Conduct benchmark research related to the Centre of Expertise
- Outreach to representatives of benchmark visitor centres
- Develop baseline profile of tourism in the two Study Areas
- Develop SWOT analysis of Tourism in the Ignace Area
- Develop Benchmark Profiles of for:
  - Three comparable communities to the Ignace Area
  - Visitor Centres
  - Cultural Centres
- Conduct a change assessment
- Present a series of options for:
  - Tourism in the Ignace Area
  - The Centre of Expertise

### 2.2 DATA COLLECTION INFORMATION SOURCES

Data was collected from a variety of primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through interviews with knowledge holders as well as questionnaires completed by knowledge holders. Secondary data were collected from a mix of the following sources:

- Provincial and third party databases
- Tourism industry documents
- A variety of municipal studies, plans and strategies

Additional details about primary and secondary data sources are provided in the subsections below.

## 2.2.1 DATABASE SOURCES

- Tourism data for Ontario as a province and for Tourism Region 13c (Northwest Ontario) were collected from Ontario's Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport<sup>23</sup>
- Border crossing data was collected from both Statistics Canada<sup>4</sup> and the U.S. Department of Transportation<sup>5</sup>
- Hunting, fishing and provincial park visitation data were collected from Ontario's open data catalogue<sup>6</sup>
- Ontario Traffic Volume Data (AADT) were retrieved from Ontario Ministry of Transportation<sup>7</sup>
- Mobile device ping data was received from Vista by Near. This dataset is a collection of location specific data to provide insight into where people are gathering. The data provide insights into time of day, pathways, and demographics.<sup>8</sup>
- Data from AirDNA provide market research related to short term rentals.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.2.2 DOCUMENT SOURCES

### Local Study Area

- Township of Ignace Community Capacity Study -2021
- Township of Ignace Background Report
- Township of Ignace Official Plan and Zoning By-law
- Township of Ignace CIP
- Township of Ignace Community Profile
- Township of Ignace Community Strategy
- NWMO: Project Economics – Employment Ignace and Area
- NWMO: Project Configuration Studies
- Ignace Project Vision Community Conversations

### Regional Study Area

- Destination Northern Ontario – Path to Prosperity – 2021
- Destination Northern Ontario – Travel Intentions Survey
- Destination Northern Ontario – Annual Report 2019
- Destination Northern Ontario – Annual Report 2020-21
- Destination Northern Ontario – Northern Ontario Guide
- Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario (NOTO) 2019-2024 Strategic Plan
- Covid-19 Tourism Modification Pilot Project – 2021
- CBRE Northwestern Ontario 13C: Fixed Roof Accommodation Performance – 2017-18
- Indigenous Tourism Ontario – Continuing Our Journey: Strategic & Covid-19 Recovery Plan 2020-2025
- Dryden Development Corporation – Economic Development Strategic Plan – 2015

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<sup>2</sup> Website: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/tourism-regions/region-13c-northwest-ontario>

<sup>3</sup> Website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/tourism-research-statistics>

<sup>4</sup> Website: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=2410000201>

<sup>5</sup> Website: <https://data.bts.gov/Research-and-Statistics/Border-Crossing-Entry-Data/keg4-3bc2/data>

<sup>6</sup> Website: <https://data.ontario.ca/>

<sup>7</sup> Website: <https://www.library.mto.gov.on.ca/SydneyPLUS/TechPubs/Portal/tp/tvSplash.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> Website: <https://near.com/vista/>

<sup>9</sup> Website: <https://www.airdna.co/>

- Dryden Community Capacity Study – 2022
- Dryden 5-year Strategic Plan – 2020
- Sioux Lookout Community Profile – 2021
- Sioux Lookout Official Plan – 2021
- Sioux Lookout Strategic Plan – 2021

### 2.2.3 KNOWLEDGE HOLDER INTERVIEWS

Interviews played a key role in building an accurate understanding of tourism in the Ignace Area from the perspective of business owners and operators as well as from industry organizations with a broader regional and industry-wide perspective.

Interview target groups were divided into the following categories:

- Tourism Organizations
- Accommodations & Hospitality
- Parks, Campgrounds and Resort/Lodge Operators
- Indigenous Tourism Representative
- Industrial Project Visitor Centres

Email invitations to participate were sent to a total of 31 potential interviewees spanning all the categories. Successfully scheduling interviews was challenging since this study is taking place during busiest time of year for operators and were too busy to participate. Consequently, interviews were conducted with only 13 participants, outlined in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1: List of Stakeholders

BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME	INTERVIEWED
Atikokan Info	Yes
NOTO	Yes
Destination Northern Ontario	Yes
Sunset Country Travel Association	Yes
Ignace Airways and Ignace Outposts	Yes
Press Lake Camp	Focus Group Discussion
Sandy Point Camp	
Davy Lake Campground	
Posiva Oy, Finland	Yes
Eurajoki, Finland	Yes
Mont Terri Visitor Centre, Switzerland	Yes
Lone Pine Inn	Yes
Oil Sands Discover Centre	Yes



## 2.3 STRUCTURE OF THE ANALYSIS

As described above in the Scope and Purpose section of this report, the objectives of the Tourism Study are threefold:

1. To identify potential changes to tourism that may occur as a result of the APM project over the course to the various phases of the project.
2. To provide ideas and options for the Centre of Expertise based on precedent research as to what types of facility spaces and programming could be included to support the needs of the Ignace Area community, tourism industry and more broadly in other ways.
3. To provide ideas and options for tourism growth and diversification in the Ignace Area that would be supported by and benefit from the APM project and population growth.

To these ends, the structure of the Tourism Study is as follows:

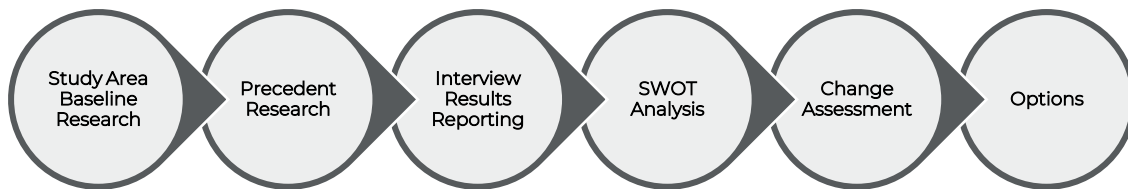


Figure 3: Project Process

## 2.4 LINKAGES TO OTHER STUDIES

Tourism as an industry relies on local and regional conditions for it to prosper and contribute to labour market and the economy as a whole. As such, the Tourism Study is closely linked with several other studies currently underway:

Table 2: Linkages to Other Baseline Studies

Study Name	Objective	Linkage
<b>Labour Baseline Study</b>	Describes and characterizes the local/regional labour supply market and household incomes.	Tourism relies on labour, particularly seasonal workers. The ability to grow and retain the labour force in the Ignace Area will mean workers are available to fill job vacancies throughout the tourism season. This is critical to tourism businesses being able to offer services and maintain amenities. Furthermore, the construction and operations of the Centre of Expertise will rely on a reliable local labour force.
<b>Workforce Development Study</b>	Focuses on attracting and retaining labour and new residents to Ignace and area.	

<b>Housing Study</b>	Focuses on how to provide housing to meet the demands of the Workforce	Housing is arguably the single most important factor in attracting and retaining workers to employment opportunities. Both rental and ownership of housing are critical to tourism for workers and visitors.
<b>Economic Development Study</b>	Focuses on identifying business opportunities, equipment services and material needs as well as the supply chain implications resulting from the APM project.	The Centre of Expertise will require equipment, materials and contractors during its construction and operations periods. Both this and tourism in general will rely on a supply chain that will be able to support the growing needs of the Ignace Area.
<b>Community Recreation Infrastructure</b>	Focusses on describing the current indoor and outdoor facilities currently in Ignace and examines the potential future demand on the current and new facilities.	Growth in tourism can leverage Ignace's recreational infrastructure and help to enhance it for both residents and visitors. Outdoor facilities if enhanced with the intent of attracting more users can be used to support the growth of new tourism businesses and activities.

## 3.0 TOURISM BASELINE FINDINGS

Tourism plays an important role in the economies of the Regional and Local Study Areas. In the Regional Study Area, communities have identified growth in tourism as a priority as part of economic development. Increased focus and investment in assets and amenities that support tourism will be needed in the coming years.

In the Township of Ignace, tourism is a key pillar of many of the Township's previous plans, reports, and the NWMO Ignace Project Visioning Community Conversations. For instance, during those visioning conversations, participants described how dependent they are on the natural environment for their livelihoods, highlighting tourism as particularly important. Community members want to see growth in Ignace's economy, including its tourism sector, all the while ensuring the health and wellbeing of the natural environment.

This section summarizes tourism trends from primary data sources, such as interviews with stakeholders and community members, and secondary data sources, such as community studies and planning documents related to Ignace.

### 3.1 TOURISM MARKET CONDITIONS

#### 3.1.1 REGIONAL STUDY AREA

This section presents the existing tourism conditions of the Ignace Area, as well as recent tourism market trends. As described above in Section 1.5, data for tourism covers Ontario's Tourism Region 13c. While the project Regional Study Area will focus on the Township of Machin, the City of Dryden, and the Municipality of Sioux Lookout, tourism data will cover the larger region.

#### Impacts of Covid-19

Tourism experienced a global decline with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. In February of 2020 the Covid-19 Pandemic stopped all international travel to Canada resulting in a dramatic decline in the industry's overall economic health.

At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, a Resource-Based Tourism Operators study suggested Ontario tourism businesses saw up to 91% decline in tourism as most of the clients come from the U.S.<sup>10</sup> This conclusion is supported by the dramatic decrease in the number of people crossing the border into Canada at the three closest border crossings, namely Rainy River, Fort Frances and Pigeon River (Figure 6 below on page 13). While visitors from the U.S. are an important contributor to the tourism market, the data points to a need to attract more Canadian visitors in the event that future pandemics or epidemics restrict mobility.

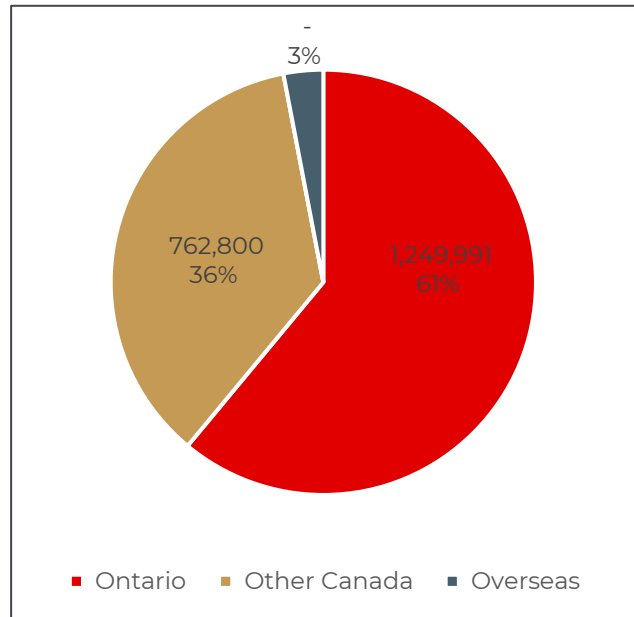
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<sup>10</sup> NOTO, 2020

## Tourism Data

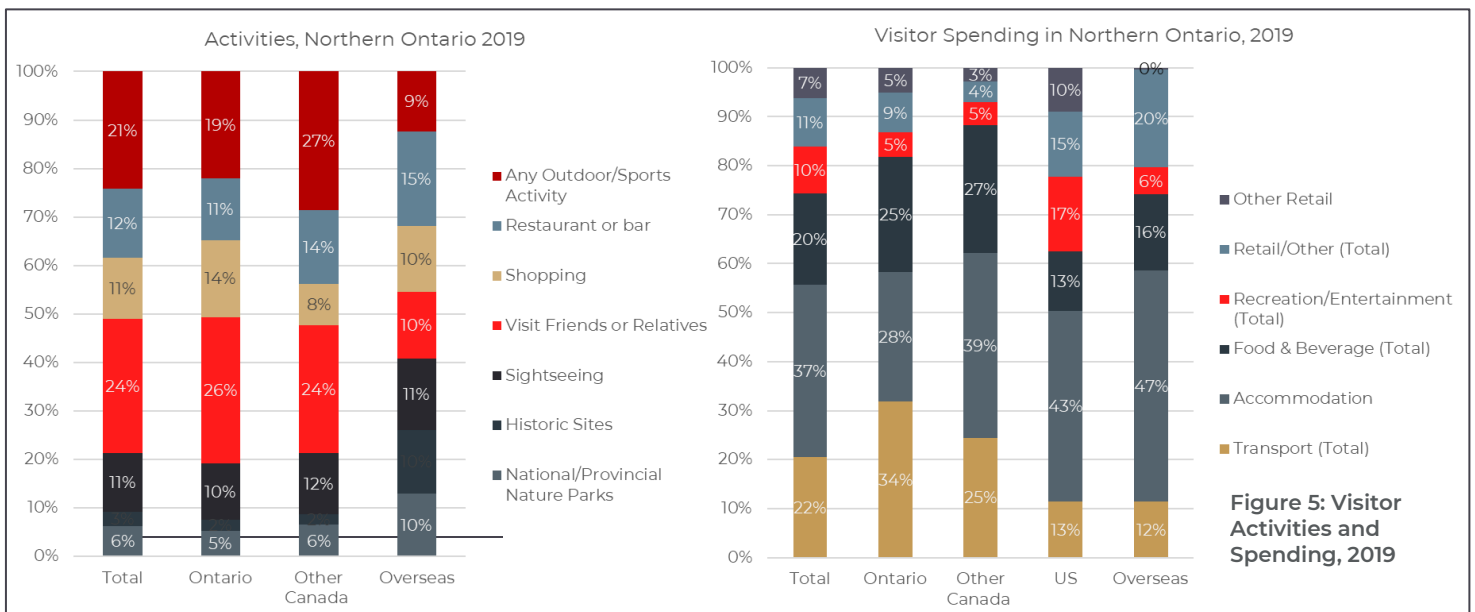
The Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport collects tourism data, which the following section is based upon and figures 4 and 5 illustrate.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 4 illustrates that in 2019, the majority of the 1.2 million visitors to the Region 13c were from Ontario (61%) with the remaining visitors from elsewhere in Canada (36%) and from overseas (3%). Visitors from the United States are included in the numbers for overseas visitors because the Ontario Ministry of Sport, Tourism and Culture considers the quality of data describing US visits to be quite low and decided to stop releasing data at the sub-provincial level for US visits since 2014. However, visitor spending does make a distinction between overseas visitors and visitors from the US. Visitors from the United States had the largest share of spending (43% or \$234M), followed by visitors from Ontario (32% or \$175M), visitors from elsewhere in Canada (22% or \$120M), and visitors from overseas (4.5% or \$25M). Figure 5 illustrates in more detail the breakdown of activities and spending of visitors to Region 13c.



**Figure 4: Visitors to Region 13c Northwest Ontario, 2019**

In terms of the activities participated by each person in Region 13c in 2019, visiting friends or families was the most common activity, except for overseas visitors. Outdoor and sports activities were the second most common activity, making up 21% of all activities. U.S. visitors were more interested in outdoor and sports activities than other groups as over a quarter of them participated in at least one of these activities. The three categories of sightseeing, historic sites, and national/provincial parks made 19% of all activities. Oversea visitors were most likely to be interested in these activities (31% of all overseas visitor activity).



**Figure 5: Visitor Activities and Spending, 2019**

<sup>11</sup> Tourism Region 13c: Northwest Ontario - <https://www.ontario.ca/document/tourism-regions/region-13c-northwest-ontario>

The top three spending categories from total visitors in 2019 are: Accommodations (37%), Transport (22%), and Food & Beverage (20%). Visitors from the U.S. spent a higher proportion on recreation and entertainment activities (17%) than any other visitor group.<sup>12</sup>

## Border Crossings

Based on stakeholder input, the sport fishing and hunting industries in Northwestern Ontario Region rely heavily on American visitors and the money they spend for the viability and success of their businesses. Figure 6 below illustrates the total number of people entering Canada at the three closest border crossings to Ignace: Rainy River, Fort Frances and Pigeon River. The data covers the past 10 years and 25% of the people crossing the border into Canada have been Americans. Figure 6 clearly illustrates the sudden and dramatic drop in border crossings in early 2020 directly correlated to Covid-19 shutdowns. The pandemic resulted in a near total collapse of the tourism industry, and the closing of the border to American visitors had a particularly accentuated negative impact on the fishing and hunting industries.<sup>13</sup>

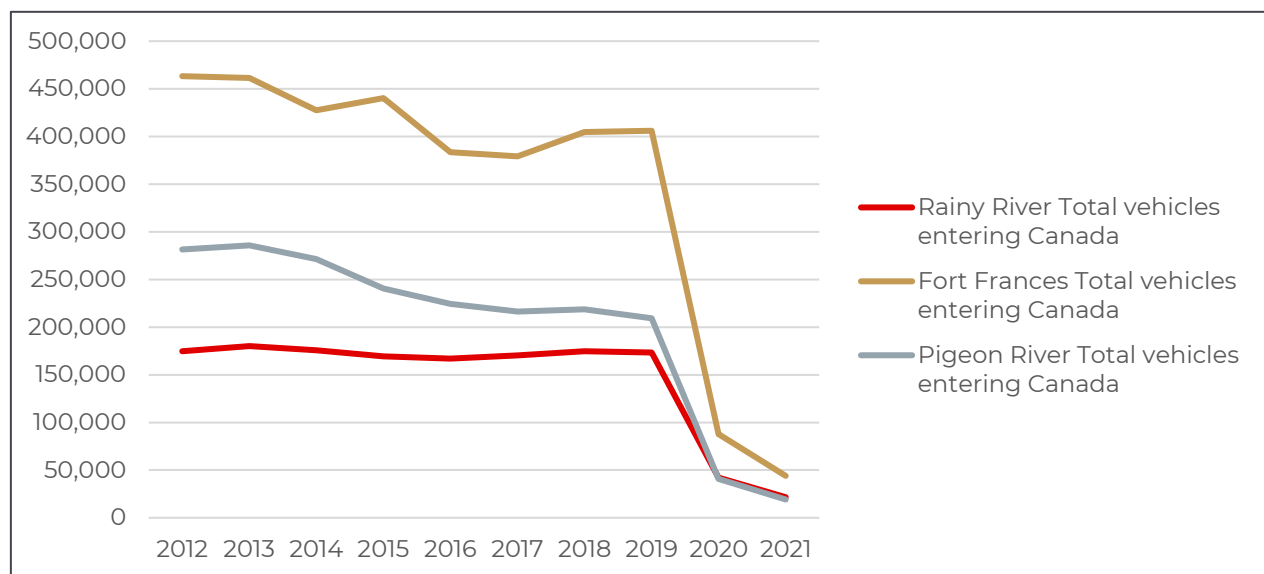


Figure 6: Border Crossing Numbers, 2012-2021

## Outfitting and Guiding

Outfitting and guiding businesses suffered immensely as a result of the pandemic because of their reliance on American travelers.

### HUNTING

In 2014, Destination Ontario commissioned a study on this industry within the Northern Ontario Tourism Region<sup>14</sup>. This is the most recent research that was commissioned on this industry. The results showed that 91% of hunters in Northern Ontario are men with average age of 50 years old who stay around 6 nights.

<sup>12</sup> Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2019

<sup>13</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 24-10-0002-01 Number of vehicles travelling between Canada and the United States

<sup>14</sup> Research Resolutions and Consulting, 2014

Figure 7 is an aggregate of all active hunters in each game category for Wildlife Management Units 5, 8, 9a, 12a and 15a<sup>15</sup>. Figure 7 is meant to illustrate the general decline of hunters in the WMU in the Ignace Area.<sup>16</sup> This decline may be attributed to a decrease in the number of hunting licenses the Province of Ontario makes available on an annual basis as well as the overall decrease in popularity of hunting as a recreational activity.

