



Lake Superior North Shore Trails Assessment Guide:

**A Resource for Municipalities, Indigenous
Communities, and Trails Organizations for
Development of Market-Ready
Recreational Trails**



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I. Identification and Classification

1. Market Readiness Criteria for all Recreational Trails

This report will outline criteria employed by Parks Canada's Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area that can be used by trails managers, communities, and tourism organizations looking to evaluate market readiness of trails within the region.

The goal is to ensure that a trail's overall experience is positive for visitors and that reasonable safety measures and messaging are in place to ensure visitors understand the challenges associated with the experience they are about to undertake. The criteria ensures that all parties involved in hosting, managing, and promoting trails understand the trail's condition and risks, have taken all reasonable precautions to prevent injuries or incidents, and that protections are in place for these parties in the event of an incident/accident/injury.

As many tourism-oriented organizations, government agencies, companies, and local communities look to bolster their appeal to potential visitors through promotion of trails, it is advised that a centralized organization become responsible for maintaining a list of Market Ready trails. Responsible trail managers should reevaluate their status as a "Market Ready Trail" annually. Any community or tourism organization promoting regional trails should reconfirm a trail's status as "Market Ready" annually.

A "Market Readiness Checklist" has been created from the following criteria and added to this report. See **Appendix A**.





Market Readiness Criteria

A. Trail Classification

See **Appendix B** for Parks Canada's Trail Classification System. All promoted trails should be classified, maintained, and have appropriate signage according to these guidelines. All promotion of the trail (including trailhead signage) should include the trail's classification level, ensuring that visitors understand the experience. This will ensure visitors are aware of risks before leaving their homes and stepping foot on the trail.



B. Land Use Permission

It should be a requirement to have either self attestation or proof of written consent for use of all properties that a trail traverses. These landowners could include one or many of the following: Provincial/Federal Crown Land, municipal property, commercial property, and/or private landowner's property.



C. Active Trail Management/Maintenance

Trails need to be managed by an active trail management organization/community with the capacity to perform inspections and maintenance at regular intervals, as prescribed by the Trail Classification System (see **Appendix B**) according to the trail's specific classification. It is the responsibility of the trail manager(s) to effectively communicate to potential trail users and stakeholders promoting the trail of any trail closures, issues, and/or liabilities in writing as soon as possible.





Market Readiness Criteria

D. Signage

Trailhead sign and route markers of a trail should follow the standards described in the Trail Classification System (**Appendix B**). See **Appendix B** for an example of a Parks Canada trailhead sign. This can be used as a guide for important information to be included for visitor safety.



E. Accurate Mapping/Description

An accurate GPS track is essential for visitor safety and trail promotion. It's also a key element of a trailhead sign, pamphlets, or other user guides. This GPS data is also important for promotion of the trail by local municipalities and other tourism-oriented organizations. A handheld GPS unit (Garmin, Magellan) to record a georeferenced track (.kml, .gpx, .kmz) is recommended for recording of the trail.



F. Insurance

For the protection of trail managers, communities, and tourism organizations looking to promote a trail, it is recommended that trails adopt Hike Ontario/Ontario Trails Council's listed insurance standards. All prospective trail managers should provide written proof to any community or tourism organization looking to promote the trail, of a \$5-million-dollar Commercial General Liability Insurance policy (including Errors and Omissions) for the trail managers and landowners. It is advised that trail managing organizations also carry \$2-million-dollar Directors & Officers coverage. <https://hikeontario.com/programs/insurance>

It should be noted that membership/adoption of a trail into the Voyageur Trail Association (VTA)'s network of trails, affords a trail insurance under the VTA's policy.





Market Readiness Criteria

G. Points of Interest

To ensure a positive experience to users, a trail's lookout(s)/destinations should be worth the effort and time required to reach them.



H. Parking/Capacity

A trail's parking lot should be evaluated to ensure it has sufficient parking space for expected capacity (and potential growth in trail use due to successful promotion), its condition, and for its visibility from expected roads travellers would take to reach the trail.



I. Online Presence

A prospective trail should have an actively updated website or social media page allowing communication with the responsible trail manager. This site can be used to communicate visitor safety updates and trail information for potential visitors. All promotion of a prospective trail by communities or tourism organizations should provide a link to this website/social media site.



J. [OPTIONAL] Connection/Support from Municipalities

A prospective trail can greatly benefit from support/affiliation of a township/community. Though not required, sustainability of a trail is greatly increased by an adjacent community's ability to assist in funding application support, promotion, and volunteer recruitment. This factor should be considered when evaluating the market readiness of a trail.