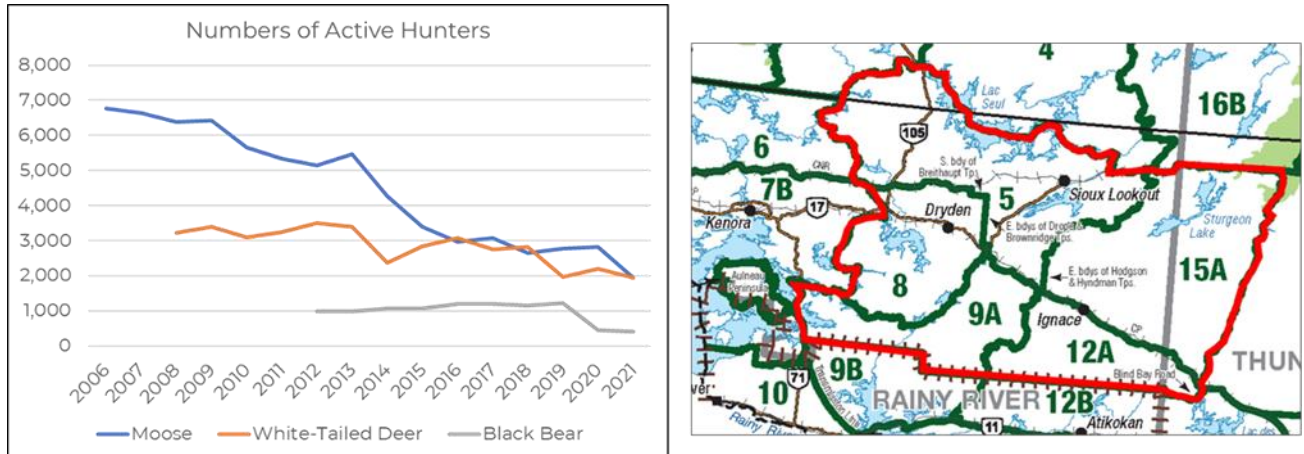


Figure 7: Number of Active Hunters

## FISHING

Sport fishing is arguably one of the cornerstone attractions for visitors to Northwestern Ontario. According to stakeholders, Northwest Ontario is anecdotally known as “God’s Country” because of the world class fishing throughout the thousands of pristine lakes. Fishing is at the heart of the lodge and resort business model as they rely on attracting a predominantly American tourist to their facilities for

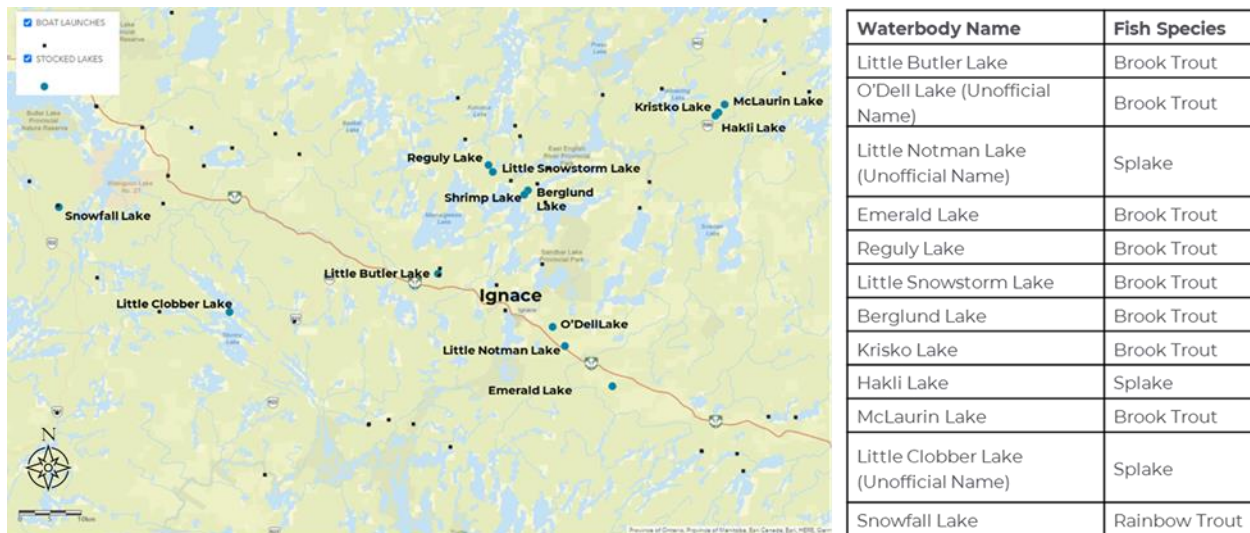


Figure 8: Stocked Lakes & Lake Access Points

<sup>15</sup> Map: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-wildlife-management-unit-wmu-map#section-4>

<sup>16</sup> Data: <https://data.ontario.ca/en/dataset/hunting-and-fishing-licence-issuers>

week-long backcountry fishing adventures. Most fishing lodges cater to the American market because it has been historically extremely lucrative.

The map (Figure 8: Stocked Lakes & Lake Access Points) above depicts lakes that are annually stocked with fish for the purpose of recreation and the table identifies the fish species and the lake being stocked. The map also indicates the location of known lake access points for boats.<sup>17</sup>

Ontario has 20 Fisheries Management Zones (FMZ) that set catch limits and seasons based on the individual needs and nature of each FMZ. The Ignace Area is located along the boundary of Fisheries Management Zones (FMZ) 4 and 5.

**Table 3: Fisheries Management Zones 4 & 5**

FMZ 4 <sup>18</sup>	FMZ 5 <sup>19</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covers an area of 60,440 square kilometres, 25% of which is privately owned;</li> <li>Is home to lakes that are characterized by intermediate depths and stained water clarity;</li> <li>Fishing is an important recreational, commercial and tourism activity.</li> <li>Fisheries include northern pike, walleye, lake trout, lake whitefish, smallmouth bass and muskellunge;</li> <li>Many lakes are stocked with brook trout, rainbow trout and splake for additional angling opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covers an area of 44,360 square kilometres of which over 90% is Crown land;</li> <li>Is home to 5,000 lakes and thousands of kilometres of streams and rivers;</li> <li>Lakes are characterized as deep and clear;</li> <li>Fishing is an important recreational, commercial and tourism activity.</li> <li>Fisheries include walleye, lake trout, northern pike, smallmouth bass, black crappie, lake whitefish and muskellunge</li> </ul>

### Cell Phone Data

The data analyzed for the Ignace and Area Tourism Study is from 2019 to avoid any impacts on typical patterns of use caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This data is collected from personal mobile devices and includes visitor dates, day of the week, and time of day calculated in seconds. This data is separated into residents of Ignace (Figure 10: Cell Phone Ping Data, Visitors to Ignace) and visitors (Figure 9: Cell Phone Ping Data, Ignace Residents).

Outside of the main commercial businesses and residential areas, Ignace residents frequently visited the Lily Pad Lake Walking Trail, Agimak Beach and West Beach areas. This is in contrast to non-residents whose movement activity was most concentrated in the gas station area and along Highway 17. When the data is analyzed for seasonality patterns (e.g., by spring and summer versus fall and winter), some non-residents frequented the Lone Pine Inn area, but there was not much movement in the nearby Lily Pad Lake Walking Trail and Agimak Beach. This signals a potential opportunity to introduce the two beaches (Agimak Beach and West Beach) and the Lily Pad Lake Walking Trail to non-residents through

<sup>17</sup> Data: <https://data.ontario.ca/en/>

<sup>18</sup> Website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/fisheries-management-zone-4-fmz-4>

<sup>19</sup> Website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/fisheries-management-zone-5-fmz-5>

advertising and wayfinding. The data did not show any significant movement trends between weekends and weekdays.

Of the visitors that originated from the United States, 75% of them were visiting from 10 states. These states are Minnesota (21%), Wisconsin (18%), Illinois (11%), Iowa (7%), Indiana (3%), Florida (3%), California (3%), Michigan (3%), Texas (2%) and Missouri (2%).

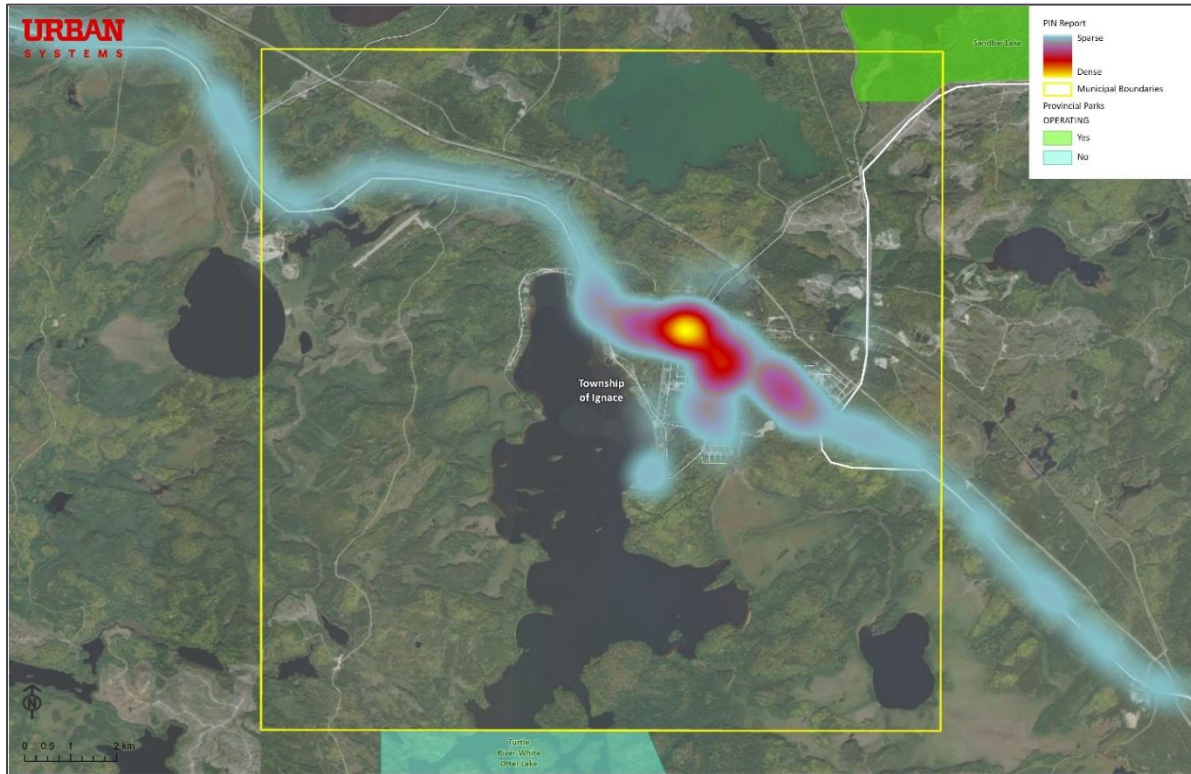


Figure 10: Cell Phone Ping Data, Visitors to Ignace

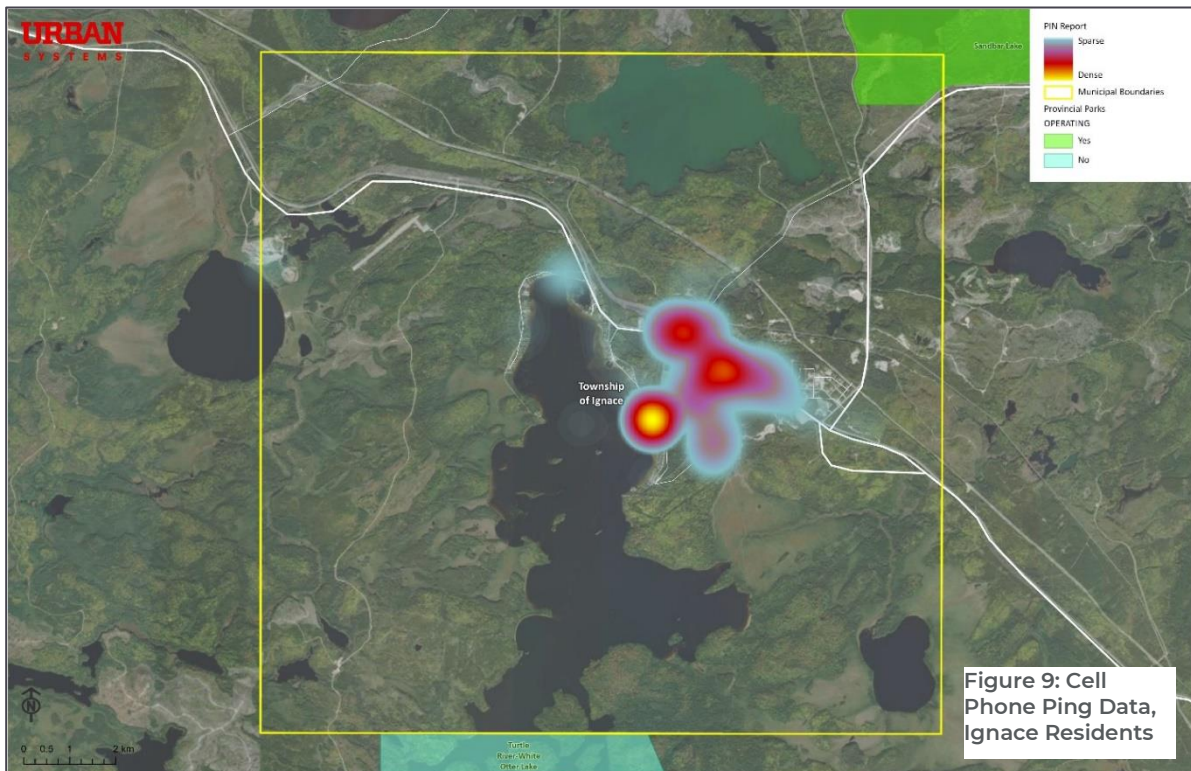


Figure 9: Cell Phone Ping Data, Ignace Residents



### 3.1.2 TOURISM EMPLOYMENT

While tourism does not have its own employment category, data from the following employment sectors are used to gauge the status of tourism jobs:<sup>20</sup>

- Accommodations
- Food & Beverage Services
- Arts, Entertainment and Recreation
- Transportation
- Travel Services

Figure 11 illustrates the trend over the past 5 years, which shows the rapid decline in jobs as a result of Covid-19.

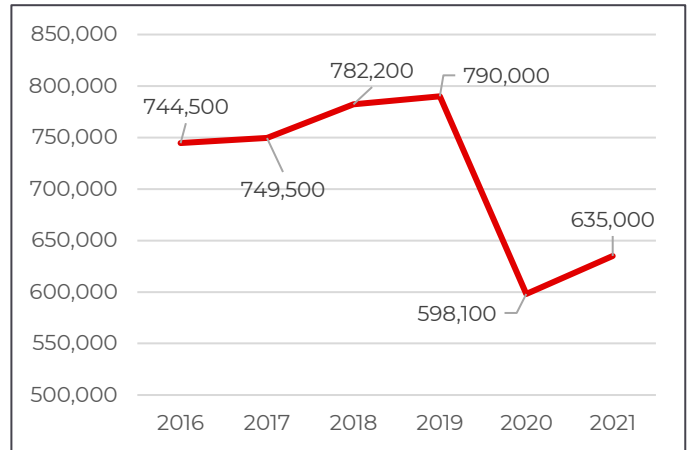


Figure 11: Tourism Employment in Ontario 2016-21

While the Province of Ontario collects employment data for the above job types on an annual basis, job numbers that cover the Regional and Local Study Areas are only available through the National Census, so are only current to 2016 at the time of this study. Data for the Kenora District Census Division are used to represent the Regional Study Area, while data for the Township of Ignace (census subdivision) are used.

Table 4: Proportion of Jobs in the Tourism Sector

Categories	Regional Study Area – Kenora District	Local Study Area – Township of Ignace
<b>Total</b>	29,245	530
<b>Proportion of jobs in tourism sector</b>	<b>23.7%</b>	<b>27.6%</b>
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting</b>	765	50
<b>Retail trade</b>	3,445	25
<b>Arts, entertainment and recreation</b>	335	0
<b>Accommodation and food services</b>	2,375	70

Based on the 2016 census data, roughly 24% of employed people in Kenora District were involved in the tourism industry, while almost 28% of employed people in Ignace were involved in the tourism. These

<sup>20</sup> Statistics Canada Table 36-10-0489-01 (formerly CANSIM 383-0031) Labour statistics consistent with the System of National Accounts

proportions are significant and highlight the importance tourism plays in both the Regional and Local Study Areas.<sup>21</sup>

## 3.2 INDIGENOUS TOURISM

Indigenous tourism in Canada is a broad sector that encompasses a diverse mix of participants and business types, including community-owned enterprises, sole proprietors such as artists, tourism guides and workshop hosts, as well as incorporated businesses with indigenous ownership. It can include businesses that provide Indigenous cultural experience or tourism businesses that are simply owned by Indigenous people.

Like the broader tourism industry, the Indigenous tourism sector offers a wide variety of experiences and services, including the following:

- Accommodation and Lodging: hotels, motels, resorts, bed and breakfasts, and campsite accommodations (cabins, yurts, longhouses)
- Experiences and Attractions: Cultural camps, excursions, workshops, trail rides, equipment rentals
- Food and Beverage: Dining establishments and experiences.
- Events: Pow Wows, community events
- Destinations: Museums, Historical Sites, National Parks.

### 3.2.1 IMPACTS OF COVID-19

The Covid-19 Pandemic had a significant negative impact on Indigenous Tourism's growth. Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada commissioned research in conjunction with the Conference Board of Canada which found<sup>22</sup>:

- Before the pandemic, Indigenous tourism contribution \$1.86 billion to the Canadian economy and employed 38,900 people.
- The pandemic had a devastating impact on Indigenous tourism as a whole, reducing the total GDP contribution to \$580 million and dropping the number of people employed to 10,600.
- Overall, Indigenous tourism is recovering, with economic output increased to \$858 million and the number of people employed rising to 19,700 by the end of 2021.

Similarly, Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO) also commissioned research on the impact of the pandemic on the sector<sup>23</sup>. This study was done in partnership with MDB Insights and found:

- Indigenous tourism's contribution to the Ontario economy from 2017-2019 was approximately \$622 million to \$654 million.
- The pandemic dramatically reduced revenues to \$322 million, a 47% drop.
- It's expected that revenues will not return to 2019 level until 2023.

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<sup>21</sup> Statistics Canada. 2017. Ignace, TP [Census subdivision], Ontario and Kenora, DIS [Census division], Ontario (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed August 12, 2022).

<sup>22</sup> Conference-Board-of-Canada-ITAC-Report-September-2021.pdf (indigenoustourism.ca)

<sup>23</sup> <https://indigenoustourismontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ITO-Final-Report-12-November-2021.pdf>

## Growing interest in Indigenous Tourism

Travelers are increasingly interested in experiences that benefit the communities they are visiting which is particularly relevant to Indigenous communities because the tourism experiences offered can be closely linked to the way of life and culture of the Indigenous community and its members. A market research report undertaken by Destination Canada on American Tourists perceptions of Indigenous Tourism outlined the following findings<sup>24</sup>:

- Authenticity: extremely important to Indigenous tourism
- Hands-on: Indigenous Tourism experiences are important; offering connections to authentic people and places.
- Experiences: These are usually booked as “add-ons” to other main destinations and experiences.

### 3.2.2 WABIGOON LAKE OJIBWAY NATION

As described on Wabigoon’s website<sup>25</sup>, Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation (WLON) is located southeast of Dryden on the shores of Dinorwic Lake with a membership of 740 people. The Nation is a proud, progressive and resilient community, having survived colonialism and the attempted acculturation by Canada, the residential schools, the flooding of lakes and the destruction of the natural environment through industrial activities, the sixties scoop of their young people and many other hardships. WLON has emerged as a vibrant Nation, confident in their culture and a desire for a more diversified modern economy.

The ancient presence of Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation people on the land is reflected in the forests and lakes, rivers and streams. Aki and Nibi - the land and water - are vital resource for WLON people. Extensive fields of Manomin (wild rice) were planted by WLON ancestors and now form an abundant source of food for people and animals. Vast towering stands of pine, birch, cedar and spruce, as well as blueberries and other foods, were once nurtured through a practice of controlled burning. WLON was a leader in the processing of wild rice and is currently an important supplier of saplings for reforestation efforts by the forestry industry through their tree nursery.

WLON also owns and operates a resort called the White Feather Resort. This drive-in resort has six fully equipped cabins that sleep 4 to 7 guests and provides easy access to Dinorwic Lake for fishing. Guiding services are also available through the resort.

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<sup>24</sup> [https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/608-aboriginal-tourism-us-qualitative-research-summary-findings-and-considerations/dc\\_us-aboriginal-qual-research\\_key-findings-implications\\_en.pdf](https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/608-aboriginal-tourism-us-qualitative-research-summary-findings-and-considerations/dc_us-aboriginal-qual-research_key-findings-implications_en.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Adapted from <https://www.wabigoonlakeon.ca/community-profile>

Based on labour data collected for Wabigoon Lake 27 in the 2016 Census, 25% of residents were involved in industries that are grouped together as tourism (fishing, hunting, and retail trade in this case). However, it should be noted that Census data collected for First Nation communities are typically considered to be unreliable because of low response rates.

### 3.3 CURRENT TOURISM CONDITIONS

This section highlights current tourism conditions as well as content from strategies, plans and other documents either dedicated to the promotion and strengthening of tourism, or with content addressing tourism in Region 13<sup>26</sup>. Given the significantly negative impact the Covid-19 pandemic had on tourism, some content is designed to mitigate against the pandemic’s impacts.

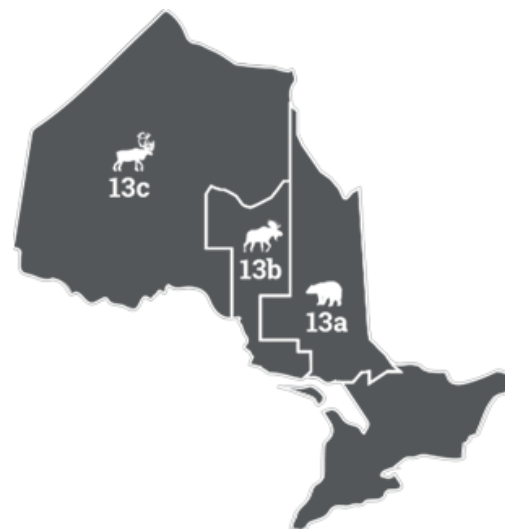


Figure 12: Northern Ontario Tourism Region

#### 3.3.1 REGIONAL STUDY AREA PLANS AND STUDIES

The following section will focus on content for the Regional Study Area and includes reports published by tourism organizations as well as for the City of Dryden, and the Municipality of Sioux Lookout.

#### Regional Tourism Organizations

As described in Section 1.5 Spatial Boundaries, tourism in Ontario is divided into a several tourism regions. Northern Ontario is Region 13 which is further divided into 13a, 13b and 13c. Destination Northern Ontario is the regional organization, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to support tourism businesses and communities develop tourism products and experiences.

While the province divides Tourism Region 13 into three subregions, there are actually four subregional organizations in place that are dedicated to supporting tourism (Figure 18)<sup>27</sup>.

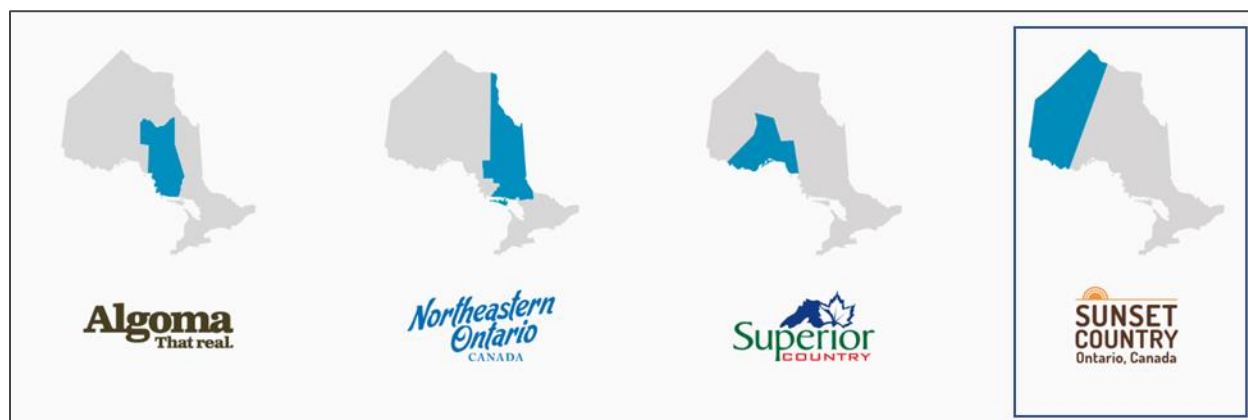


Figure 13: Region 13 Tourism Organizations

<sup>26</sup> Map: <https://destinationnorthernontario.ca/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.northernontario.travel/>

## Tourism Reports

- **Sunset Country:** Ontario's Sunset Country is one of four travel associations in Region 13 and is focused on promoting Northwestern Ontario tourism and outdoor experiences. Within its boundaries, illustrated in Figure 13 it markets the approximately 70,000 lakes and rivers to visitors from around the world with a special focus on American visitors who are important to the fishing and hunting industries.
- **Northern Ontario Tourist Outfitters Association (NOTO):** Distinct from the travel associations described above, NOTO is primarily an industry association representing tourism and outfitter operators, particularly of hunting and fishing operations. It advocates on behalf of its members to governments with the objective of protecting their livelihoods and the natural environment they rely on.

A number of reports were published by regional tourism organizations (Destination Northern Ontario and Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario) for Northern Ontario (Region 13), in which Ignace and surrounding area are part of as Region 13c. In 2020 to 2021, tourism in Northern Ontario as a whole generated 9.2 million visits and \$1.6 billion in tourism receipts. Initiatives that Destination Northern Ontario is focused on for the 2020 to 2021 year is to support product development, improve wayfinding and continue to develop workforce and provide industry training.

The reports highlighted travel trends during the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and for travel intentions in 2021. In summary, the 2021 survey travel intentions found the following:

- Survey respondents were most likely to have middle to high household incomes (40k to 250k) and were most interested in participating in outdoor activities.
- Survey respondents were most likely to travel to Northern Ontario for a week (40% of respondents) and mostly for pleasure (80%).
- The top activities that respondents would participate in are outdoor activities (e.g., paddling, cycling, hiking) (34%), road, trails and waterways (e.g., motorcycling, ATVing, RVing, road trips, snowmobiling, boating) (22%) and fishing or hunting (19%). Seven percent of respondents were interested in culture and history (e.g., museums, attractions, events and galleries).

Destination Northern Ontario's 2021 Path to Prosperity outlines key initiatives and priorities to be undertaken to support tourism in Northern Ontario after the lift of Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. The action plan to tackle the priority areas includes product development, investment attraction, workforce development and industry training and marketing. Some of these actions include:

- Diversifying services to attract new markets and diversified visitor profiles;
- Linking the tourism industry to municipal economic development;
- Addressing core skill and training requirements; and,
- Aligning marketing strategies to remain nimble.

Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario (NOTO) is a regional tourism organization for the resource-based tourism industry. There are 5 strategic priorities and corresponding actions that NOTO will take in 2019 to 2024 to enhance the quality, diversity, and economic viability of outdoor tourism in Ontario:

- Rebrand;
- Sustain & Revitalize;
- Value-Added Services;
- Communication; and,
- Partnerships.

Key initiatives consists of a new digital and social media presence, establishing a Northern Ontario Tourism Act by working with the provincial government, developing a new adventure guide, and increase government relations to promote resource-based tourism industry.

## City of Dryden

The City of Dryden is the second largest community in Kenora District, and the largest in the Regional Study Area. The City is an attractive tourism destination due to its location in the Boreal Forest surrounded by the Wabigoon Chain of Lakes, Thunder Lake, and Eagle Lake. Dryden acknowledges the importance of supporting tourism and taking advantage of expansion opportunities. In *Dryden's 2020-2025 Community Strategic Plan*, one of the strategy's priorities is to utilize a portion of the MAT (Municipal Accommodation Tax) to further build community capacity and local tourism activities and attractions.

### DRYDEN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

- Strengthening local and regional tourism is classified as a Highlighted Action in Targeted Economic Opportunities. This entails strengthening local tourism product, advancing marketing efforts, networking regional tourism offerings, and advance local sports tourism
- Due to its central location within Canada, Dryden is a good meeting place for conferences, sports, and other events.
- Increased tourism activity is an economic driver that can attract people to move into the community. Therefore, additional investments in tourism are necessary.
- The City's ambition is to develop a more robust tourism sector. Unfortunately, there are several challenges that impede this process, including:
  - A shortage of qualified labour force
  - A lack of arts and cultural offerings, and
  - A dearth of entertainment options and recreation opportunities.
- On the other hand, Dryden's strengths include:
  - Well-organized sport tourism information and good facilities to support events
  - Accommodation options, and
  - Airport infrastructure and services.
- Indigenous tourism is on the rise in the region and partnering with Indigenous people on tourism initiatives is a good strategy to increase tourism activity.
- A shifting paradigm – tourists are not only visitors; they are also potential residents and business investors.

### CITY OF DRYDEN COMMUNITY CAPACITY STUDY

Key tourism assets in the community are outlined in the table below (Table 5):

Table 5: City of Dryden Tourism Assets

Tourism Asset	Type	Number	Sites
Accommodation	Hotels	5	Best Western, Comfort Inn, Holiday Inn, Kowality Motor Inn, Riverview Lodge
	Motels	7	Chalet Inn, Dryden Motel, Evening Star Motel, Hide Away Inn, Patricia Inn, Timberland Motel, Town & Country Motel
	Camp & RV Park	4	Aaron Provincial Park, Davis' Bonny Bay Camp & RV Park, Nature's Inn Tent & RV Park, Northwestern Tent & RV Park

Trails & Parks	Hiking & Trails	7	Laura Howe Marsh Trail, Aaron Provincial Park Trails, Ghost Lake Trails, Trans Canada Trails, Dryden Urban Trails, Dryden Signature Trail, Nature in the City Trail
	Parks	12	Aaron Provincial Park, Cooper Park, Dryden Rotary Park, Eagle Park, Johnston Park, Kinsmen Park, Lions Park, Milestone Park, Plumridge Park, Pronger Park, Flat Rock Park, Earls Court, Sandy Beach Park, Sandy Beach Recreational Area
Waterfront Access	Beaches	4	Sandy Beach Recreational Area, Aaron Park, Johnston Public Beach, Ghost Lake Public Beach
	Docks & Boat Launches	4	Van Home Landing, Aaron Park, Skene's Landing, Duke Street Dock
Cultural Assets	Artworks	3	Pieces of Dryden Mosaic Sculpture, Holiday Handcrafters Market, Anne Siciliano Original Artwork
	Galleries	3	Naked North Gallery and Gifts, The Clever Corvid
	Museums	1	NWO Farmhouse Studio, Studio Girdwood Dryden & District Museum
Events & Festivals	Events	11	Home & Trade Show, Tbaytel Walleye Masters Tournament, Canada's National Indigenous People's Day, Canada Day, Northern Lights Classic Quarter Horse Show, Teddy Bear Picnic, Max the Moose Birthday, Dryden Days of Summer, Annual Gun and Collectible Show, Dryden Fall Fair, Santa Claus Parade
	Festivals	3	Dryden Winter Festival, Dryden Dragon Boat Festival, Dryden Fall Fest

- More attention needs to be given to the following aspects of tourism:
  - Marketing and promotion efforts
  - Tourism, waterfront, and downtown signage
  - Tourism packages and experience packages
  - Sports tourism activities and opportunities
  - Larger variety of accommodation options.

## Sioux Lookout

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout is an important regional services hub north of Ignace. It has a diversified economy of which tourism plays a growing important role.

### MUNICIPALITY OF SIOUX LOOKOUT 2021 COMMUNITY PROFILE

- The Profile recognizes Sioux Lookout as a renowned, year-round tourist destination.
- Outdoor recreational and sporting activities, such as water sports, hiking, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, and fishing, attract visitors to the area.
- Heritage tourism is one of the targeted sectors recognized in the 2009 Economic Strategy.

The tourism facilities snapshot can be found in the table below (Table 6).

Table 6: Municipality of Sioux Lookout Tourism Facilities

Facility	Number	Facility	Number
Hotels/motels/resorts	29	<b>Total Number of Rooms</b>	300
Community Centres	1	<b>Libraries</b>	1

<b>Facilities for Seniors</b>	2	<b>Ice Arenas</b>	1
<b>Private Golf Courses</b>	1	<b>Indoor Swimming Pools</b>	2
<b>Cinemas</b>	1	<b>Museums</b>	1
<b>Galleries</b>	1	<b>Baseball Diamonds</b>	3
<b>Soccer / Football Fields</b>	2		

**SIOUX LOOKOUT OFFICIAL PLAN**

- One key principle of the Plan is to establish Sioux Lookout as a tourist destination. The objectives to achieve this goal are:
  - To provide opportunities to enhance the downtown as a destination for visitors by providing docking facilities.
  - To support the development of the heritage sector to meet visitor expectations by preserving important buildings, landscapes, and other elements that defines or represents Sioux Lookout’s history such as Centennial Park.
  - To coordinate with Indigenous communities on planning matters related to tourism. To provide opportunities for eco-tourism in a manner that is balanced with the protection and conservation of the natural environment.
- Tourism draws approximately 20,000 visitors annually. The Town’s branding relies on the “frontier” image.
- Hunting and fishing are activities that attract most visitations to Sioux Lookout.
- The area provides numerous year-round recreational uses, including fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, hiking, horseback riding, camping, and other recreational activities.
- The area has an extensive trail network that includes Umfreville Trail which connects Umfreville Park, a national historic site, and Lake Superior, Cedar Bay, and Ojibway Provincial Park.

**3.3.2 LOCAL STUDY AREA PLANS AND STUDIES**

The following are key themes that emerged from the background review for the Township of Ignace, which is the primary community located in the Local Study Area. Specific priorities and strategic actions have been identified in several documents to support tourism development and economic development, with respect to the APM project.

**IGNACE POLICY FRAMEWORKS TO SUPPORT TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

- Ignace has undertaken a review of the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law in 2018-2019 to identify policies and provisions that can be updated to facilitate future economic development and tourism opportunities.
- Ignace has a Community Improvement Plan in place to Implement community improvement through an effective set of direct and indirect financial incentives and municipal leadership strategies.
- Through the Ignace Community Capacity Study, 2022, Ignace is proactively planning for a period of significant growth and development resulting from the potential siting of the APM project in its vicinity to ensure the growth of the community is being met with appropriate service levels, infrastructure and facilities to maintain a high quality of life while balancing its small-town charm and sense of community.
- A large proportion of Ignace’s labour force works in occupations related to Sales and Service which could be taken as an opportunity to support tourism businesses in the Ignace Area.
- Four tourism recommendations have been identified in the Township of Ignace Community Strategy, 2019-2024 to strengthen the industry in the area. These are: 1) Supporting and implementing training for operators, frontline staff and residents; 2) Enhance beach facilities and



programming; 3) Establishment of an annual event; and 4) Support the development of new and enhanced tourism businesses, experiences and packages.

#### **TOURISM AND CULTURAL ASSETS IN PLACE**

- Ignace's Official Plan and Zoning By-Law directs and regulates land use and emphasizes key industries that support and strengthen tourism opportunities in Ignace. These industries are hunting, fishing, harvesting, and cultural heritage.
- Ignace is surrounded by boreal forests, a natural ecological environment that draws visitors to the area for fishing, hunting, canoeing, and bird watching.
- Ignace has an active outdoor culture, and the town hosts several outdoor activities year-round including ice fishing, sliding, a poker derby involving snowmobiles, Christmas parade and other festivals.

#### **COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Ignace is located at the intersection of Highway 17 (Trans-Canada Highway) and Secondary Highway 599, and on the Canadian Pacific Railway.
- The Mary Berglund Community Health Centre Hub is located in Ignace. It is a primary health organization and is funded by the Northwest Local Health Integration Network. It is focused on overall health and wellness of the community, offering a multi-disciplinary services team including locums, nurses, counsellors, physios, mental health, indigenous support worker, etc.

#### **COMMUNITY PRIORITIES FOR THE APM PROJECT**

- Important to promote blend of community culture, heritage, and natural features (e.g. boreal forest, role of forestry and mining) and highlight potential opportunities for walking and bicycling trails as tourism options.
- Maximize APM project employment and training opportunities for local residents and enhancing facilities and services to the community and area.
- The Centre of Expertise should be a facility designed to fit in with the community and surrounding areas and be a multi-use facility that serves community needs (e.g. education/training/employment and community arts and culture).

### 3.3.3 REGIONAL STUDY AREA TOURISM INVENTORY

#### Provincial Parks

There are numerous Ontario provincial parks within the Regional Study Area, which encompasses the Local Study Area as well. The Regional Study Area in this case is in reference to the larger red box representing a 2-hour driving distance from Ignace (Figure 14). Ontario provincial parks are categorized into different park classes based on their intended use. The thirteen provincial parks located throughout the Regional Study Area are subdivided into four separate park classes which are outlined below and identified on the map below (Figure 14).<sup>28</sup>

##### Recreation Class

These provincial parks usually have beaches, campgrounds and outdoor recreation opportunities. Most recreation parks provide a mix of amenities that include toilets, showers, laundromats, interpretive programs, playgrounds, boat launches, hiking trails and picnic tables.

- Aaron Provincial Park

##### Natural Environment Class

This class of park aims to protect the natural landscape and special natural features while also providing opportunities for activities such as swimming and camping.

- Sandbar Lake Provincial Park
- Ojibway Provincial Park

##### Waterway Class

These are river corridors that provide canoeists with high-quality recreation on historical riverways for travel.

- Brightsand River Provincial Park
- East English River Provincial Park
- Turtle-White Otter Lake Provincial Park
- Eagle-Dogtooth Provincial Park
- West English River Provincial Park
- St. Raphael Provincial Park

##### Nature Reserve Class

These areas are intended to protect distinctive natural habitats and landforms of the province for educational and research purposes. Due to the fragility of many of these natural features, only a few nature reserves are accessible to the public.