Identification and Classification

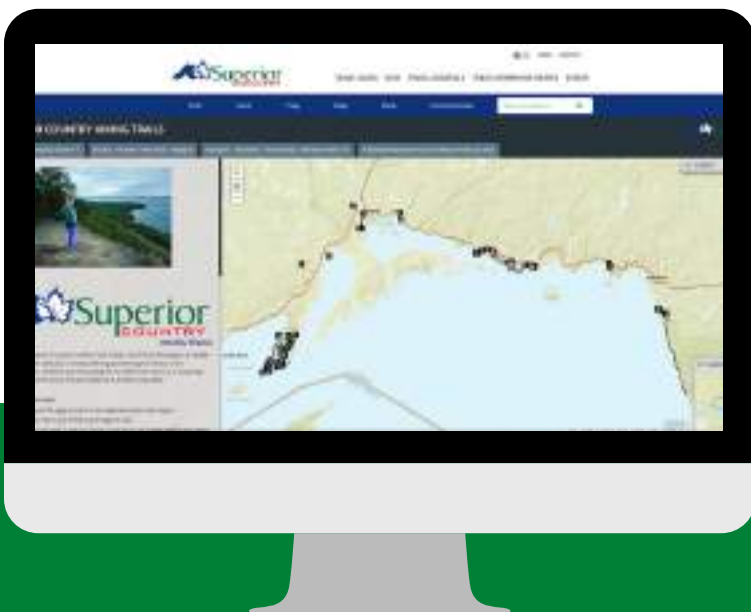
2. Market Ready Trails Identified

In 2019, a trail inventory was conducted by Parks Canada and Superior Country to be used for the creation of a regional trails map. This map, hosted on Superior Country's website, was developed to promote market ready trails within Superior Country's boundaries that meet all the criteria in Section 1. Provincial Parks, a National Park, communities, and known trails organizations within these boundaries were also encouraged to submit trails meeting these criteria.

<https://superiorcountry.ca/hiking/>

Currently, the Superior Country Hiking page is the most complete catalogue of market ready trails. This webpage, though useful for desktop computer users, is not "mobile friendly". It is recommended that a centralized database, available in a mobile friendly online format, be created for the region's trails. This site should be made available for the promotion of trails in the region by any stakeholder organization, community, or trail manager.

See **Appendix D** for a list of all "Market Ready" trails in the region. Information within **Appendix D** (trail name, distance, description, and self-attestation as "Market Ready") was provided by the responsible trail managing organization or community. It is possible that more trails meeting the criteria exist in the region.



3. Trails Close to but not Market Ready with Gaps Identified

The north shore of Lake Superior is home to many trails that are not currently listed on the Superior Country Hiking page. Many have existed for years, known, and used only by locals. Many of these trails offer incredible views and experiences, though lack formal management or other missing criteria that have limited or stopped their promotion.

Social media has allowed rapidly spreading awareness of regional trails. Indoor gathering restrictions stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic not only increased overall trail usage, but expanded awareness of previously underutilized trails, both formally managed and unmanaged trails.



LOCAL CASE STUDY

Mazukama Falls Trail and Wolf River Falls

As an example of the need for a centralized list of Market Ready Trails and compliance with its requirements, both the Mazukama Falls Trail (formally managed by the Nor'Wester VTA Club) and the Wolf River Falls Trail (unmanaged) became popular destinations for visitors from Thunder Bay (Observation from social media popularity and significant increase in parking lot use).

Both trails offer wonderful hikes of similar distance (1-2km) along rivers, leading to excellent waterfalls. Though both trails are difficult, Mazukama Falls is formally managed, insured, maintained, appropriately signed (detailing risks), and has undergone proper remediation to mitigate risk at water crossings and steep inclines which are inspected annually.

Wolf River Falls is unmaintained, unsigned, lacks wayfinding markers, and has uninspected ropes meant to assist in descent/ascent from excessively steep inclines. Each trail poses a risk to those with mobility issues or to the inexperienced hiker. Proper communication of the risks/and due diligence towards mitigation of risks at the Mazukama Falls Trail allow a visitor to make an informed decision about the experience and to undertake the hike with relative safety. This trail would be considered ready to promote, as long as these risks are clearly shared with potential visitors.



The Wolf River Falls trail poses a serious risk of injury, that may not be appreciated by a visitor who has become aware of the trail through friend/peer social media posts. Though ropes assist in the descent/ascent of steep inclines, they are unmaintained and could be at risk of failure at any moment. The lack of trailhead signage at its start, inhibits “last minute” informed decision-making regarding risk for any potential hiker. This trail should not be promoted by any local tourist-oriented agency, for risk of liability.