- Butler Lake Provincial Park
- Bonheur River Kame Provincial Park
- Lola Lake Provincial Park
- Minnitaki Kames Provincial Park

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<sup>28</sup> Website: <https://allontario.ca/ontario-profile-ontario-parks/>

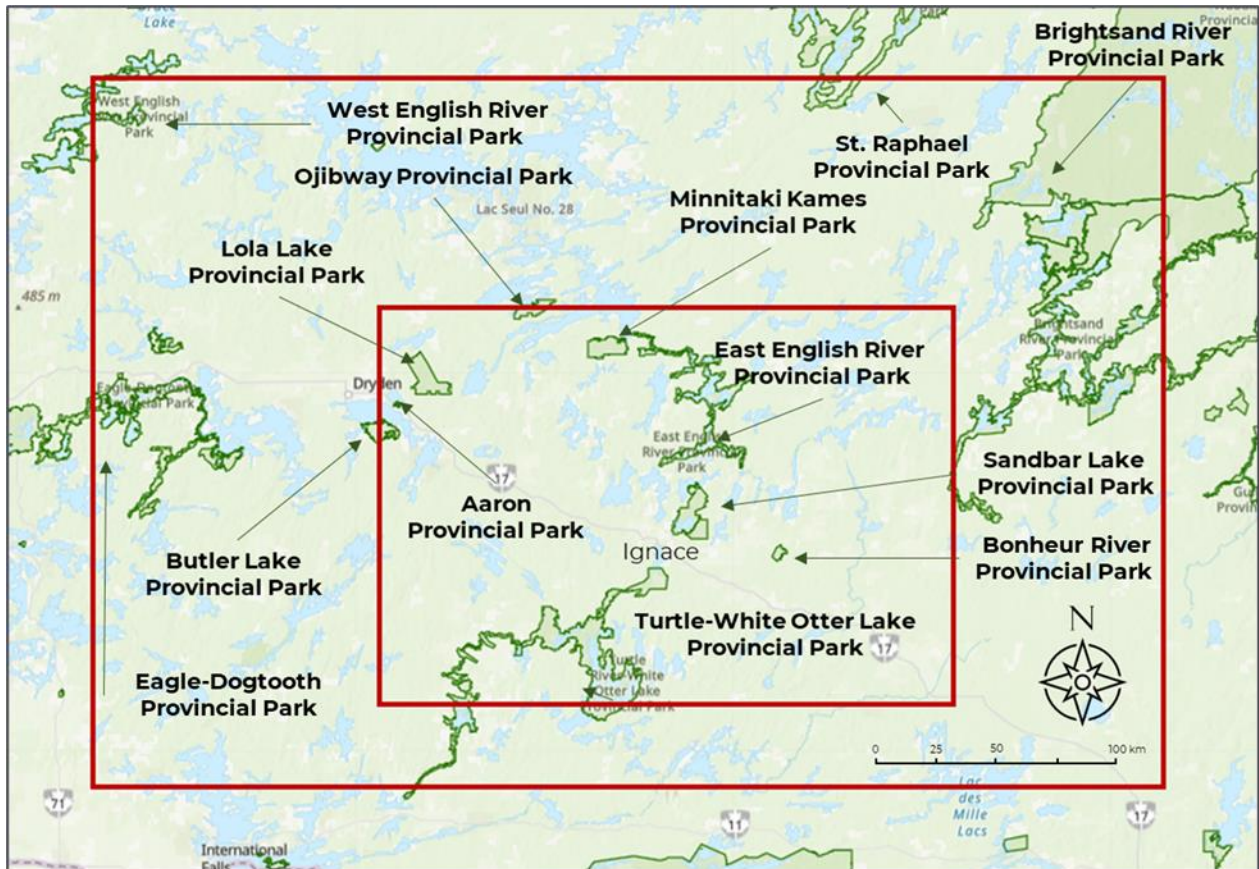


Figure 14: Regional Study Area Provincial Parks

The following table provides details for three provincial parks in the Regional and Local Study Area that are open to the public to visit and use. Each park is a different class of park to illustrate the differences in available amenities, services and activities.

Table 7: Description of Three Contrasting Provincial Parks

Camping	Activities	Facilities
<b>Aaron Provincial Park (Recreation Class)</b>		
Two sandy beaches and the clear, shallow waters of Thunder Lake make Aaron ideal for water based activities, such as swimming, boating and fishing.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual campsite (100)</li> <li>Group campsites (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biking</li> <li>Birding</li> <li>Boating</li> <li>Bicycling</li> <li>Canoeing (two loops, 4-12 days)</li> <li>Discovery Program</li> <li>Hunting</li> <li>Hiking (2 trails, 1-2km)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boat launch</li> <li>Comfort Stations (barrier-free)</li> <li>Day Use</li> <li>Flush Toilets</li> <li>Laundromat</li> <li>Park store</li> <li>Picnic Shelters</li> <li>Rentals (canoes, kayaks, motorboats, personal flotation devices)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Sandbar Lake Provincial Park (Natural Environment Class)</b>          Beautiful sandy beach with gently sloping swimming area that's great for kids          For use from May to September 2022</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual campsite (75)</li> <li>• Group campsites (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swimming</li> <li>• Boating</li> <li>• Bicycling</li> <li>• Canoeing (two loops, 4-12 days)</li> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Hunting</li> <li>• Hiking (3 trails, 0.5-4km)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boat launch</li> <li>• Comfort Stations (barrier-free)</li> <li>• Day Use</li> <li>• Flush Toilets</li> <li>• Laundromat</li> <li>• Park store</li> <li>• Picnic Shelters</li> <li>• Rentals (canoes, kayaks, motorboats, personal flotation devices)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Turtle River-White Otter Lake Provincial Park (Waterway Class)</b>          Access by water only. Features some of the oldest rocks on earth. A large moraine and many Indigenous pictographs are also found within the park.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No facilities available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backcountry canoeing and fishing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No facilities available.</li> </ul>

The majority of the provincial parks in the Regional Study Area are either Waterway Class or Nature Reserve Class parks which provide the least amount amenities and programed activities. While Nature Reserve are highly limited for recreational use, Waterway parks present an opportunity for future tourism activities and services.

**Highway Counts**

Ignace is located along Highway 17 which is a major route linking communities in northern Ontario from Thunder Bay to Kenora. In 2016, the highest average annual daily traffic (AADT) counts along Highway 17 were highest in Thunder Bay (over 6.2 million), Kenora (2.3 million) and Dryden (1.5 million). In Ignace, the AADT was approximately 660,000.<sup>29</sup>

**Provincial Park Visitation**

The closest provincial park to Ignace is Sandbar Lake Provincial Park which received approximately 11,500 visitors in 2020. This is lower than some of the other popular provincial park destinations in the region, including Aaron Provincial Park which saw 22,100 visitors in 2020, and Blue Lake Provincial Park which received 39,600 visitors in the same year.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Adapted from Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2020 and Ministry of Transportation, 2016  
<sup>30</sup> <https://data.ontario.ca/dataset/visitation-to-provincial-parks>

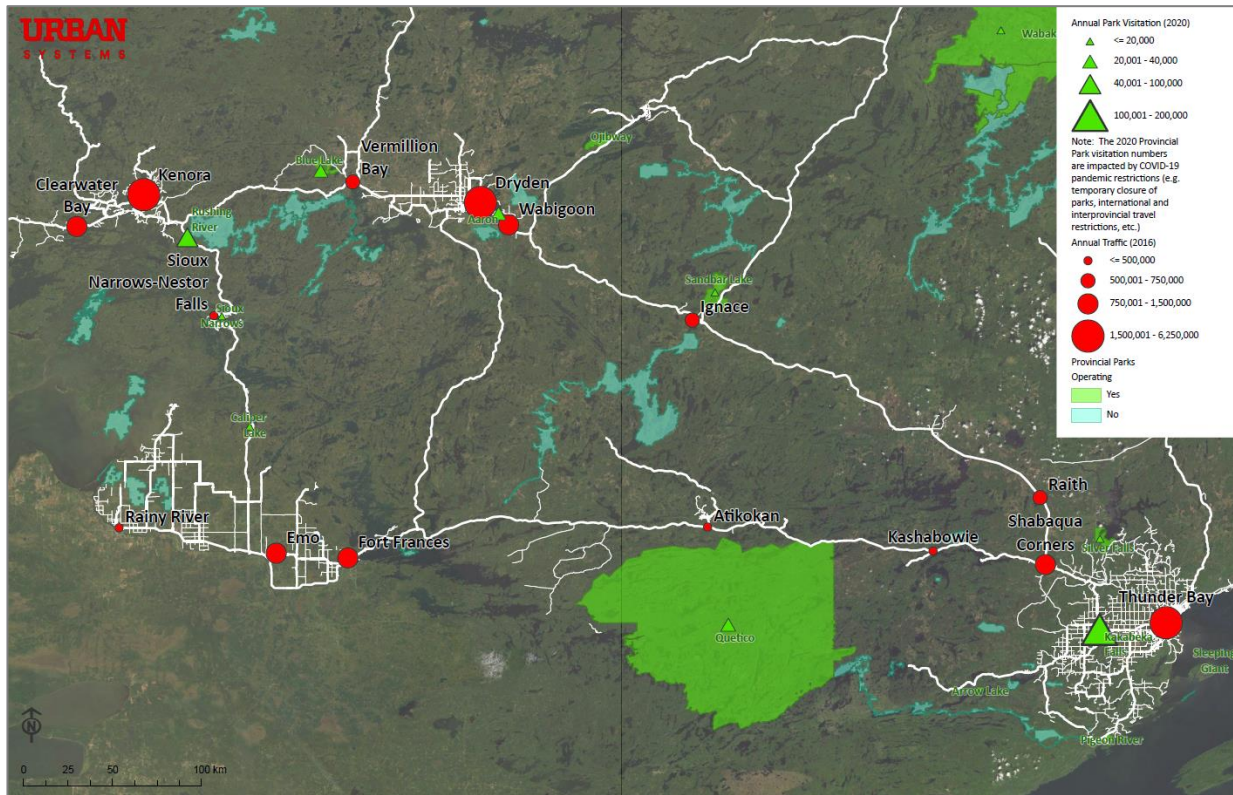


Figure 15: Provincial Park Visitation Numbers and Hwy Counts

## Accommodations and Hospitality

In Region 13c, the hotel occupancy rate for the northern Ontario region is 52.9% in 2020, down from the previous year of 69.5%, likely attributed to the social distancing and travel restrictions during the pandemic. The average daily rate in 2020 is \$123.68.<sup>31</sup>

There are approximately 6 short-term rental dwellings listed on AirBnB in Ignace, roughly representing 0.3% of all private dwellings in the community. While this number can fluctuate based on availability throughout the year, it indicates that the ratio of short-term rentals to total housing stock is low.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.ontario.ca/document/tourism-regions/region-13c-northwest-ontario>

### 3.3.4 IGNACE TOURISM INVENTORY

Tourism in Ignace is a sustainable economic development opportunity, and it has rich natural resources which offers several exciting activities, including hunting, fishing, harvesting, snowmobiling and much more to residents and visitors alike.

#### Community Events

Ignace hosts many community events for a diverse range of participants. For example, White Otter Days and Winter Carnival are popular events (hockey tournament, fishing derby, slo-pitch tournament). There are events designed for children and families including Kids Fest (fun outdoor festival) and the Christmas Parade. Other events held by Ignace are outlined in Table 8.

#### Accommodations and Hospitality

There are five (5) hotels and one (1) bed and breakfast facility in Ignace. These include:

- Lone Pine Inn
- Ignace White Otter Inn
- Westwood Hotel
- North Woods Motor Inn
- Trading Post Motel Ignace (currently being renovated)

At the time of this report, there were 6 short-term rental listings on Airbnb in Ignace.

#### Businesses and Attractions

The following are a list of businesses and attractions in Ignace that currently support its existing population and could be expanded upon for visitors.

- Dennis Smyk Heritage Centre
- Twin Roots café (anticipated to open)
- Clooch's Tavern (restaurant)
- Ignace Convenience (convenience store)
- Shoprite Fine Foods (convenience store)
- Robin's Donuts (restaurant)

There are also many home-based businesses that specialize in cooking, crafts and other services.

Event	Date
Community Sliding Party	January
Lego Builds	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday/month
Poker Derby	February
Family Ice Fish Derby	February
Winter Carnival	All of March
White Otter Days	June 29 <sup>th</sup> to July 1 <sup>st</sup>
Canada Day	July 1 <sup>st</sup>
Slo-Pitch Tournament	3 <sup>rd</sup> weekend in July
Kids Fest	August 12 <sup>th</sup>
Teddy Dear Picnic	Grandparents Day – September
Community Fall Harvest Dinner	3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday in October
Family Sleigh Rides	1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday in December
Christmas Parades	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday in December

**Table 8 Ignace Community Events**

- Subway (fast food restaurant)
- LCBO (licensed liquor store)
- The Gallery (specialty store)
- Anglers Gifts (specialty store)
- Vern's Minnows
- K&S Bait and Tackle

## Campgrounds

There are three businesses in Ignace that operate campgrounds near or in Ignace, found in the Table 9.

Table 9: Local Study Area Campground Descriptions

<b>Davy Lake Campground and Resort</b> Privately operated campground		
<b>Camping</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Facilities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RV / camp</li> <li>• Cabins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canoeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wi-fi</li> <li>• Shower facilities</li> <li>• Laundry</li> <li>• Electricity</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's playground</li> <li>• Gazebo</li> <li>• Fire pits</li> </ul>
<b>Agimak Lake Resort</b> Privately operated lakeside cabins		
<b>Camping</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Facilities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RV / camp</li> <li>• Cabins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunting</li> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Blueberry picking</li> <li>• Hunting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boat rentals</li> <li>• Cabins are pet-friendly</li> <li>• Wi-fi</li> <li>• Fire pits</li> </ul>
<b>Ten Mile Lake Camp</b> Privately operated business - Fly in or drive in fishing camp		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Wildlife</li> <li>• Scenery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Shower</li> <li>• Boat Docking</li> <li>• Swimming Beach</li> <li>• Charcoal Grills</li> <li>• Paddleboat &amp; Kayaks</li> <li>• Bonfire Pit</li> </ul>

## Outdoor and Nature Activities

To understand what places residents and visitors frequent in Ignace for common outdoor recreation activities, Strava data from the last year was acquired and is illustrated in Figure 16.<sup>32</sup> While these data are limited to activities recorded by Strava users and are constrained by the frequency of the activities reported, they show that activities such as biking, hiking, running, and walking are popular. Most cycling trips are concentrated in the core of Ignace and along the southern portion of Hwy 599, whereas hiking, running and walking activities are dispersed in the core and particularly concentrated at Sandbar Lake Provincial Park.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Strava is an internet service for tracking physical exercise and incorporates a social media component.

<sup>33</sup> Strava Global Heatmap, 2021-2022

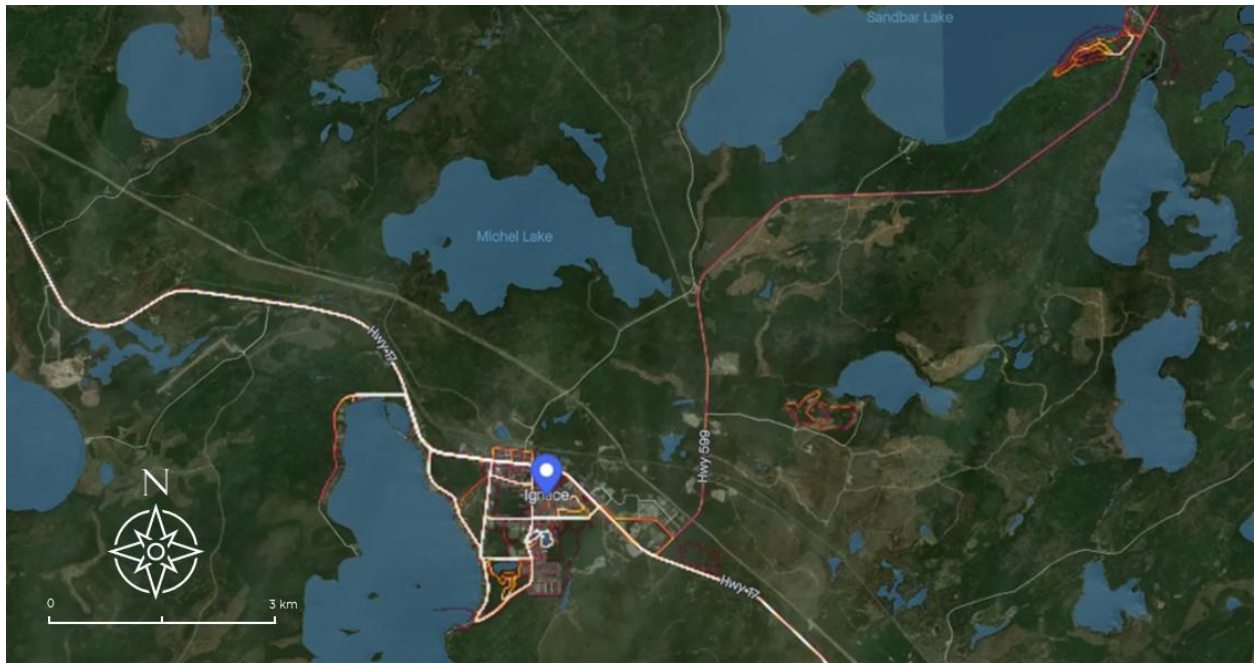


Figure 16: Strava heat map for Ignace

### Trails and Canoe Routes

Given water is a defining landscape features in the Ignace Area, activities on the water are commonplace. The most typical water activities are swimming and fishing, but canoe and kayak trips are also possible, though not nearly as popular. Figure 22 illustrate two local canoe routes.

One canoe route in proximity to Ignace is called the Turtle River Provincial Park Route. This route can take between 3 to 12 days depending on the route chosen. The main attractions for paddlers along these fairly easy routes are the White Otter Castle, Indigenous pictographs, and beautifully pristine clear lakes, among other features described above for Turtle River-White Otter Lake Provincial Park. The canoe route can also take paddlers into a loop north of Ignace past Sandbar Lake Provincial Park.

The Trans Canada Trail also passes through the Ignace Area, though is does not officially connect with Ignace. While most of the Trans Canada Trail is overland, the majority of the trail through Kenora District is water trail, requiring a canoe or kayak. The Turtle River Route and the Trans Canada Trail overlap, which presents an opportunity to promote a detour to Ignace.



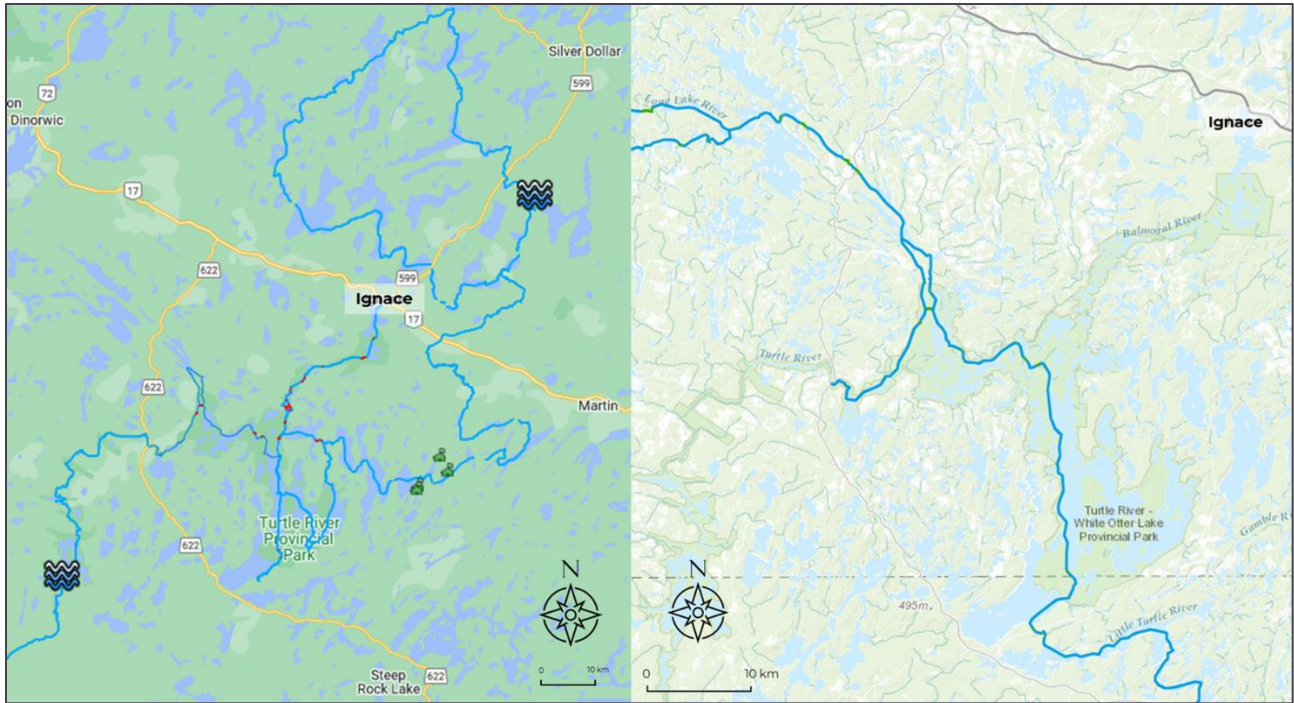


Figure 17: Turtle River Canoe Route (left) and Trans-Canada Trail (right)

## 4.0 INTERVIEW THEMES

Urban Systems interviewed a range of stakeholders involved in the tourism sector from the Ignace Area. The key themes and commentary from these interviews have been grouped into the following three sections:

- Current Tourism Market
- Opportunities for Tourism
- Opportunities for COE

Interviews were conducted with 13 participants who accepted the interview request, outlined in Table 10.