Both trails have seen a steep increase in use over the past two years. This increase in use does support each trail’s potential as viable tourism products for visitors beyond the immediate region (Thunder Bay, and surrounding communities), Mazukama Falls Trail is ready to promote while Wolf River Falls would require proper risk assessment, risk mitigation, inspection, signage, and maintenance only possible with proper management.

Identification and Classification

Trails Close to but not Market Ready with Gaps Identified

To be considered as “Market Ready” and be promoted to visitors, trail managers should submit a self-attestation form to a centralized body to notify tourism promotion/oriented agencies that a new trail meeting the Market Readiness Criteria outlined in section 1 can be added to a regional database. Without a centralized database, any community or tourism organization looking to promote a new trail, should ensure all Market Readiness Criteria are met before promotion.

Prior to effort and investment towards the establishment of new trails, the benefit to the region’s existing trail offers and appeal to tourist demographics should be evaluated.

Outside of the North Shore of Lake Superior Region’s Federal and Provincial Parks, most trails are classified with a “Difficult” rating. Destination Northern Ontario’s RTO 13C 2019 Visitor Statistics Report (Canadian and Overseas visitors only, US visitation excluded) breaks down existing regional visitation statistics and may indicate a misalignment of existing trail product with current visitors. Of the 997,567 counted visitors to the region, with the primary reason for travel being pleasure or visiting friends/relatives, 112,473 (11%) participated in hiking while here.

Visits to Region 13c	Main Purpose of Trip	
Year: 2019	Pleasure	VFR
Hiking	81,516	30,956

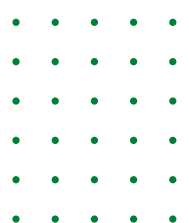
Identification and Classification

Trails Close to but not Market Ready with Gaps Identified

Using Statistics Canada’s average age of parents at the birth of a child* (30.2 years for all children), it is possible that a significant percentage of the 25-44 (40% of total VFR/Pleasure visitors) year old demographics are travelling with child/children under 10 years old, and not seeking a “difficult” trail experience. It would also seem safe to assume that trails of a higher difficulty classification may not appeal to a significant percentage of visitors aged 55+ (40.3% of total VFR/Pleasure visitors).

Visits to Region 13c	Main Purpose of Trip	
	Pleasure	VFR
Year: 2019		
Age of Adult Visitor [18+] (Person Visits)		
18 - 24 years old	50,374	15,339
25 - 34 years old	234,592	43,278
35 - 44 years old	64,452	56,208
45 - 54 years old	74,556	56,979
55 - 64 years old	133,592	71,998
65+ years old	95,170	88,891
Age not stated	2,811	9,328
Average age	44.1	51.4

The current trail offering, therefore, may not appeal to the majority of current and potential visitors to the region. Following the model used by Provincial and Federal Parks, variety of difficulty within the regional trail network would allow promotion of a trail offering for a broader range of demographics.



Identification and Classification

Trails Close to but not Market Ready with Gaps Identified

It is recommended that, although there are “near” market ready trails in the region, efforts would be best used in remediating some of the existing trails (where cost/benefit indicates highest likelihood of success) from difficult to intermediate classification.

Considering the existing trail product availability, it is recommended to raise targeted awareness of the current trail offering through promotion of multi-day experiences. This effort could focus on either promotion of longer multi-day single trails, such as Casque Isles (53km), Pukaskwa’s Coastal Trail (60km), and Kabeyun Trail (36km), or to promote groupings of day-hike/accommodation/food packages for communities/parks with a dense cluster of day hike trails available within a relatively short distance. Each of these strategies would require targeted demographic promotion within a reasonable travel range (distance to be determined).

***Statistics Canada: Fertility: Fewer children, older moms**

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2014002-eng.htm>



Identification and Classification

4. Classification System

The Trail Classification System adopted by Parks Canada is an internationally recognized standard for trail classification. It is recommended that trail managers adopt this system, its standards, and labels/icons to ensure trail users can choose a trail suited to their capabilities and/or desired challenge level. Proper classification of a trail will yield positives for trail users, trail managers, and the overall tourism region by ensuring visitor safety, visitor experiences that match visitors' interest/desired challenge, a higher likelihood of positive experience for a visitor, and reduced liability to trail managers.

The Parks Canada Trail Classification System (See **Appendix B**) is divided into two parts. One section is intended to be used by trail managers as a guide to properly identify a trail type classification from type 1 (less challenging) to type 4 (more challenging). Trail type is based on physical/technical characteristics (distance, profile, surface type, obstacles, signage, and facilities), level of service of the trail (inspection, maintenance), and visitor safety (mitigation efforts, risk assessment, messaging). This trail type classification is meant for internal (trail manager) assessment only. It will help a trail manager assess both the physical structure/challenge of a trail, and the capacity of the trail group to inspect, maintain, and properly mitigate risks for its users.