**Table 10: Interviews with Knowledge Holders**

<b>Business/Organization Name</b>	<b>Interviewed</b>
<b>Atikokan Info</b>	Yes
<b>NOTO</b>	Yes
<b>Destination Northern Ontario</b>	Yes
<b>Sunset Country Travel Association</b>	Yes
<b>Ignace Airways and Ignace Outposts</b>	Yes
<b>Press Lake Camp Sandy Point Camp Davy Lake Campground</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>Posiva Finland</b>	Yes
<b>Eurajoki, Finland</b>	Yes
<b>Mont Terri Visitor Centre, Switzerland</b>	Yes
<b>Lone Pine Inn</b>	Yes
<b>Oil Sands Discover Centre</b>	Yes

### 4.1 CURRENT TOURISM MARKET

Discussions about the current state of the tourism market involved both pre and post pandemic commentary.

Prior to the pandemic the tourism sector in the Ignace Area was seen to be performing well, some of the key themes include:

- Fishing dominates tourism sector. Leading up to the Covid-19 pandemic, business had reportedly been strong, and the expectation was for a banner year in 2020.
- The vast majority of tourism in the Ignace Area is seen to be driven by tourists looking to fish in area lakes. Most of the revenue for fishing lodges comes from U.S. visitors who are willing to spend a great deal to travel to the Ignace Area for week-long fishing excursions. As a result, most fishing lodges market themselves to Americans rather than Canadians.
- Canadian are less willing to spend the same amount of money for a fishing experience.
- Other types of attractions or experiences cannot compete with the revenues generated by from fishing, which creates a disincentive to existing tourism operators to expand into other areas. The initial capital investment required to offer other experiences is perceived to be too high in relation to the potential revenues. Nonetheless, interviewees recognized the opportunity for more tourism and recreation options in the Ignace Area geared toward Canadian visitors.

- Prior to the pandemic, interviewees commented that the composition of groups visiting the Ignace Area was beginning to change. Groups of men are still the norm, but these groups are getting older, requiring an investment in facilities that can accommodate the needs of older visitors (i.e. ramps, handrails). Overall, groups of all men have been declining while groups of families have been on the rise. These trends are expected to continue.
- Apart from the fishing lodges, campgrounds and hotels that rely on transient guests, such as visitors travelling across the country, felt they were earning sustainable incomes. Hotels in particular reported low vacancy rates. Contractors were playing a big role in this trend as they have been renting rooms for long stretches of time while they are in the areas working on infrastructure projects. In many instances, some lodgings are having to turn people away because of no vacancy, which points to the need for more short term lodging options.
- Many hotels / resorts in the area are seasonal and closed during the colder times of the year.
- Finding employees and housing for employees for new businesses was an important issue and was seen as a factor limiting the growth of new businesses in the area, including tourism opportunities.

### **Covid-19 Pandemic Impacts**

- Given that the majority of tourists visiting fishing lodges in the Ignace Area have traditionally been American, revenues at these businesses reportedly dropped by as much as 95%. Operators interviewed expect business to take a few years to recover and will require a significant amount of marketing and promotion to Americans to attract them back.
- Resorts moved their focus to the Canadian market, but these attempts were largely unsuccessful either due to Canadians concerns for travelling within the country during the pandemic, or reluctance for spending the same amounts as Americans for a fishing experience.

## **4.2 OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOURISM**

With the pause created by the pandemic, many involved in the tourism sector have been considering how tourism might evolve in the Ignace Area. Some of the ideas that were discussed include:

- Having more local companies collaborate and provide tourists to the area the opportunity to participate in a broader range of experiences, such as package deals:
  - This could include fishing lodges offering guests excursions provided by other businesses.
  - Because Ignace it is a small community with difficulties in finding housing for tourism sector employees, it would be helpful if people in the sector worked together to provide the best experience possible for visitors.
- Focus on providing amenities and attractions for families, with fishing groups including more women and children than in the past. Families are generally looking for a wider variety of experiences than just fishing.
- There were a number of strategies mentioned to promote Trans-Canada Highway travellers to stop and spend time in Ignace, including:
  - Build a replica of the White Otter Castle in the community to create an attraction. The White Otter Castle is one of the most interesting tourism assets in the area, but only a small proportion of visitors get to see it due to the difficulty of access.
  - Redevelop the train station. The historic train station in Ignace was demolished due to the age of the building, but the plans for the station exist and it could be redeveloped and act as a tourism hub and a point of interest.
  - Improved wayfinding to local lakes and beaches. The Agimak Lake Beach was highlighted as an underused asset that could see more traffic with improved signage.

- Science North which is based in Sudbury, offers exhibitions and programming at its satellite centres in Kenora and Thunder Bay. An expansion to Ignace would connect the two offerings to develop a Science North corridor along Highway 17.

### 4.3 OPPORTUNITIES RESULTING FROM THE CENTRE OF EXPERTISE

Part of the interviews included questions and discussions as to how the Centre of Expertise, if built in Ignace, could support tourism more broadly in the Ignace Area. Knowledge holders recognized the COE could have a positive impact on the tourism sector. Comments from the interviews included:

- Information available to introduce APM visitors to the attractions and tourist services available within the Ignace Area.
  - This information could take a variety of forms, from interactive exhibits to a making brochures from local businesses available.
- Educating COE visitors about the history of the area, including First Nations history, to help promote visits to existing tourism businesses.
  - Providing a connection with the local First Nations was an idea that was repeated by stakeholders.
- Potential for the COE to provide office space / business services to small tourism businesses to help them get off the ground.
- Promote the integration of tourism businesses in the area.
- Provide outdoor / indoor gathering spaces to support local events.

## 5.0 IGNACE AREA SWOT ANALYSIS

The following table outlines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to tourism based on the background research and interviews with knowledge holders.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust existing outdoor industry – fishing and hunting resorts</li> <li>• Renowned fishing, highly valued by American visitors</li> <li>• Historical attractions (i.e. White Otter Castle)</li> <li>• Located at a convenient location for cross country travelers on the TransCanada Hwy</li> <li>• Pristine natural environment</li> <li>• Countless lakes</li> <li>• Dark skies</li> <li>• Nearby provincial parks with recreational amenities</li> <li>• Canoe routes</li> <li>• Prominent Indigenous cultural heritage in the area</li> <li>• Committed and passionate community members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of diversity of services and amenities</li> <li>• Current tourism service offerings focus on middle-aged males</li> <li>• Labour shortage</li> <li>• Reliance on American visitors</li> <li>• Housing shortage</li> <li>• Rural and remote location</li> <li>• Lack of incentives to expand tourism offerings</li> <li>• Lack of package tour offerings</li> <li>• Many underutilized natural and community assets</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre of Expertise as singular point of interest and destination attraction with accompanying campus of activities and amenities</li> <li>• Promoting Night Sky/Stargazing opportunities</li> <li>• Snowmobile tours, canoe &amp; kayak tours</li> <li>• Canoe/Kayak Campground</li> <li>• Wildlife viewing (bears, moose)</li> <li>• Connected multi-use trail throughout Ignace and surrounding areas – ties in with the Centre of Expertise</li> <li>• Install more wayfinding signs</li> <li>• Lobby for a connection to the TransCanada Trail</li> <li>• Package deals connecting multiple services and operators – more seamless experiences</li> <li>• New hotel/motel - short term accommodation businesses</li> <li>• More food and beverage opportunities as a result of increased local population and visitors</li> <li>• More attractions/services etc. geared toward women, children/youth and families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative publicity surrounding the DGR facility</li> <li>• Poor communications, marketing and promotions</li> <li>• Opposition to the project</li> <li>• Persistent misinformation</li> <li>• Losing control of the narrative about the APM project</li> <li>• Competition from other communities</li> <li>• COE design not suitable for Ignace context</li> <li>• Climate Change related natural hazards/disasters</li> <li>• Flooding in the community</li> <li>• Hwy closures</li> <li>• Future epidemic to pandemics restricting movement of visitors</li> <li>• Not enough financial support or seed money for initiatives</li> <li>• Inadequate number accommodations for visitors/workers etc.</li> <li>• Amenities and services are inadequate</li> <li>• Ongoing labour shortage</li> <li>• Ongoing housing shortage or housing speculation leading to unaffordable housing</li> </ul>

# 6.0 BENCHMARK PROFILES

The following section presents three types of tourism profiles:

- 1. Community Precedents describe three communities that each share some characteristics with Ignace and are intended to provide examples for how tourism can be enhanced in the face of a significant change in the community.
- 2. Visitor Centre profiles are meant to provide ideas and options for how the Centre of Expertise is conceptualized and developed.
- 3. Cultural Centre profiles outline the details from several Indigenous cultural centre and are intended to inform any future collaboration with Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation.

## 6.1 COMMUNITY PRECEDENTS

The Community Precedent section profiles three communities that share characteristics with Ignace in terms of geography, climate, and prominence of a single economic sector and employer. To diversify and stabilize their local economies, each of these communities have, in part, turned to tourism to create jobs and economic activity. A visitor centre or recreation area play important roles as tourism focal points for visitors in each of the communities. They are intended to educate and entertain tourists about the local area’s industrial activities and natural environment which are such dominant parts of the community’s identity.

### 6.1.1 FORT MCMURRAY, AB

As the largest community in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo in northeastern Alberta, Fort McMurray serves as the primary service hub for the entire area. The community is surrounded by thick boreal forest and lies at the confluence of four rivers – Athabasca, Clearwater, Hangingstone, and Horse River. Fort McMurray is also situated in the heart of the Athabasca Oil Sands, the largest known reservoir of crude bitumen in the world.<sup>34</sup>

Fort McMurray	
Population (2021)	68,002
Population Growth (2016-2021)	2.15%
Area	59.89 km <sup>2</sup>
Major Industries	Oil production, oil and gas transport, forestry, tourism
Tourism Growth (2017-2018)	4.1%

Fort McMurray had an economic boom in the 1970s when oil production took off. The development of oil sands transformed the regional economy and made Fort McMurray a thriving industrial centre that attracted an influx of oil-industry workers, who took up both permanent and temporary residence in the community. The resulting population growth between 1971 and 1981 saw the population increase from approximately 7,000 to 31,000 people.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo. Visit and Explore. URL: [www.fmwb.ca/visit-explore](http://www.fmwb.ca/visit-explore)

<sup>35</sup> Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (2000). Historical Overview of the Fort McMurray Area and Oil Sands Industry in Northeast Alberta. URL: [https://static.ags.aer.ca/files/document/ESR/ESR\\_2000\\_05.pdf](https://static.ags.aer.ca/files/document/ESR/ESR_2000_05.pdf)

Since Fort McMurray relies so heavily on oil production, it has been sensitive to global shifts in oil demand, such as oil price collapses in 1986, 2003, and 2014-2015. Economic activity in the community consequently slowed significantly following each oil price decline. Fort McMurray also endured several natural disasters, notably the catastrophic wildfire of 2016 and recurring flooding of the Athabasca River, the most recent occurring in 2020.

## TOURISM

In an effort to diversify its economy and limit its reliance on oil production, the Fort McMurray economic development office launched Startup YMM and was tasked with helping entrepreneurs launch new ventures in the community. Part of the economic focus is on experiential and adventure tourism, which include activities like fishing (ice fishing, fly-in fishing), dog sledding, hunting, snowmobiling, ATViing, jet boating, canoeing, hiking, aerial tours, and night sky and northern lights viewing.<sup>36</sup>

## Oil Sands Discovery Centre

The vast scale of the oil sands and the industrial activities that take place there have attracted a lot of interest from visitors over the decades. To provide visitors with information on the history, science, and technology behind Alberta's Oil Sands, the Oil Sands Discovery Centre was established in 1985. It is part of the Alberta government's network of museums and centres. The Centre focuses on fact-based accounts and on technology, geology, chemistry and other scientific processes in its development. The Centre strives to be impartial and educational which is a challenge given the polarizing nature of oil sands development. Table 11 below provides further details about the centre.

**Table 11: Oil Sands Discovery Centre Overview<sup>37</sup>**

<p><b>Programs and Activities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers scheduled demonstrations and films throughout the day</li> <li>• Private guided tours</li> <li>• Full curriculum-based school field trips for children in kindergarten to Grade 7</li> <li>• Summer science gaps</li> <li>• Badge programs</li> <li>• Facility rentals</li> </ul>
<p><b>Building Design</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building size is approximately 27,000 square feet</li> <li>• The floor plate of the building is roughly divided into thirds:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1/3 floor space for the exhibit hall</li> <li>○ 1/3 programming and event space (incl theatre - 146 seat) - discovery lab (classroom) - multi-purpose room (school programs and anything) - board rooms (14 people)</li> <li>○ 1/3 lobby, gift shop, storage rooms etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 6 indoor facilities and 1 outdoor facility</li> <li>• More storage is desirable</li> <li>• Space for ongoing changes and innovations in the industry need to be accommodated</li> <li>• Upgrades are needed to replace obsolete and aging features and technology</li> </ul>
<p><b>Revenue</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Centre is assigned a budget from the Provincial government at the beginning of each fiscal year</li> <li>• The Centre has a mandate to generate revenue but is not required to cover its costs.</li> </ul>

<sup>36</sup> Vincent McDermott (2022). RMWB's 2021 census shows more people settling as population shrinks, becomes increasingly multicultural. Fort McMurray Today. URL: <https://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/news/rmwbs-2021-census-shows-more-people-settling-as-population-shrinks-becomes-increasingly-multicultural>

<sup>37</sup> <https://oilsandsdiscovery.ca/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a part of the provincial museum network, revenues from all museums go to a central pool and are redistributed based on need.</li> <li>• Main revenues generators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Admission fees</li> <li>○ Programming</li> <li>○ Rentals</li> <li>○ Gift Shop</li> <li>○ Sales of resource kits</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Events and Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conferences,</li> <li>• Local non-profits for meetings</li> <li>• Other groups use the Centre to run their own programs</li> <li>• Government-run programs</li> <li>• Indigenous consultation</li> <li>• Children's birthday parties</li> </ul>
<b>Staffing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff play a key role in the story being told at the Centre</li> <li>• Assist guests throughout the exhibits</li> <li>• Technical and curatorial staff are shared with the Royal Alberta Museum</li> </ul>

### 6.1.2 EURAJOKI, FINLAND

Eurajoki is a municipality located in the Satakunta province in western Finland and is situated between the larger towns of Rauma and Pori. Since the late 1970s, Eurajoki has been home to the Loviisa Nuclear Power Plant

Eurajoki	
<b>Population (2021)</b>	9,350
<b>Area</b>	1,505 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Major Industries</b>	Nuclear Power Generation

on Olkiuoto Island, which houses two of Finland's four nuclear reactors, with a third reactor currently under construction. As a result, the nuclear power industry plays a key role in the local economy as an employer. Other employers in the area include the service industry and agriculture.<sup>38</sup>

Nuclear power generation has been a part of the Eurajoki economy and community for over 40 years, and a spent nuclear fuel deep geological repository – a facility similar to the one being considered in the Ignace – is currently under construction in the community. The final disposal facility is expected to have a positive impact on Eurajoki and the entire province of Satakunta through an increase in employment opportunities, tax revenues and a steadily growing population which is unlike surrounding communities that have been decreasing in population.

The Mayor of Eurajoki indicated that support for the nuclear power industry and for the disposal facility is quite high in Eurajoki for number of reasons<sup>39</sup>:

1. Since the industry has been in the community for over 40 years, residents have become accustomed to it.
2. The nuclear power industry is one of the main employers in the area and people have a strong basic understanding of how nuclear energy is generated, resulting in people's comfort levels with nuclear power being quite high.

<sup>38</sup> Onkalo Finland - Visitor's Centre and Deep Geological Repository Presentation- 2022.04.08

<sup>39</sup> The Mayor of Eurajoki contributed to this study by answering a questionnaire sent to them during the knowledge holder engagement phase of the study.



3. Communications and cooperation between Eurajoki and industry players TVO (power generation company) and Posiva Oy (spent fuel storage company) has open and transparent. As a result, a lot of trust has been built between the community and industry.

Nuclear power companies in Finland are very open and transparent about their operations in order to build trust and understanding among people for their power generation plants and more recently for the spent fuel storage facility.

In Eurajoki, Posiva Oy has invested a lot of time providing lectures, public hearings and print materials to inform and educate residents about the deep geological repository facility. While ensuring people understand how nuclear power works is important to building support, building people’s trust in the safety of the technology is critical to gaining support and ensuring people feel comfortable with the facility.

### TOURISM

Like most European towns and cities, Eurajoki has a long history and much in the way of historical points of interest to offer visitors. As such, tourism in Eurajoki revolves around its extensive historical features that can be found through the community. Attractions and activities in Eurajoki include:

- Tours of notable historical buildings and churches
- Museums and significant historical landscapes
- Recreational areas and outdoor activities

Additionally, Eurajoki has a large variety of shops, restaurants, cafés, accommodations, entertainment and services for visitors to access while they explore the many points of interest during their visit. <sup>40</sup>

### Onkalo Visitor Centre

Over the years, the nuclear power facilities on Olkiuoto have attracted a lot of interest from around Finland as well as from abroad. Now with the development of the disposal facility, the number of visitors to the area has increased, attracting business travelers, journalists, scientists and tourists. The construction of the fuel disposal facility is generating high demand for tours of the facility and the underground repository. Guests may attend the visitor centre and low and intermediate waste facility or participate in an underground tour of Onkalo where high level waste will be stored.

Discussions for the development of a spent nuclear fuel storage facility have been ongoing for many years. In 2006, the Onkalo Visitor Centre was opened to serve as a focal point in the communications and education efforts for the disposal facility. Table 12 below provides further details about the centre.