Trail Classification System

- A tool that provides essential information to Parks Canada and to visitors of Parks Canada sites.
- Provides precise information so that Parks Canada can make important decisions about developing, maintaining and managing of trails.

Trail Type Classification (for Asset, Resource Conservation, and Visitor Experience Management)				
Trail Type	General Description and Technical Details			
	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	TYPE 3	TYPE 4
	 A paved road or narrow shared-use path.	 A dirt path or narrow shared-use path.	 A dirt path or narrow shared-use path with some obstacles.	 A dirt path or narrow shared-use path with significant obstacles.

	BATHIC	EASY	MODERATE	DIFFICULT	ROUTE
Symbol					

Identification and Classification





Classification System

The second part of the Parks Canada Trail Classification System is the Trail Classification Rating (for users). This section will help guide a trail manager toward the required information that should be conveyed to a user, such as:

- **Overall classification symbol/title**
- **Definition**
- **Physical features**
- **Safety messaging**

When using the Trail Classification System*, it should be noted that a trail must be classified by their most challenging segment and most likely level of service, and not simply the “majority” of the trail, its “average” difficulty, or its “best case scenario” service level. If conditions deteriorate, or the managing trail organization is no longer able to meet a typical level of service, the trail should be reclassified.

The full Parks Canada Trail Classification System is attached to this report.

RATING	EASY	MODERATE	DIFFICULT	ROUTE
Symbol				

5. Trail Signage/Visitor Safety

A. Trailhead Signage (See Appendix C)

- i. Recommended that all trailhead signs share the following information with visitors: Trail Classification Rating Difficulty (symbol and text), description of the trail, distance, estimated time of completion, elevation gain/profile, hazards (symbol and text recommended), rules of the trail, emergency contact information, and include a map of the trail.
- ii. All text within the trail should be clearly legible through consideration of font colour and size.
- iii. All symbols used in a trailhead sign should be accompanied by descriptive text (legend).
- iv. It is recommended that trailhead signs be bilingual (French and English).
- v. Trailhead signs should promote cleanliness/stewardship of regional trails, through adoption of “Take only pictures, leave only footprints” type language.



Trail Signage/Visitor Safety (cont'd)

B. Route Markers

- i. Frequency of markers should adhere to the standards of the Trail Classification System.
- ii. Markers should be placed in both directions of travel.
- iii. Markers should be clearly visible in placement height, colour, and brightness.
- iv. Extra consideration required for areas where route confusion may appear (intersections, sharp turns in trail, creek crossings, tops of hills).



C. Off-Trail Information (such as websites, maps, and pamphlets)

- i. These products are typically used in the trip planning/decision making phase of the visitor cycle. Trail classification, description, definition, local amenities, trail user type, trail and regional map, and visitor safety messaging should be included in these information sources.



6. Criteria of Insurance and Land Ownership Requirements

A. Insurance

- i. Trail organization should provide a copy of their “certificate of insurance” to the Regional Trail Network Lead (see **section 8.e**) and any community or organization looking to promote the trail.
- ii. In accordance with Hike Ontario/Ontario Trails Council’s standard, it is recommended that all promoted trails have a \$5-Million-dollar Commercial General Liability Insurance listing trail managers and landowners; and \$2-million-dollar coverage for directors and officers.
- iii. For more information, visit the Ontario Trail Council’s page here - <https://www.ontariotrails.on.ca/index.php?url=trail-services/insurance-for-trails>



Criteria of Insurance and Land Ownership Requirements (cont'd)

B. Land Use Permission

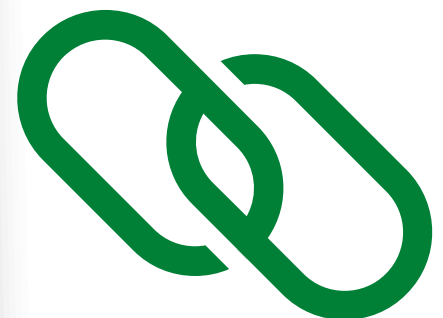
- i. Trail organisations provide the Regional Trail Network Lead with affirmation that they have permission from all landowners, over whose land the trail(s) pass(es), to use property for the trail(s), e.g., lease, licence, letter.
- ii. Trail organisations are responsible for obtaining landowner permission/approval prior to undertaking activities such as construction, remediation, maintenance, and signage projects. Proof of such permission/approval may be requested by the Regional Trail Network Lead.
- iii. Responsibility for notifying any licensed or registered crown land users adjacent to the trail property, e.g., trappers, outfitters, would rest with OMNRF and OMECP.



II. Market Ready Trail Creation, Wayfinding and Sustainable Maintenance Pathways

7. Market-ready and Potential Trail Linkages with Communities and Businesses

Currently, few linkages exist between businesses and trails within the region. In many cases, the capacity exists already but the connections have not been made. This may require coordination between businesses and trails groups through the Regional Tourism Coordinator's office, community EDOs, or the Regional Trail Network Lead. These efforts may require explanation of the mutual benefits to the business, trail, and regional economy through education and sharing of success models in other regions. The following linkages either exist and are ready for further promotion, or merit further consideration/exploration as regional tourism products.



Market Ready Trail Creation, Wayfinding and Sustainable Maintenance Pathways

Market-ready and Potential Trail Linkages with Communities and Businesses (cont'd)

A. Trail Shuttles

- i.** Casque Isles Trail: Currently, the Casque Isles Trail is offering a shuttle service for pick-up or drop off at any of the 10 access points. Arrangements can be made by contacting Casque Isles Trail Group via contact information provided on all web and print material.
- ii.** Epic Adventures based out of Nipigon offers shuttle service for pick up or drop off at both trail heads on the Nipigon River Recreation Trail.
- iii.** S.A.N.D. has the local capacity and has been rumored to be offering shuttle services for paddlers and hikers. This should be confirmed.
- iv.** North Shore Adventures currently operates a water shuttle, servicing sections of the Pukaskwa Park Lake Superior Coastal Trail, as well as the Group of Seven Trail in Marathon.



Market-ready and Potential Trail Linkages with Communities and Businesses (cont'd)

B. Trail Lunches/Picnic

- i. The "Superior Picnics" program was developed and piloted in 2021, through the implementation of the culinary strategy, "Celebrating Food and Drink Around Lake Superior's North Shore". The program brings together the outdoors and local food, which is the underlying theme throughout the culinary strategy. Superior Picnics incorporates picnic specials with a local component, available for purchase from participating local restaurants/food operators. Those that purchase the specials are encouraged to enjoy them at identified Superior Picnics spots. In 2022, the program was expanded to include branded "Superior Picnics" accessible picnic tables in seven communities along the north shore of Lake Superior. The program is marketed through the Superior Country website and is promoted through distribution of the Top of Superior Hiking Trails guide that is available throughout the region.



- ii. Aside from the Superior Picnics program, multiple restaurants and grocery stores do offer sandwiches and other "take-out" options. This should be pursued and promoted regionally, possibly by the Regional Tourism Coordinator, and/or integrated into the Superior Picnics program, or as an objective of a regional trails committee.



Market Ready Trail Creation, Wayfinding and Sustainable Maintenance Pathways

Market-ready and Potential Trail Linkages with Communities and Businesses (cont'd)

C. Guided/Interpretive Hikes

- i. Blaq Bear Eco Adventure Routes (BBEAR), based in the Algoma Region, is currently offering guided hikes along the Group of Seven trail. BBEAR is a Travel Industry Council of Ontario (TICO) registered packaging/guiding service specializing in trail experiences. Follow-up with BBEAR may offer insight on the challenges, opportunities, and interest in guided hiking within the region.
- ii. Thunder Bay based Outdoor Skills and Thrills offers guided hikes, with optional equipment rental, within Sleeping Giant Provincial Park. Outdoor Skills and Thrills is primarily a rock-climbing guide/outfitter for the region, but has significant experience with trails (required for access to climbing locations). Follow-up with Outdoor Skills and Thrills may offer insight on the challenges, opportunities, and interest in guided hiking within the region.
- iii. The Casque Isles Trail Group has Hike Leader certified guides amongst its membership. In the past, they have led guided hikes through segments of the trail. With verification that they are liability covered (proper insurance and first aid certification), these guided hikes could be promoted and used to gauge interest in guided hike experiences for the region. If promotion yields interest (social media activity/interaction), a regularly offered paid product could generate income for the NFP trail group or other private businesses.



Market Ready Trail Creation, Wayfinding and Sustainable Maintenance Pathways

Market-ready and Potential Trail Linkages with Communities and Businesses (cont'd)

Guided/Interpretive Hikes cont.

- iv. Pukaskwa National Park offers regular interpretive nature and cultural history themed guided hikes along their trail network. Changes to their programming are coming over the next few years, with possible expansion to Indigenous partner lead cultural hikes and the possibility of dark sky related night hikes. Follow-up discussion with Pukaskwa National Park staff may offer a better understanding of visitor interest and demographics for guided interpretive hikes, though participation in these hikes is likely to be a secondary activity to visitors primarily there for camping/travel. Sleeping Giant Provincial Park also offer guided interpretive hikes, similar to Pukaskwa, and similar follow-up could be used to understand this market, though the motivation/primary interest of attendees is likely the same.