**Table 12: Onkalo Visitor Centre Overview<sup>41</sup>**

<b>Number and Types of Visitors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13,000 visitors annually</li> <li>• Visitors range in profile:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Families</li> <li>○ Students</li> <li>○ Tourists</li> <li>○ Businesses</li> <li>○ Journalists</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<sup>40</sup> [https://www.eurajoki.fi/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Eurajoki\\_esite2018\\_EN\\_web.pdf](https://www.eurajoki.fi/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Eurajoki_esite2018_EN_web.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> Onkalo Finland - Visitor's Centre and Deep Geological Repository Presentation- 2022.04.08

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Scientists</li> </ul>
<b>Programs and Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visits are on average 3 ½ hours</li> <li>• Every visit includes a free welcome coffee</li> <li>• Auditorium presentation and video</li> <li>• Bus tour of the Olkiluoto facilities</li> <li>• Visit Onkalo waste facility exhibition (underground and part of the nuclear facility)</li> <li>• Visit options include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ OL1 power plant tour</li> <li>○ OL3 power plant walking tour</li> <li>○ OL3 bus tour</li> <li>○ Interim storage facility tour</li> <li>○ Onkalo tour</li> <li>○ Simulators</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Exhibitions are educational and interactive, covering the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Uranium procurement</li> <li>○ Scientific foundations</li> <li>○ Energy production</li> <li>○ Environmental protection and impacts</li> <li>○ Radiation</li> <li>○ Electricity production</li> <li>○ Spent nuclear fuel and waste</li> <li>○ Final disposal and spent fuel</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Building Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total area: 18,600 square feet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Exhibition area: 6,889 square feet</li> <li>○ Auditorium area: 2,045 square feet</li> <li>○ Cafeteria area: 4,198 square feet</li> <li>○ Office area: 969 square feet</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The surrounding landscape is accessible by way of the Olkiluoto Nature Trail and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Nature Conservation Area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Revenue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Visitor Centre's operations and maintenance is fully covered by Posiva Oy and does not rely on any additional revenue sources from the Visitor Centre.</li> </ul>

### 6.1.3 TUMBLER RIDGE, BC

The District of Tumbler Ridge is located on the eastern foothills of Northern British Columbia's Rocky Mountains. The District is pivoting its economy toward tourism and clean energy production after being historically focused on natural resource extraction. Tumbler Ridge was incorporated in 1981 as the last of B.C.'s "instant towns" that were purpose-built to house industry workers in remote areas.<sup>43</sup>

Tumbler Ridge	
<b>Population (2021)</b>	2,399
<b>Population Growth (2016-2021)<sup>42</sup></b>	20.7%
<b>Area</b>	1,557.41 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Major Industries</b>	Coal production forestry, tourism
<b>Tourism Growth (2014-2015)</b>	*UNESCO Global Geopark status awarded in 2014 spurred significant growth in tourism

<sup>42</sup> 2016 and 2021 Census

<sup>43</sup> <https://tumbleridge.ca/>

Due to increased foreign demand for coking coal for steel production in the 1970's, the Government of British Columbia sought to expand regional production, and the site for Tumbler Ridge was selected and incorporated as a district municipality before it had any residents. Throughout the 1980's and 1990's the coal mining industry struggled with market uncertainty and price reductions. The Quintette Project ceased operations prematurely in 2000, and the Bullmoose Mine Project reached the end of its life span in 2003. After having a peak population of 4,650 in 1991 the population plummeted to 1,851 in 2001, equating to a 60% reduction in the District's tax base. The percentage of the District's labour force working in natural resource extraction significantly decreased from 56% in 1996 to 15% in 2016. The Wolverine Coal Mine, the last significant mining operation responsible for 10% of the District's revenue reopened in 2017 and is currently expanding operations. Teck deferred the restart of the Quintette Project and placed the mine on care and maintenance due to continued unfavourable market conditions.

The second most significant employment sector in the District is construction. Tumbler Ridge has been rapidly adapting its economy to survive under reduced mining operations, which has included boosting tourism and clean energy production. Tumbler Ridge now contains some of B.C.'s largest wind turbine farms.

## **TOURISM**

Tumbler Ridge is rapidly becoming a year-round destination and a destination of choice for people who are looking for adventure and experiential tourism opportunities. The area offers many opportunities to hike, mountain bike, visit the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery, wildlife and birdwatch, ATV, snowmobile, water activities, golf, camp, and hunt and fish among others.

In the early 2000's, the richest dinosaur deposits in the province were discovered in Tumbler Ridge. The discovery led to the Peace Region Palaeontology Research Centre being founded in 2003 and the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery opening to the public in 2006. The District is currently exploring provincial funding opportunities for both institutions. In 2014, Tumbler Ridge became the second designated UNESCO Geopark in North America, which caused a considerable increase in tourism activity in the area. Registered traffic at the Tumbler Ridge Visitor Centre peaked in 2017 with 14,105 visitors, and visitor numbers have remained steady since then. Opportunities to address the gaps in existing tourism offerings include more specialized stores, outdoor equipment rental, and more accommodation options.

## **Tumbler Ridge Regional Geopark**

The Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark contains a record of sedimentary deposition within the Western Canadian Foreland Basin which has been deformed by past mountain building episodes to form the rugged mountains and foothills of the northern Canadian Rocky Mountains. It is complemented by an abundance of palaeontological resources, including Cretaceous dinosaur tracks (many of which are of global significance), a Cretaceous dinosaur bone bed with unusual features, and Triassic fishes and marine reptiles of particular importance and abundance. Table 13 below provides further details about the Geopark.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.tumblerridgegeopark.ca/>

**Table 13: Regional Geopark Overview**

<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private and guided tours</li> <li>• Winter activities (snowshoeing, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing)</li> <li>• ATViing</li> <li>• Hiking (more than 20 hikes in the region)</li> <li>• Wildlife and birdwatching</li> <li>• Rock-climbing</li> </ul>
<b>Natural Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dinosaur tracks</li> <li>• Fossils</li> <li>• Sediment deposits</li> <li>• Waterfalls, most notably Kinuseo Falls</li> <li>• Lakes</li> <li>• Canyons</li> <li>• Peaks</li> </ul>
<b>Top 10 Geosites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kinuseo Falls – taller-than-Niagara Falls</li> <li>• Dinosaur Discovery Gallery – replicas and interpretation of the only known Tyrannosaur trackways in the world</li> <li>• Shipyard Titanic – rock towers and cliffs, and a scenic hiking route</li> <li>• Monkman Cascades – sequence of ten waterfalls</li> <li>• Flatbed Cabin Pool Dinosaur Tracks – trails lead to an ankylosaur trackway</li> <li>• Bergeron Falls – tallest accessible waterfall in northern BC</li> <li>• Windfall Lake – alpine hiking hotspot with tent pads for overnights stays</li> <li>• The Stone Corral – a mystical pool that looks infinitely deep</li> <li>• Murray River Canyon – riverboat tours through a geological fault</li> <li>• Mount Spieker – hotspot for ATViing, snowmobiling, and hiking</li> </ul>
<b>Revenue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main revenues generators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Admission fees</li> <li>◦ Gift Shop</li> <li>◦ Donations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Funding from the Province of British Columbia and Northern Development (last one in 2018 for \$148,788)</li> </ul>
<b>Events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emperor’s Challenge – half marathon in the Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark</li> </ul>
<b>Staffing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff provides the Geopark with its direction</li> <li>• Scientific advisors provide a broad interdisciplinary perspective</li> <li>• Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation provides curation at the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery and the Peace Region Paleontology Research Centre</li> </ul>

### 6.1.4 KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM COMMUNITY PRECEDENTS

Each of the communities share a focus on experiencing their natural environments for tourism purposes, just as the qualities of the natural environment are at the heart of their economies. Whether extracting a resource for economic use, or leveraging the characteristics of the local geology, the natural environment plays a key role in the identify of each of the communities. Promoting outdoor activities for tourism purposes is a natural step.

Educational opportunities and experiences for a wide range of ages and knowledge are at the centre of visitor centre attractions. Merchandizing is also focussed on providing visitors with educational products as well as with items for entertainment. Where revenue generation is necessary for operations, merchandise, tours, rental operations and other sources of revenues are more developed and prominent. However, when operational funding is guaranteed from governments or from other sources, commercialization overall is less prominent.

## 6.2 LESSONS LEARNED FROM OTHER PROFILES

Several visitor centre and Indigenous cultural centre profiles are provided in **Appendix B**. Below are some key takeaways from those profiles. More detail is provided in the appendix.

### 6.2.1 VISITOR CENTRES

Most successful visitor centres offer accurate information and provide a variety of tourism services to visitors to create a complete experience. In addition to standard tourism assets, such as accommodation options, food and beverage, and places of interest, additional services need to be provided to satisfy the visitors' needs. Successful visitor centres emphasize the importance of educational activities, commercial offerings, and the possibility to host large events. Another important component is innovation. New approaches and novel ideas can have a significant impact on tourism activities.

Visitor centres are typically funded primarily by governments or agencies responsible for the large project the centres are associated with. Other sources of revenue are mostly through admission fees, booking fees, and event hosting fees. Universal accessibility is a critical design feature that visitor centres should integrate into construction from the outset. Creating an accessible environment where everyone can enjoy the experiences is fundamental to ensuring broad appeal.

### 6.2.2 INDIGENEOUS CULTURAL CENTRES

Some key insights gained from the Indigenous cultural centres includes the following:

#### **Purpose**

- Have a clear mandate on what the centre's core purpose and role, both for the First Nation and for the larger community. If it is primarily for exhibitions and learning it will require museum grade construction and environmental controls to house artifacts. These facilities and assets require specialized equipment and staff for maintenance and handling.

#### **Building and Store Design**

- While gift shops do not need to be large, they should be oriented and merchandised in a way that prioritizes the showcasing of authentic and higher price point pieces. This can help to support sales of custom art and carvings while boosting sales of more accessible, lower price point items such as jewellery and clothing. Incorporate racks and cases that can be moved about to maximize flexibility and use of space.

#### **Programming**

- Have a good idea of what the programming for the centre is going to be year-round, as that will determine staffing levels and roles needed for the cultural centre, which can vary widely depending on the programming calendar.

#### **Diversify Revenues**

- Several different revenue streams can contribute to a centres self-sufficiency. Creative additions to showcase local arts and crafts will serve the broader community.

## 7.0 CHANGE ASSESSMENT

The following Change Assessment is a culmination of all the background research and knowledge holder interviews conducted as part of this tourism study. The reader should note that the changes described here are not certainties, but merely suppositions based on the information and input gathered.

The APM project could result in a number of changes to the tourism industry in the Ignace Area as a result of the APM project. The development of the Centre of Expertise would present the most immediate and impactful change to tourism in the Ignace Area, most notably within Ignace itself because the COE would be a hub of activity with a variety of features that would attract a diversity of people throughout the APM project.

The development of the COE would occur during the 'Pre-Construction Phase' of the APM, therefore, additional sub-temporal boundaries have been added to that phase of the overall project. Pre-Construction Phase (2024–2032).

### 7.1 PRE-CONSTRUCTION (2024-2032)

As mentioned above, sub-temporal boundaries have been added to this phase to reflect before and after the COE has been developed.

- Population projections created by other consultants on the project team estimate the population of Ignace will increase to 1,765 during this period.
- Fishing and hunting will remain cornerstone tourist attractions but could be negatively impacted by the project from misinformation and negative publicity related to the project.
- An ever-present challenge would be steer the narrative towards fact-based positive and educative messaging about the APM project, particularly in the face of strident perceptions of negative impact on the natural environment and thus, tourism.

#### 7.1.1 PRE-CENTRE OF EXPERTISE DEVELOPMENT

- The impacts of the AMP on tourism in the Ignace Area during this sub-phase are not expected to be significant, however, with Ignace gaining publicity as potentially being awarded the APM, there could be additional interest in visiting the area. Since Ignace would be in the news, people would learn about the community and the area and could learn about the attractions in the area.
- Public relations, communications and marketing would play significant roles in how the project and Ignace are presented to the public. These early years will be critical to establishing a positive and favorable outlook on the project and the community and would need to be sustained and proactive.

#### 7.1.2 CENTRE OF EXPERTISE OPENS (2028)

- Once complete, the COE would be a poised to be a major attraction to the Ignace Area in and of itself. The success of the COE as an attraction would depend on the marketing to target both Canadians and visitors from abroad to visit, which would be best accompanied with a selection of local attractions and activities to raise Ignace's profile.
- Promoting the COE could help to bolster tourism throughout the entire Ignace Area. Acting as a new stable source of tourism marketing, all tourism businesses in the study area could benefit.
- Once the COE is operational, and assuming its design strikes all the right architectural notes, a different demographic of visitors could be enticed to stop in Ignace to learn about the project and explore the centre and its outdoor grounds. These visitors may increase demand for food and

beverage services in Ignace, and possibly increase demand for accommodations as well as short excursions in and around the Ignace Area.

- In the event a partnership has been established with Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation, the COE could include Indigenous design features, programming and spaces to introduce and celebrate their culture and community, while also providing space for their use. This would generate demand for opportunities to experience and learn about First Nation culture.
- The COE could potentially be the site of a campus development in support of workers of both the COE and the future construction phase of the project. Workers at the COE would be new residents of Ignace and would likely be interested in exploring their surrounding new home. They would also increase demand for services like restaurants and other forms of entertainment. Transient workers involved in the construction of the APM facility would be less likely to have the time to engage in tourist activities, though there may be a handful.

## 7.2 CONSTRUCTION PHASE (2033–2042)

- Population projections created by other consultants on the project team estimate the population of Ignace will increase to 1,850 during this period.
- With the increase in the population of local residents, additional friend and family visitors can be expected to travel to Ignace. This will rely on word of mouth promotion and could have positive knock on effects to tourism.
- During the construction phase of the project, ongoing publicity about the project would attract more visitors the Ignace Area, particularly to the COE if the centre is actively promoted as a tourism destination.
- Tourism as a proportion of employment could increase as a result of the COE and whatever potential spin-off businesses that manifest as part of the local COE ecosystem.
- Depending on the facilities incorporated into the design of the COE, there could be spin-off business opportunities in direct relation to the service and amenity offerings of the COE.
- Involvement of tourism organizations could increase in response to operators seeking support, especially new or novices entrepreneurs seeking to improve their operations, or established operators seeking diversify their services.
- Travel trade could begin to gain popularity with tour buses of visitors making the journey to the COE either as a day trip or an overnight trip.
- Popularity of lakes with boat access and stocked lakes could result from an increase in population, higher numbers of visitors and improved promotions.
- Visitor and resident concentration in Ignace would likely change in response to the location of the COE, incentivising additional amenities and services to locate closer.
- As the construction phase approaches completion, the local population will have increased, creating the conditions and demand for new businesses to be established in Ignace, such as restaurants and potentially expanded tourism accommodations.
- Activity profiles could change to focus more on sightseeing, restaurants, retail and accommodations, and will result in more spending in these other categories.
- The COE will get more Highway 17 traffic to stop in Ignace for at least a quick stop, which will provide additional support for the food and beverage sector, as well as the need for wayfinding to local attractions, and potentially a visitor information centre.
- Over time, COE operations and would mature and become more integrated into the identity of Ignace. Displays, exhibits and the overall experience would likely evolve and incorporate more of the Ignace Area.

- Communications and public relations about the project would need to continue in order to stave off any negative narratives. Underinvesting in a sustained communications campaign runs the risk of jeopardizing existing tourism operations that rely on the reputation of a pristine natural environment.

### 7.3 OPERATIONS (2043+)

- Population projections created by other consultants on the project team estimate the population of Ignace will increase to 2,260 during this period.
- By the time the facility is complete and operational, the COE would already be embedded in the Ignace community and economy. Growth and diversification in tourism would have already occurred.
- Once the facility is operational, Ignace may see a new wave of interest with new or returning travelers to the area, motivated to visit and learn about the APM. The COE would likely have updated and modernized their displays and exhibits to match the technological expectations of this time.
- Replacement workers and the next generation of businesses could be establishing themselves at this time, 15 years after the COE first opened.
- The increased demand for tourism and local amenities might increase the pressure on the local labour pool and the housing market for service sector workers.
- With the increased demand for tourism experiences, and the strain on the local labour pool, there will be opportunities for local tourism businesses to work together and provide package deals for visitors.
- Once the APM and COE is complete, the Ignace Area will likely be attracting a new demographic of visitor. The majority of tourists to the area are currently focused on the outdoors and fishing, but the COE will attract people interested in science, technology and energy. This demographic might be less likely to go on weeklong fishing trips but would quite probably be open to shorter outdoor excursions.
- Ongoing education and communication will need to continue. However, the hard work of educating, building understanding and support for the project will need to have been done already. Opposition to the project and misinformation may still remain, but for the project to be a welcomed part of the Ignace Area landscape, a sustained and appropriately tailored communications campaign will need to have been in lock step with the project.



## 8.0 OPTIONS FOR CENTRE OF EXPERTISE

### Note to Reader

This section provides an overview of possible options to mitigate negative consequences or to enhance positive outcomes. They are presented by the authors to foster discussion only. They do not represent commitments or actions for the NWMO, the Township of Ignace, or other parties. The final decisions on actions and commitments will be made at a future date.

This section presents the options for the Centre of Expertise that could be used to promote and enhance the tourism sector in the Ignace Area. The options for the COE are focused on how the building and operations can impact tourism, so will be focused on the sub-temporal boundary within the 'Pre-Construction Phase' once the COE is completed.

### 8.1 PRE-CONSTRUCTION (2024-2032)

The schedule for development of the COE is expected to occur during the "Pre-Construction Phase", of the APM. Therefore, two additional sub-temporal boundaries have been added to the 'Pre-Construction Phase' of the APM to discuss the options for the COE.

#### 8.1.1 PRE-CENTRE OF EXPERTISE DEVELOPMENT

During the pre-construction phase, the COE will only have a limited impact on tourism. However, once the planning and design phase of the COE project begins, and images are released it could get different businesses excited for how the project will impact Ignace.

The Pre-Construction Phase should be taken as an opportunity to invite and seek out open and honest conversations about the APM project and nuclear technology in general. In order to engender support and understanding about the project and the technology at play, opposition and support for the project should be destigmatized to allow for conversations. Ongoing, sustained multimedia communication would be required to demystify the project and clear the air of any misconceptions and misinformation. These early days of the project timeline will be critical to steering the narrative and effectively communicating with stakeholders and residents in terms they will understand.

In Eurajoki Finland, support and trust was gained through persistent and regular communication and demonstration of what the technology is all about. The visitor centre today has physical replicas of how nuclear waste would be stored, which is a powerful and effective approach to communicating and education people about an otherwise unknown technology.

#### 8.1.2 CENTRE OF EXPERTISE OPENS (2028)

Once the COE is operating it is expected to have a wide-ranging positive impact on the tourism sector in the Ignace Area. As a new and unique focal point of activity and interest, the COE would have the opportunity to facilitate a revitalization of tourism in the Ignace Area. It could nurture synergies between existing tourism operators and help to generate new businesses that build off and support the COE activities.

The design and layout of the COE would have a material influence on how the tourism sector could be supported and benefit. The layout, features and size of the visitor centre within the COE could potentially include a range of components that will be discussed here for consideration.

Potential options or ideas for the COE could include:

- **EDUCATION:** A cornerstone objective of the COE would have to be dedicated to educating residents and stakeholders about the project and nuclear energy technology in general. The COE could also act as a forum for discussion and a venue to educate the public and visitors through the use of replicas, models and other physical and multimedia approaches about the APM project specifically, and nuclear power technology in general.

Education and communication will be critical to the success and ongoing support of the APM project, and the COE will play a prominent role in achieving those ends. The visitor centre space of the COE would include educational displays, exhibits and interactive activities geared toward a wide range of ages and education levels. Programming and tours would be structured around these educational exhibits and interactive spaces.

- **FIRST NATION SPACE:** How involved First Nations generally and Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation (WLON) specifically are part of the visioning of the COE will determine the degree to which they influence or are represented in the design of the COE. Tokenism, unilateral and uninformed representation of First Nations and WLON cultures should be avoided. First Nations involvement should be understood as part of the ongoing process of reconciliation.

Assuming a partnership is established with WLON, the COE could be used to introduce their history, knowledge and culture visitors would provide an understanding of First Nation's territory. There are a range of options of how visitors are introduced to First Nations education exhibits in the COE, from small information boards to a more involved component that would inform the design of the COE and surrounding landscape while also incorporating elements of a cultural centre and gift shop. First Nations-owned and operated businesses could be supported and actively sought after during every stage of the COE development and operations.

- **EVENT SPACE:** The COE will be expected to attract bus tours of visitors looking to learn about the project. Rooms that are able to host these visitors, depending on group size, should be considered. The capability to speak and present to larger groups, and potentially serve them a meal could be considered, could be a benefit to the building, and to the community. An event space within the COE could also potentially be available for community events, and possibly private events as well such as family reunions, or weddings.
- **MEETING ROOMS:** One of the learnings from reviewing cultural spaces and visitor centres is that it is possible to plan for too few meeting spaces. The COE should consider that local businesses and public officials might want to host meetings in the COE as it will be the most modern facility in Ignace for hosting meetings and presentations.