- v. Visitor interest in genuine Indigenous experiences is growing and has proven successful in other regions*. Though none currently exist in this region, it should be noted that there have been expressions of interest from local First Nations members towards offering guided cultural interpretative hikes. Work with local First Nations explaining the economic benefit, potential for cultural education in line with Truth and Reconciliation efforts, while assessing capacity gaps may prove beneficial to both the regional trail offering and First Nations community members. Potential may exist to duplicate this effort with regional Métis communities.



*see Great Spirit Circle Trail

www.indigenousexperienceontario.ca/listing/great-spirit-circle-trail

Market Ready Trail Creation, Wayfinding and Sustainable Maintenance Pathways

Market-ready and Potential Trail Linkages with Communities and Businesses (cont'd)

D. Hike/Paddle

- i. Casque Isles Trail's route, based near/on the Lake Superior shoreline, between Terrace Bay and Rosspport, could offer an interesting hike and paddle back experience for visitors. Casque Isles Trail hosts multiple shoreline campsites of its own and the Rainbow Falls Rosspport campground's campsites could be added to this route. This experience could be coordinated by local paddling outfitters.
- ii. Pukaskwa National Park's Coastal Trail offers multiple shoreline (or adjacent) campsites that could facilitate a hike/paddle experience. The current water shuttle, offered by North Shore Adventures, could serve the role of shuttling kayaks to any visitors interested in this product.
- iii. Sleeping Giant Provincial Park has multiple options for a hike/paddle product. Primarily, the Kabeyun Trail would offer a stunning coastal hike/paddle option for interested visitors. Due to the overlapping network of trails accessing multiple sections of the shoreline and crossing the peninsula, hike/paddle products of various lengths could be created. The growing presence of charter vessels operating in the region (Sail Superior and Archie's Charters) could allow water taxi service for Kayaks. Such a Nice Day, a local paddle guide/outfitter may be a strong option to facilitate this product.



Market-ready and Potential Trail Linkages with Communities and Businesses (cont'd)

Hike/Paddle cont.

- iv. Though there are currently no paddle outfitters in either community, the Nipigon River Recreation Trail is ideally located between the communities of Nipigon and Red Rock, along the Nipigon River. Considering the trail's 10.1km distance, and river current, this product could be advertised as an exciting "day trip".

Work with Red Rock Indian Band (voyageur canoe), existing outfitters (such as Nipigon River Adventures), or through communities actively promoting the business opportunity would be required to create this potential product. With proper Indigenous community engagement/participation, this product could include interpretation of the Nipigon River Pictograph site.



8. Recommendations for Trail Sustainability (gaps and risks identified)

A. Volunteer recruitment/sustainability

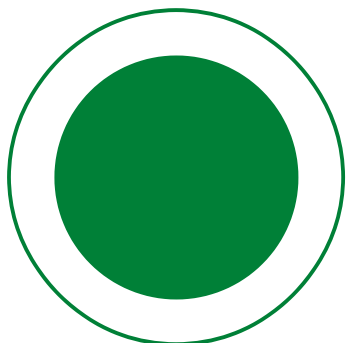
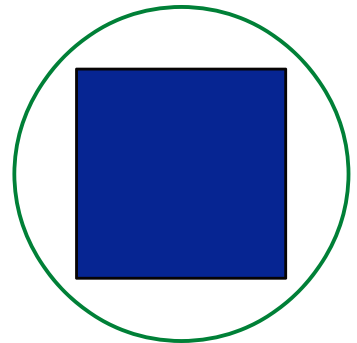
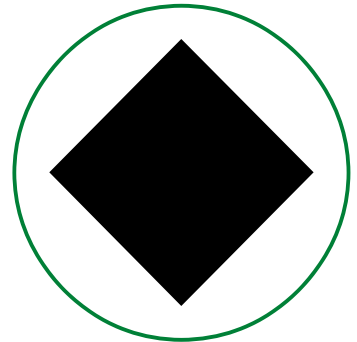
- i.** The North Shore of Lake Superior is suffering from declining volunteer levels. Typical trail manager and trail volunteer ages for the region fall within the Baby Boomer demographic (born 1946-1965). With sequentially lower volunteer participation for each younger demographic.
- ii.** A volunteer recruitment/retention strategy is required; and may be the largest threat to the regional trail offer. Most active trail volunteers and trail managers will likely “retire” from their roles within the next 10 years.
- iii.** Some success has been found, both in the region and beyond, through partnership with local high school outdoor recreation and other classes. Even locally, this class coordinated efforts have yielded student volunteers willing to continue volunteering beyond the class requirements. This strategy should be pursued further, throughout the region.
- iv.** Research is required to identify and action trail volunteer recruitment/retention strategies that have proven successful in other districts.