There is the potential to integrate some of the meetings for community groups and Township staff in a more official way which could indicate demand for meeting rooms.

- **CAFÉ & GIFT SHOP:** The COE could include a themed café and gift shop that could support the visitor centre and generate revenue and support local artisans. The café could support visitors and staff, as well as provide some food and beverage options for events and meetings that would be expected. Larger events would likely still require catering from a local restaurant depending on the size of the café's kitchen and the number of people that can attend events in the COE.

The gift shop could include branded COE merchandise as well as educational kits. A gift shop could also include merchandise from local artisans including First Nations.

- **DESIGNING FOR ETERNITY:** This was a concept that came out of the discussions regarding the Yucca Mountain Repository in the United States. The thought experiment was to produce an artistic structure that would last as long as the nuclear waste. The idea was to create programming and competitions on a design that would spark conversation and could communicate to our future descendants.
- **INTEGRATE BUILDING WITH SURROUNDINGS:** Important buildings with a strong design element often neglect to consider how the building will integrate with its surroundings. Ensuring the building fits with outdoor walking trails or potential outdoor gathering areas will make the building much more inviting and attract visitors who may not have otherwise planned a trip to the COE.

Part of integrating the COE with its adjacent uses would involve being aware of the potential for commercial and industrial uses that might be developed adjacent to the COE. The development of a campus for different types of tenants is a concept that is already being discussed.

- **EXHIBITING TECHNICAL SPACES:** The COE will host office spaces for employees as well as technical spaces for operations and labs. Considering how these places could be shared with tours, even if it is only with VIP guests, could be part of the design brief.
- **BROADER TOURISM SECTOR:** Integrate the COE with the broader tourism sector. Given that the COE will be an important tourism draw, it has the opportunity to make visitors aware of the other attractions in the Ignace Area. How this integration with other tourism attractions occurs could range from simply a wall with brochures to a more interactive display to present opportunities in the area.
- **LOCAL BUSINESS SPACES:** The design of the COE could also include office space for local businesses and act as an incubator for smaller businesses in the area. This idea was mentioned in multiple stakeholder meetings regarding the COE and its potential to support businesses in the Ignace Area.

## 8.2 CONSTRUCTION (2033–2042)

During the construction phase the impact of the COE is expected to remain positive for the tourism sector, with potentially additional traffic visiting Ignace as a result of increased publicity about the project. More Highway 17 travellers might stop to look at the construction site, which will add support for the local food and beverage sector. It is also possible that local tourism businesses will begin planning to expand their offerings in anticipation of a new demographic of visitor to the Ignace Area.

## 8.3 OPERATIONS (2043+)

During the operations phase of the project the COE will be expected to attract a new demographic of visitor to Ignace, who is specifically drawn to the area to visit the COE and the APM.

Once the APM is operational, there will need to be considerations of whether there is any capacity for the public to visit the DGR on paid tours.

By this time, it is also expected that the operations of the COE will have matured, with the potential for new technologies being utilized to educate and communicate the how the APM operates, as well as the potential for new exhibits. During the preceding years, it is expected that the team operating the COE will have learned which types of exhibits resonate with visitors and adapt the facility to changing tastes. New and changing displays will also be a means to promote repeat visits.

## 9.0 OPTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

The following options are a result of all the research and interviews undertaken throughout the course of this project. The purpose of these options is to continue promoting Ignace's presence as a leading tourism destination in Northeastern Ontario by expanding the offerings of the tourism sector and targeting a broader audience.

While these options could be implemented separately from the APM project, they would undoubtedly benefit from the increase in number of visitors to the Ignace Area. Furthermore, they would be mutually complimentary with the Centre of Expertise and its goals of educating visitors about the APM while providing stability and support to the Ignace Area community and economy.

### First Nation Partnership Opportunities

There is opportunity to work with local First Nations, particularly Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation, to codevelop tourism opportunities in the Ignace Area. One potential product development initiative identified in the Destination Northern Ontario 2020-2021 Annual Report is Indigenous tourism food plan.

### Connecting to Science North

Science North is a science centre based in Sudbury focused on delivering science education in fun and interactive ways. It has recently expanded programming to Thunder Bay and two permanent exhibits in Kenora. The organization serves local areas with science programming for all ages with summer camps, school programs, and event. One of the defining features of Science North's approach to science education and tourism is that they customize all their displays and exhibits. A possible option to explore is the expansion of Science North programs to Ignace, forming a corridor of Science North exhibits along Highway 17 for a wide variety of visitors.

### Night Sky Viewing

Leverage the natural environment of Ignace and the surrounding areas by providing night sky viewing services that immerse the guests in aurora borealis and stargazing. The unadulterated clear sky is becoming rarer in North America, and this is a service that Ignace and surrounding areas could offer. These could be offered individually or as a package deal to other tourism activities.

### Snowmobiling

There are some snowmobiling trails in the area, and this is a sector that could see some potential growth as a winter-based outdoor activity. Some fishing lodge operators have indicated that some of their existing clientele would be interested in an all-inclusive experience. However, the challenge is with start up capital costs and liability. There could be a partnership or joint venture with Ignace Otters, the local snowmobile club to possibly open up access to the sport to visitors.

### Expanding Multi-purpose Recreation Trails

Expand the existing trail networks throughout the Ignace Area, and accommodate multi-purpose uses, such as walking, bicycling, and snowshoeing.

### Build a replica of the White Otter Castle in Ignace

The White Otter Castle is a log house only accessible by snowmobile, plane, boat and canoeing. It is a three-storey log house built in 1915 by one person and has been admired by visitors and locals alike. As

the White Otter Castle is not easily accessible by all visitors, there is an opportunity to build a replica of the log house in Ignace for a broader audience to visit.

## Improved Use of Underutilized Assets

While Ignace has many strong foundational blocks for tourism, there are some underutilized assets that can be leveraged for more tourism development opportunities. These assets are:

- **Agimak Lake**  
Agimak Lake is located in Ignace and has great recreational opportunities. Agimak Beach is one of two swimming beaches in Ignace and is an asset that can be leveraged for more water-based tourism activities. Wayfinding and signage to Agimak Lake can be improved for ease of visiting.
- **Lily Pad Lake Walking Trails**  
Residents of Ignace frequent the Lily Pad Lake Walking Trail and is an asset that is easily missed by tourists and visitors. As it is located just south of Highway 17 and away from the main strip of commercial services, additional wayfinding and signage can improve visibility for visitors.
- **Tower Hill**  
Highway signage to Tower Hill can be improved for ease of visiting.
- **Trans-Canada Trail and other Paddling Routes**  
Potential to connect the waterway trail to a hiking and bicycling trail connected to Ignace and the COE.
- **White Otter Castle**  
The White Otter Castle is a log house only accessible by snowmobile, plane, boat and canoeing. It is a three-storey log house built in 1915 by one person and has been admired by visitors and locals alike. As the White Otter Castle is not easily accessible by all visitors, there is an opportunity to build a replica of the log house in Ignace for a broader audience to visit.
- **Beaches**  
Potential to provide trails connecting from the campgrounds directly to the beaches and promote water-based summer activities to a broader audience (e.g., families with children, youth). Opportunity to improve wayfinding and add landscaping to the attractions.
- **Events**  
Poker Derby and Ricci Music Festival/Canada Day Celebration: There's potential to expand these into bigger events to accommodate larger and more diverse audiences.

## Tourism Packages

The Ignace Area has a wide variety of outdoor activities and experiences, as evidenced throughout this study. One improvement to the quality of tourism is to coordinate the different activities and offerings into package deals which would include accommodations and suggestions for food and shopping. Operators and businesses would collectively benefit for such collaboration.

## Market Opportunity Assessment

The increased visitation levels to Ignace and surrounding areas will bring new market opportunities to expand tourism and hospitality-related services. A market opportunity assessment could be undertaken to determine the types of services that could be expanded (e.g., retail commercial, hospitality, food and beverage, groceries, etc.) and the market share that could be captured. Other potential tourism opportunities include eco-tourism.

## 10.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the research and analysis of the tourism market; research on visitor centres, cultural centres, community precedents; and knowledge holder interviews, there are several options to foster growth and diversification of tourism in the Ignace Area. With the potential advent of the APM project and more directly the Centre of Expertise, Ignace could be facing a period of unprecedented change and opportunity.

Key tourism findings from this study are the following:

- Northern Ontario tourism statistics show that visitors to the region commonly visit for outdoor and sports-related activities.
- While the Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on the resource-based tourism industry in Ontario, the regional tourism organizations for the Ignace Area are prepared with new strategic initiatives to attract visitors to the area.
- Ignace has land use policy frameworks to support tourism development and has many assets and foundational blocks in place for tourism.
- Canadian community precedent profiles show how tourism can be enhanced in the face of a significant change in the community while visitors centres and cultural centres provide ideas and options for how the Centre of Expertise (COE) can be conceptualized.
- Interviews with knowledge stakeholders identified that fishing is a dominant activity in the tourism sector and there are opportunities to expand the market services to a broader audience, including spouses, youth and children.
- Potential to improve use of underutilized assets (e.g., Agimak Beach, West Beach, White Otter Castle) and options to expand tourism market service offerings, including collaborating with First Nations and Indigenous communities to provide cultural tourism experiences
- The COE presents a rare opportunity to be a hub of activity, growth and synergy within tourism and beyond. Greater than the sum of its parts, the COE could be a catalyst for change and opportunity in the Ignace Area while also acting as the centre of education and communication for the APM project and sustainable economic growth.

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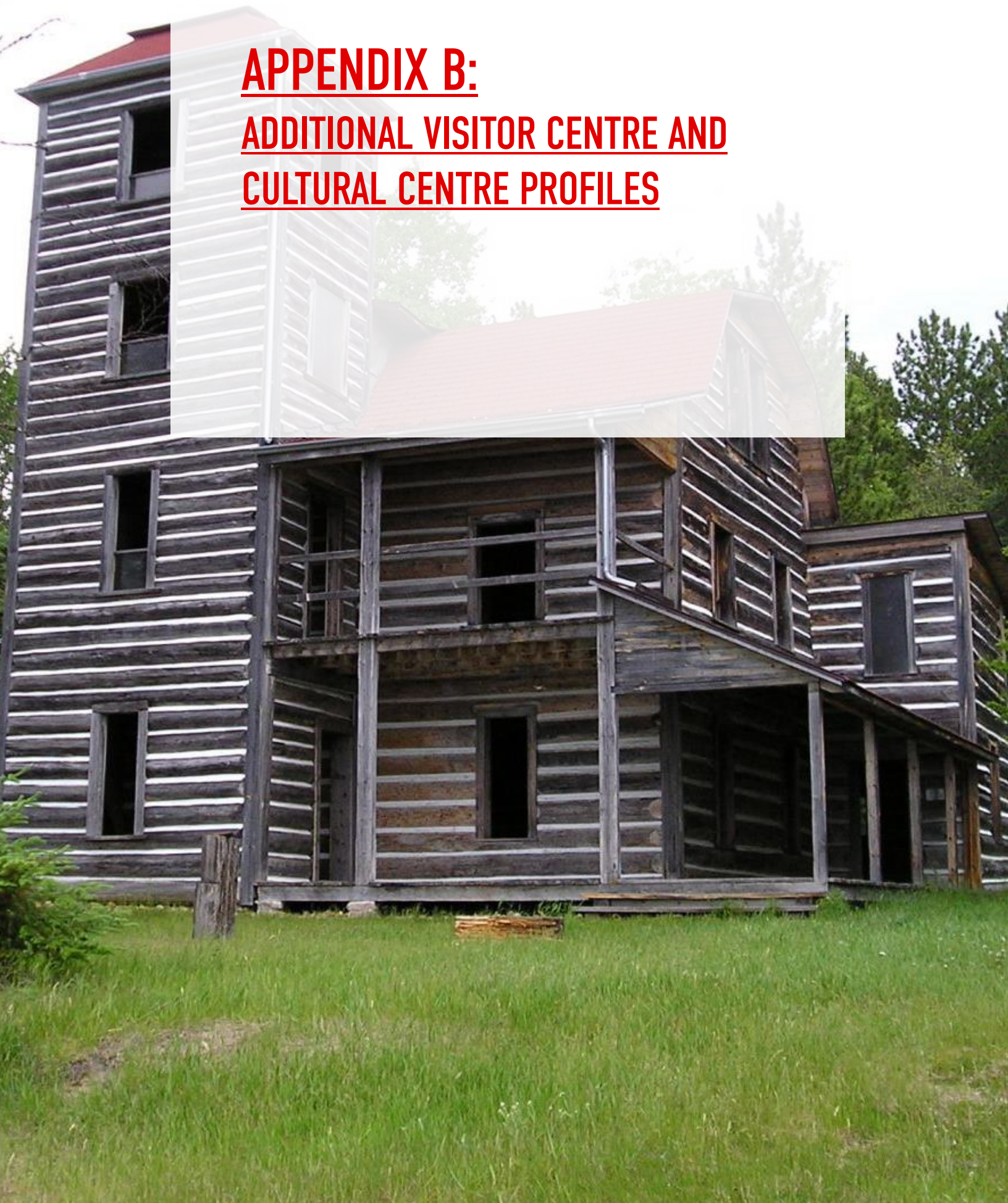


**APPENDIX A:**  
**LIST OF COMMUNITY STUDIES**

# **APPENDIX A: LIST OF COMMUNITY STUDIES**

<b>Study Name</b>	<b>Study Proponent</b>	<b>Lead Consultant</b>
Community and Culture	NWMO	InterGroup Consultants Ltd and Scatliff+Miller+Murray
Local and Regional Economics and Finance	NWMO	Hardy Stevenson and Associates Ltd
People and Health	NWMO	InterGroup Consultants Ltd
Infrastructure	Township of Ignace	WSP
Tourism	Township of Ignace	Urban Systems

**APPENDIX B:**  
**ADDITIONAL VISITOR CENTRE AND**  
**CULTURAL CENTRE PROFILES**



# APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL VISITOR CENTRE AND CULTURAL CENTRE PROFILES

## Visitor Centre Profiles

Visitor centres serve as information hubs for tourists. They can either be located at specific attractions or places of interest or centralized in a form of tourist information centres. The success of tourism destinations relies on the visitor experience, and visitor centres play a vital role in ensuring tourism information is available when and where visitors need it.

The success of visitor centres relies on information accuracy, the service visitors receive, and innovation. Seven visitor centres were analyzed for the purpose of this study, and these are:

- Mont Terri Rock Laboratory, Switzerland
- Saunders Hydro Dam, Ontario
- Niagara Parks Power Station, Ontario
- Oil Sands Discovery Centre, Alberta
- W.A.C. Bennett Dam, B.C.
- Deep Bay Marine Field Station, B.C.
- Hoover Dam Powerplant, Nevada

### Mont Terri Rock Laboratory, Switzerland

Mont Terri Rock Laboratory	
<b>Location</b>	Sainte-Ursanne, Switzerland
<b>Season</b>	Monday to Saturday all year
<b>Programs &amp; Activities</b>	Guided tours for visitors to the underground rock laboratory. Visitors are taken by a minibus through a safety tunnel (1 kilometre in distance) to the rock laboratory where more than 40 experiments are currently in progress. Visitors can learn about topics such as geology, gas flow paths, bacteria, diffusion, CO <sub>2</sub> , deep geological repository, and seismology.
<b>Building Design</b>	The visitor centre is approximately 5,000 square feet. The entire site of the Mont Terri Rock Laboratory is difficult to measure as it contains underground tunnels, however, the surface is estimated to be 10,000-15,000 sq. ft.
<b>Revenue &amp; Funding</b>	The primary revenue source is not through the programs it offers to the public at the facility. The facility offers reservations at the conference room for a fee. The student visitor tours are funded by the Nagra Cooperative which consists of nuclear power plant operators and the Swiss Federal Government.
<b>Events &amp; Uses</b>	Research activities Guided tours Conferences

The Mont Terri Rock Laboratory is an international research project for the hydrogeological, geochemical, and geotechnical characterization of a clay formation. The Mont Terri laboratory is a research facility that has been built to provide knowledge on the feasibility and safety of deep geological disposal. As of 2020, 22 international organizations now conduct research in the Mont Terri Rock Laboratory.

## Saunders Hydro Dam, Cornwall, Ontario

The Saunders Hydro Dam is one of the only visitor centres owned and operated by the Ontario Power Generation (OPG) and is located in Cornwall, eastern Ontario. The visitor centre provides information and interactive displays about the history of the St. Lawrence Seaway and Power Project and about the impacts of the hydro dam on the community. The visitor centre offers information about the first inhabitants of the St. Lawrence River Valley –Mohawks of Akwesasne – and about the villages that were affected by the development of the project.

Saunders Hydro Dam	
Location	Cornwall, Ontario
Season	Closed for the season due to Covid-19.
Programs & Activities	The visitor centre has several murals and interactive displays to engage visitors. A recreational path for walking and bicycling along the river connects the visitor centre and the St. Lawrence River. Meeting rooms within the visitor centre are open to community groups to reserve at no fee.
Building & Siting	The visitor centre is located on a peninsula next to the St. Lawrence River. The power generating site is located on the same peninsula next to the visitor centre.
Revenue & Funding	Admission to the Saunders Hydro Dam visitor centre is free.
Events & Uses	Educational activities Guided tours Meeting bookings

## Niagara Parks Power Station, Niagara Falls, Ontario

The Niagara Parks Power Station visitor centre presents the history and unique architectural features of two former power generating stations (Toronto Power Generating Station and Ontario Power Company Generating Station) that existed on the site for 115 years before it was decommissioned. The visitor centre is on the shore of the Niagara River near the Niagara Falls. The building is a Provincially Significant Heritage Building.

Niagara Parks Power Station	
Location	Niagara Falls, Ontario
Season	Monday to Sunday, 10am to 6pm.
Programs & Activities	Experience repurposed artifacts, interactive displays, and interpretative installations of the power of water used to generate power. “Little Inventors Workshop” is offered for children and youth and is included in the admission fee. New 180-foot glass-paneled elevator was installed to provide access to a 2,200-foot-long tunnel leading to an observation deck at the river’s edge.

<b>Building &amp; Siting</b>	The visitor centre is located on Horseshoe Falls. The power generating site is located next to the visitor centre.
<b>Revenue &amp; Funding</b>	The visitor centre generates revenue from admissions, with an add-on cost for the special exhibition of the "Currents" (\$30 for adults, \$19.50 for children). The venue also generates revenue from parking fees (\$26.55 daily per car).
<b>Events &amp; Uses</b>	Educational activities Guided tours Light shows at night

## W.A.C. Bennett Dam, Hudson's Hope, B.C.

The W.A.C. Bennett Dam Visitor Centre is one of three Visitor centres operated by B.C. Hydro. The centre was created to showcase and educate the public about the dam, which is one of the world's largest Earth filled structures. The centre hosts a series of exhibits and galleries aimed at educating visitors on hydro electricity generation, the dam's construction, local wildlife and First Nations history and culture. The visitor centre and the dam sit within the traditional territory of Treaty 8 First Nations.