Recommendations for Trail Sustainability (gaps and risks identified)

B. Lack of Diversity of Trail Classification within Regional Trail Offering

- i. Most trails within the region are classified as “Difficult” (Type 3 Trail).
- ii. Difficult trail, though sought out by physically active and younger trail users, is less likely to appeal to younger families, inexperienced hikers, or older visitors.
- iii. Efforts have been made to remediate shorter (0-2km) sections of local trails to an “Intermediate” (type 2) classification, when an easily accessible parking facility and desirable positive control point (look out) are in proximity.
- iv. Diversification of classification difficulty has proven successful, with these trails showing some of the highest usage levels throughout the region.
- v. This strategy could be further expanded, especially in trails that meet the criteria described above in point iii. that are in close proximity to a community.
- vi. Diversification of trail classification would bolster regional appeal for visitors of younger family and older travellers, which could be promoted through existing targeted tourism promotion.



Market Ready Trail Creation, Wayfinding and Sustainable Maintenance Pathways

Recommendations for Trail Sustainability (gaps and risks identified)

C. Reliable Funding

- i.** Due to the decline in trail volunteer participation, lack of variety in levels of trail classification difficulty (vast majority are difficult, with few intermediate and even less that are easy), aging trail infrastructure, and trail tread remediation (as a result of the original design not conforming to sustainable trail construction practices) further funding towards trails will be required over the coming years.
- ii.** Coordinated support from communities, both as financial contributors and proponents of trail funding applications, would offer a reliable source of income.
- iii.** Having a reliable source of income would allow for strategic planning and systematic improvement of the regional trail offer based on cost/benefit.
- iv.** This effort could be coordinated through a regional trails committee, comprising of community representatives and trail managers committed to supporting the regional trail offering.



Market Ready Trail Creation, Wayfinding and Sustainable Maintenance Pathways

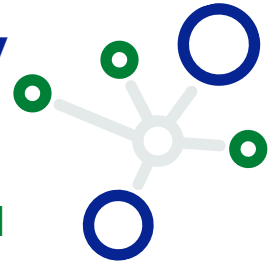
Recommendations for Trail Sustainability (gaps and risks identified)

D. Sustainable Trail Design practices used for all construction/remediation

- i. Trails originally designed without the use of sustainable construction design practices are far more likely to require repeated remediation on the same section to repair such things as wet spots and damage from erosion. This work is time consuming, costly, and can pose risk to both the trail/ecology such as visitors widening a trail to walk around a wet spot and visitor safety issues including steep sections and washouts.
- ii. Trail groups should be made aware of available resources from International Mountain Biking Association, National Forest Service, and publicly available Parks Canada documents. They'd also benefit from training in sustainable trail construction/design.
- iii. All future construction or remediation of regional trails should follow sustainable trail construction design practices to reduce further cost, effort, and risk. <https://imbacanada.com/designing-and-building-sustainable-trails/>



Recommendations for Trail Sustainability (gaps and risks identified)



E. Establishment of a Regional Trail Network and Lead

- i.** A regional trail network, with participation by all trails groups and communities with stake in trail tourism should be created.
- ii.** Appointment of a Regional Trail Network Lead (person or organization) is recommended. This position would organize and oversee trails listings, data collection, information sharing, and meetings.
- iii.** Would allow regional branding of trail product.
- iv.** Should focus primarily on development of a regional trails strategic plan.
- v.** Would allow regional prioritization of product development, maintenance, and promotion.
- vi.** Could be organizationally structured to be eligible to act as an applicant for federal, provincial, and private tourism funding opportunities.
- vii.** Could act as a centralized recipient and holder of trail data (GPS information, trail media/signage templates, land use permission/insurance documentation).
- viii.** Could act as the proponent/manager of online market ready trails listings.
- ix.** Could hold standardized plans for trail infrastructure types throughout the regional trail offering.



Market Ready Trail Creation, Wayfinding and Sustainable Maintenance Pathways

Recommendations for Trail Sustainability (gaps and risks identified)

F. Land use permission – Private landholder information package

- i. Many regional trails are located, in part, within privately owned property.
- ii. Growing perception of liability, potential for property damage, growing ATV trespass on trails/property, and risk of land sale to new owners are all factors that threaten many of the regional trails.
- iii. A package should be created to help trail managers communicate the protections for private landowners listed within the Ontario Trails Act and the regional benefits of trails. This may assist in ensuring the continuity of many of the regional trails and assist trail managers in the creation/adoption of new trails. Ontario Trails Council has a summary of the document (Ontario Trails – Viewpoints and Information on the Ontario Trails Act 2015) that can be reviewed at the following link.