W.A.C. Bennett Dam	
<b>Location</b>	Hudson Hope, B.C.
<b>Season</b>	Re-opening May 2022, Regular Schedule May to September.
<b>Programs &amp; Activities</b>	A series of self-directed galleries and exhibits that are open to the public for a small admission fee. School groups (K-12) and larger tour groups can participate in guided tours. Individuals can book guided tours in advance. The centre has a gift shop which sell souvenirs and snacks.
<b>Building &amp; Siting</b>	The visitor centre is located on the east side of the dam and provides visitors a side long view of the dam and the Williston Lake Reservoir. The visitor centre is comprised of one 6,500 square foot visitor building and is supported by approximately 35,000 square feet of outdoor exhibit space. The centre also has a large parking lot where visitors can park their cars, RVs, or tour busses for free.
<b>Revenue &amp; Funding</b>	The primary revenue source for the visitor centre are admissions from daily visitors. The centre generates revenue from larger group tours such as school groups and tour busses (travel trade). Visitors can rent an audio version of the tour for an additional fee. The visitor centre has a gift shop that sells a range of souvenirs, snacks, and drinks. The centre has hosted private events in the past.
<b>Events &amp; Uses</b>	Galleries and exhibits School tours Guided tours Gift shop Private events

## Deep Bay Marine Field Station, Bowser, B.C.

The Deep Bay Marine Field Station is part of the Vancouver Island University and conducts applied research on the shellfish aquaculture industry. It is also home to the Centre for Seafood Innovation which

offers infrastructure, equipment and resources to seafood industry members and is part of the British Columbia Food Hub network.

Deep Bay Marine Field Station	
<b>Location</b>	Bowser, B.C.
<b>Season</b>	May 1 to August 31
<b>Programs &amp; Activities</b>	Year-round events, group tours, and school fieldtrips to students in kindergarten to Grade 12. Camp programs to youth during March break and during the summer. In-person and virtual educational programs to the public and to Vancouver Island University students interested in learning more about aquaculture. Visitors can participate in guided and self-guided tours. Activities include visiting a wide variety of local species in their aquariums and touch tanks, observing research scientists working in their laboratories, and exploring the wetland habitat next to the station.
<b>Building &amp; Siting</b>	Deep Bay Marine site is 6 acres in size and has direct saltwater flow through from Baynes Sound. The Field Station building is a state-of-the-art facility, with a field station, commercial kitchen, flexible wet and dry lab space, meeting rooms and event space, and two research marine vessels and equipment on site. 11 hectares of marine research shellfish farm are adjacent to the site.
<b>Revenue &amp; Funding</b>	The primary revenue sources are likely a combination of funding and admissions.
<b>Events &amp; Uses</b>	Group tours School fieldtrips Youth camp programs Educational programs Self-guided tours Wetland exploration

## Hoover Dam Powerplant, Nevada, U.S.

The Hoover Dam is an operating hydroelectric powerplant in Nevada, U.S. that draws nearly 1 million international tourists and visitors annually to view the dam and to learn about the inner workings. The Hoover Dam was built using 6.6 million tons of concrete and the labour of approximately 21,000 number of workers. The intensive construction and engineering feat behind the Dam makes it one of the 7 engineering wonders of the world. It also features Art Deco architecture and sculptures.

Hoover Dam Powerplant	
<b>Location</b>	Nevada, U.S.
<b>Season</b>	Open year-round
<b>Programs &amp; Activities</b>	The Hoover Dam offers its own programs, including guided tours throughout the day; youth and school group tours; and education documents such as the Hoover Dam Learning Packet. Special events and activities are offered for residents and tourists.

	The Hoover Dam can be booked by private parties for commercial filming and photography events; venue booking for conferences which accommodate up to 200 people; trail use and sporting activities; and special private tours.
<b>Building &amp; Siting</b>	The crest of the Hoover Dam is about a quarter mile long. The entire site of the Hoover Dam consists of 4 main buildings and attractions: Visitor Center (includes the Hoover Dam Café), original Exhibit Building, Hoover Dam Spillway House, and Winged Features. A parking garage with 459 stalls available for paid public parking is provided. There is a \$10 daily parking fee. There are four other parking sites at a distance from the Hoover Dam that are free for visitors to park. The Hoover Dam Spillway House is available for private functions for a total area of 2,780 sq. ft.
<b>Revenue &amp; Funding</b>	The primary revenue sources for the visitor centre are admissions from daily visitors who visit the exhibits and from the parking fees. The centre also generates revenue from larger group tours such as school groups and tour busses, as well as from bookable private functions.
<b>Events &amp; Uses</b>	Group tours School fieldtrips Educational programs Self-guided tours Private parties Conferences Trail use Sporting activities

### Wunderland Kalkar, Kalkar, Germany

The Wunderland Kalkar is an amusement park built on the site of a nuclear power plant that did not go into operation. There are 40 attractions, seven hotels, meeting spaces and leisure spaces on the site. The Wunderland Kalkar is situated in a natural landscape. The location of the Wunderland Kalkar is situated near other attractions, including bicycling to nearby shopping centres in the city of Oberhausen, visiting the historic village (Kalkar) which is the largest place of pilgrimage in northern Europe.

Wunderland Kalkar	
<b>Location</b>	Kalkar, Germany
<b>Season</b>	Closed for the season due to Covid-19.
<b>Programs &amp; Activities</b>	Many facilities constructed for the powerplant were integrated into the park and its attractions, including the cooling tower which features a swing ride and a climbing wall. Other facilities include four restaurants, eight bars, and six hotels.
<b>Building &amp; Siting</b>	The Wunderland Kalkar amusement park is made up of 40 attractions, as well as 7 hotels, and several restaurants and bars. There are over 2,000 parking stalls.
<b>Revenue &amp; Funding</b>	The Wunderland Kalkar receives 300,000 visitors a year. Its revenue sources come from the amusement park admissions, group tours, and business day trips.



	It generates revenues from meeting space bookings and from the retail spaces on the site. Online tickets start at € 25.45, which is approximately CAD 33.50.
<b>Events &amp; Uses</b>	Amusement park Hotel Food & Beverage Family tours Private & business events Conferences

## Indigenous Cultural Centre Profiles

Indigenous cultural centres offer a unique opportunity for visitors and communities to engage with the local Indigenous culture. Through curated exhibits and programming, a cultural centre can showcase and teach visitors about the Nation’s culture and history.

Successful cultural centres can typically accommodate several different functions to generate revenue. The diversity of revenue generating enterprises are incorporated into the operations of a cultural centre and serve to attract a variety of visitors and patrons. Common revenue generators at a cultural centre include admissions, gift shop, tours, café/restaurant, and rental spaces for events and meetings.

Three cultural centres were profiled for the purpose of this study, and these are:

- Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre (SLCC)
- Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre
- 'Ksan Historical Village

### Squamish Lil'Wat Cultural Centre (SLCC)

The Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre is the product of historical protocol agreements and dialogue between the Squamish and Lil-wat First nations and the Resort Municipality of Whistler, dating back to the late 1990s. The cultural centre idea unfolded over the next few years, and the centre was completed in 2008. Funding made available from the Vancouver 2010 Olympic & Paralympic Winter Games Shared Legacy Project was a critical driver of the centre’s development and launch. SLCC is designed to be a showcase for the culture and heritage of the Squamish and Lil'wat Nations. The 4.35-acre site was granted under a long-term lease from the Resort Municipality of Whistler. The centre is a “green” development, incorporating principles of sustainability and environmentally responsible technologies.

Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre	
<b>Location</b>	Resort Municipality of Whistler, directly across from the Fairmont Chateau Whistler
<b>Season</b>	Tuesdays – Sundays, hourly from 10 am to 4 pm, with the last tour starting at 3 pm.
<b>Programs &amp; Activities</b>	The centre provides a series of educational visitor experiences and offers a multitude of interactive activities and events. Cultural delivery and the promotion of positive cultural awareness are a central mandate of the SLCC.

	<p>The main forms of cultural delivery are in the form of guided tours, during which tour guides are encouraged to add their own interpretations, experiences, and stories to the base tour.</p> <p>The SLCC runs the Indigenous Youth Ambassador (IYA) program, which is an important training and capacity building program for First Nations youth.</p>
<b>Building &amp; Siting</b>	<p>38,000 sq. ft. (3,350 sq. m.) building on a 4.35-acre site.</p> <p>Construction completed in 2008.</p>
<b>Revenue &amp; Funding</b>	<p>The SLCC is a not-for-profit organization.</p> <p>Many operations are funded through federal or other funding programs or grants. Venue rental, catering and event services, gift shop and café businesses are additional significant revenue sources.</p> <p>Annual revenue of additional revenue sources:</p> <p>Gift Shop – approximately \$700,000</p> <p>Café – Break-even operation</p> <p>Catering and Event Services – estimated at between \$1.5 and \$2.0 million</p> <p>Venue Rentals – approximately \$450,000</p> <p>Cultural Services – approximately \$450,000</p>
<b>Events &amp; Uses</b>	<p>Interpretive centre</p> <p>Temporary and permanent art exhibits</p> <p>Live theatre and demonstrations of Squamish and Lil'wat craft</p> <p>Traditional pit house and Longhouse with artist-lead workshops and demonstrations</p> <p>Aboriginal tourism information centre</p> <p>Eco-tour booking centre</p> <p>Walking tour of old growth forest</p> <p>Whistler's largest First Nation gift shop</p> <p>Restaurant offering First Nation-inspired cuisine and catering</p> <p>Gallery office featuring art commissioning sales of First Nations artworks</p> <p>Performance services (wedding, banquet and conference blessings, dance performances and welcome/guided processions)</p> <p>Conferences</p> <p>Private events</p>
<b>Awards</b>	<p>Canadian Wood Council Award – Western Red Cedar 2008</p>

## **Lessons Learned**

### **Building and Store Design**

- While the gift shop component does not need to be large, it should be oriented and merchandised in a way that prioritizes the showcasing of authentic and higher price point pieces. This can help to support sales of custom art and carvings while boosting sales of more accessible, lower price point items such as jewellery and clothing. Incorporate racks and cases that can be moved about to maximize flexibility and use of space.
- Design event/exhibit and hall spaces to be flexible. Where possible, consider having larger display items on pulley systems so that they can be lifted when needed to create different aesthetics, feel, and usable floor area depending on the nature of the event.

### **Programming**

- Focus on interactive and engaging programming. Museums and cultural centres are seeing a shift in their traditional funding sources, as more and more funding sources and philanthropists are choosing to donate to different types of charities. These organizations are having to re-invent themselves to generate more revenue by hosting more events and programming, including more immersive and interactive experiences. Since many of these spaces were not designed for that purpose, some are having trouble adapting. Venues such as the Royal Ontario Museum have undergone significant renovations in recent years to be able to host these types of alternate revenue-generating activities to stay relevant.

### **Identifying Opportunities**

- Hire a sales and marketing manager to identify key business opportunities that the centre can participate in. The SLCC's success in the travel trade sector was a direct result of this type of expertise, and not necessarily an obvious move for a cultural centre. Travel trade-related business has become the centre's largest revenue generator.
- Future business operations for SLCC include manufacturing their own goods for the gift shop.
- SLCC is developing a performance department to expand its experiential cultural services.

## **Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre**

The Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre (KDCC), located on the bank of Chu Ninkwan (Yukon River), was developed as a celebratory space for Kwanlin Dün to share their history, stories, arts, and culture. The centre's location marks a return to the riverfront for KDFN, as the community had historically been relocated away from the Yukon River to allow for city development. KDCC construction was completed in 2012, and the centre has since become a major focal point, not only for Kwanlin Dün, but also for the City of Whitehorse and its business and arts communities.

KDCC also leases 15,000 sq. ft. of its site/building to the Yukon Territorial Government to house the Whitehorse public library, which is physically connected to the cultural centre. KDCC is considered the City's premier conference and convention centre due to its ideal riverfront – and central Downtown Whitehorse – location and world-class architecture. The centre is also an important place of learning and artistic expression and runs several education programs as well as an artist-in-residence program.

<b>Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre</b>	
<b>Location</b>	Whitehorse, Yukon
<b>Season</b>	Monday to Friday, 10:00am – 3:00pm
<b>Programs &amp; Activities</b>	Interpretive Programs – available on request during the winter season. Christmas Craft Fair Open House

	<p>National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebrations - live music, dancing, and other events</p> <p>Shakaat Artists-in-Residence program gives access to spaces to emerging Indigenous artists within KDCC</p> <p>Sewing Circle – Every Thursday at 5:00 P.M.</p> <p>Moose hide to Moccasins – participants learn how to prepare moose hide</p> <p>Moose hair Tufting with Florence Moses</p>
<b>Building &amp; Siting</b>	<p>38,000 sq. ft. (3,350 sq. m.) building on a 4.35-acre site.</p> <p>Construction completed in 2008.</p>
<b>Revenue &amp; Funding</b>	<p>The Kwanlin Dün Cultural Society is a not-for-profit society.</p> <p>As a not-for-profit, the KDCC receives much of its operational funding from different government grants and programs.</p> <p>KDCC receives in-kind contributions from the Kwanlin Dün First Nation government.</p> <p>The centre now runs at a “profit” each year, which supports contribution to a capital reserve allowance and the establishment of a scholarship program for local First Nations youth.</p> <p>Room and venue rentals are KDCC’s main revenue stream.</p> <p>Annual revenue generators include:</p> <p>Venue rentals - \$600,000</p> <p>Staffing, catering, equipment, and security - \$400,000</p> <p>Catering - \$200,000</p> <p>Lease of library space - \$700,000 (15,000 sq. ft. of the building’s south end is leased out on a 10-year lease to the Yukon Territorial Government).</p>
<b>Events &amp; Uses</b>	<p>Eight indoor spaces available for rent, ranging from conference spaces to more intimate classroom and lounge settings.</p> <p>Several outdoor spaces that can be rented, including a firepit area with seating, a multi-purpose room, patio, and tenting areas that for a range of event types.</p> <p>Two kitchen areas fully equipped for catering service and plating uses.</p> <p>Top-of-the-line equipment to serve the audio-visual needs of various events.</p>

**Lessons Learned**

**Purpose**

- Have a clear mandate on what the centre’s core purpose and role, both for the First Nation and for the larger community. If it is primarily for exhibitions and learning it will require museum grade construction and environmental controls to house artifacts. These facilities and assets require specialized equipment and staff for maintenance and handling.
- If revenue generation is a critical consideration, particularly with respect to food and beverage and catering service, then be aware of design and social considerations. Whether or not to allow alcohol on-site for special events is an example that KDCC had to consider. Make sure that the community is consulted early on with respect to considerations with social/cultural implications.

**Building Design**

- Ensure that there is enough office space. KDCC was built with 2,000 sf of office space, which it has since found to be inadequate to meet the various staffing functions it requires. The centre is currently exploring the possibility of reorganizing parts of the building to create more space for office use. With less venue/meeting room rental space, this may be less pressing for LDCC. (This was addressed in the revision of the building concept).

**Programming**

- Have a good idea of what the programming for the centre is going to be year-round, as that will determine staffing levels and roles needed for the cultural centre, which can vary widely depending on the programming calendar.

### Cultural Sensitivity

- Some key cultural sensitivities need to be addressed when programming the centre. Conversations with the board and the Nation need to clarify questions like:
- Will alcohol be permitted on site for events? Where will it be permitted within the centre (e.g. Around the artefacts?). Prohibiting alcohol will limit the centre's appeal as a location for conferences and weddings.
- If the centre will host celebrations of life/funerals, will it allow these for non-band members?
- What dates would the Nation like to block off for important events each year? If the Nation is partnering with the municipality, what dates would they like to reserve the centre for?

### Organizational Structure

- KDCC was not always revenue positive. The centre struggled during its first few years but was able to recover with some targeted effort in key areas such as:
  - A focus on accountability for all positions, with clearly defined responsibilities by role
  - A focus on governance and obligations of the board
  - Setting clear lines of communication
  - Clear and usable financial systems and forms
- Establish a clear agreement between the Nation and the City.

## Ksan Historical Village

The 'Ksan Heritage Village is a popular First Nations cultural centre located on Highway 62 near New Hazelton, B.C. The Heritage Village has been operating for over 50 years, making it one of British Columbia's longest-running First Nations cultural centres. The facility has been owned and operated by Gitanmaax First Nation for the last five years and is entirely self-funded. The centre does not rely on outside funding, which makes it a rarity amongst cultural centres. 'Ksan generates revenue through its gift shop, which is supported by a screen printing operation, tours, foodservice and bus tours (travel trade).

'Ksan Heritage Village	
<b>Location</b>	New Hazelton, Gitanmaax First Nation
<b>Season</b>	May 1 - September 30 (occasionally extended depending on tourist volumes).
<b>Programs &amp; Activities</b>	<p>Several tours and cultural experiences. Individual or guided tours are offered. Tours take people through the museum, carving shed, the feast hall, regalia exhibit and historical way of life exhibit. Visitors also learn about the longhouse buildings themselves.</p> <p>The Wolf House hosts live performances. The space is a replica of a traditional feast hall where the Ksan Performing Arts dance group holds shows once a week. Performances include traditional dances, singing and drumming in traditional regalia.</p>
<b>Building &amp; Siting</b>	<p>The cultural centre consists of seven buildings that were constructed to emulate a traditional Gitksan village and are ornately decorated with beautiful paintings and totem poles. Each building hosts a different function:</p> <p>Building 1 - the main museum, gift shop, administration            Building 2 - carving shed            Building 3 - screen printing business, public washroom            Building 4 (Eagle House) - Eagle House Restaurant            Building 5 (Fireweed House) - Fireweed treasure house – regalia storage and exhibit</p>

	<p>Building 6 (Wolf House) - feast hall and performance space</p> <p>Building 7 (Frog House) - traditional life exhibit – information, items, and artifacts set up to show how the Gitxsan people lived in the past</p>
<b>Revenue &amp; Funding</b>	<p>Several different revenue sources and has attributed most of its success to its gift shop and bus tours.</p> <p>The gift shop has generated between \$250,000 - \$300,000 annually for the last five years, and revenues have been steadily growing.</p> <p>'Ksan hosts between 4,000 and 5,000 bus tour passengers annually. This generates between \$40,000 and \$50,000 annually.</p> <p>Gitanmaax First Nation also operates an RV park adjacent to the 'Ksan Heritage Village. The RV park has approximately 40 sites, and rates vary between \$35 and \$45.</p>
<b>Events &amp; Uses</b>	<p>Guided tours</p> <p>Individual tours</p> <p>Traditional knowledge</p> <p>Exhibition</p> <p>Live performances</p> <p>Venue rental</p>

**Lessons Learned**

'Ksan Heritage Village has been operating since the 1970s and is one of the oldest and most successful examples of First Nation cultural centres in the province. Several lessons for West Moberly First Nation from Ksan include:

**Bus Tours and Travel Trade**

- The impact of bus tours can be huge. Bus tours (travel trade) are package tours sold in advance, often catering to international travellers. By building relationships with tour operators and getting on their itineraries, cultural centres can add a level of certainty to their annual visitor numbers and revenues.

**Restaurant and Food Service**

- Food service options are critically important if serving bus tours. Many visitors on bus tours are elderly and need to have food available.

**Diversify Revenues**

- 'Ksan has several different revenue streams that contribute to its self-sufficiency. Creative additions like the screen-printing business allow the Village to print its own merchandise and showcase new local designs while also serving the broader community.

**Keep People Coming Back**

- Keep programming at the cultural centre varied and offer different opportunities for people to interact with it. The centre should be able to reflect opportunities related to the landscape from a tourist point of view. Keep the cultural centre interesting and give people a reason to come back for repeat visits.

**Operations and Maintenance**

- If possible, reduce maintenance costs by outsourcing grounds maintenance or sharing it will another department. It may also be cost-effective to outsource grounds maintenance rather than have dedicated staff depending on the local market.

# Comparison of Visitor Centres and Cultural Centres

There are several important similarities and differences when comparing visitor and cultural centres:

Similarities	Differences
Broad range of tourism offerings	Emphasis on cultural heritage in cultural centres
More than one revenue stream	Cultural considerations
Focus on educating and interacting with guests	Different funding opportunities
Leveraging competitive advantages	Focus on community pride in cultural centres
Catering to different types of tourists	Accessibility (cultural centres are usually further away from markets)
Efforts to retain guests	Authenticity vs. commercialization
Affordability and accessibility are important	