<https://www.ontariotrails.on.ca/assets/files/pdf/OTCC/Trails%20Act%20Trailhead%202015.pdf>

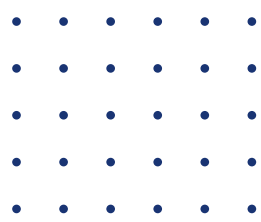
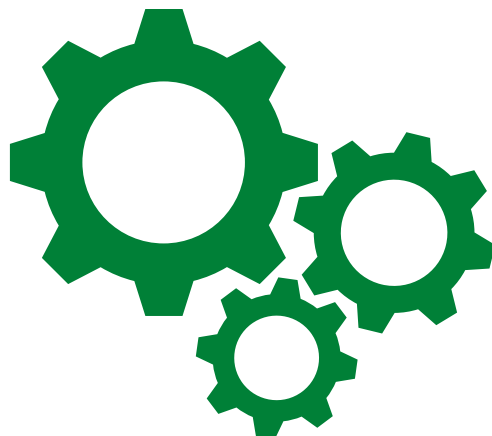


Market Ready Trail Creation, Wayfinding and Sustainable Maintenance Pathways

Recommendations for Trail Sustainability (gaps and risks identified)

G. Infrastructure replacement/maintenance plan

- i.** Some regional trails rely on infrastructure, such as stairs and bridges, for continuation of trail corridor.
- ii.** Trail infrastructure requires inspection, maintenance, and eventual replacement.
- iii.** To ensure sustainability, a plan is required for each trail. Such plans would include human and financial resources needed, schedules for inspection, maintenance, and eventual replacement of existing trails infrastructure.
- iv.** Partnerships should be explored between communities'/trail managers and the Provincial Youth Stewardship Rangers Programs, currently managed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. With advanced notice and communities advocating for trails maintenance/remediation as priority projects, trail work could be included in Youth Stewardship Ranger work plans.



Market Ready Trail Creation, Wayfinding and Sustainable Maintenance Pathways

Recommendations for Trail Sustainability (gaps and risks identified)

H. Trails Wayfinding Strategy (3 tier decision making approach)

i. 3 tier decision making approach strategy:

Short: Highway Signage at trail head intersections with HWY 17.

Mid: Trails promotional material at “overnight stay” locations 1-3 days travel from the region.

Long: Trail promotion through existing tourism trip planning sources (Circle Tour, Cross Canada RV Promotional Products, Destination Canada).



ii. Raising awareness of regional trails should be a key priority.

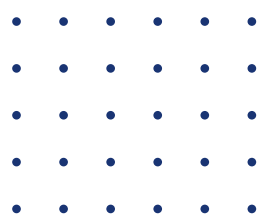
iii. From the RTO 13c 2019 visitor statistics (weighted statistics from smaller sample size), 121,774 visitors of a projected 1,249,991 total visitors to the region engaged in hiking in 2019.



iv. Regional trails did not see full benefit (# of visiting hikers) possible from this figure, despite many of these visitors driving past regional communities along Hwy 17.



v. Increases in trail use, through building awareness of regional trails, could be achieved through long, mid, short-term notification, allowing adequate decision-making time to engage in a regional trails experience.



9. Best Practices and Recommendations in Volunteer Sustainability and Attraction

Attraction and retention of volunteers is a continuing challenge for all non-profits. The following recommendations could be completed by regional trails managing organizations. Many will require broader support from trail vested communities, the Regional Trails Network (lead), the Regional Tourism Coordinator, and/or other trails tourism aligned entities.

Suggestions for **attracting** volunteers to help with trails:

A. Prepare a Trail Volunteer Recruitment “best practices” reference tool for trail mangers.

This tool could include the following:

- i. Create a list of tasks that are required of volunteers.
- ii. Make a list of people in the community that know avid trail users. People are more willing to help if they are passionate about the cause.
- iii. Approach potential volunteers one-on-one. When asking someone directly, they are more likely to help.
- iv. Before approaching a potential volunteer, be prepared with the ask. Ensure the role aligns with their skills and abilities:
 - What are they being asked to do?
 - What is the time commitment?
 - How often will they be needed?
 - Are they able to complete the tasks asked of them?
- v. Have interview questions prepared for potential volunteers to establish their skills, abilities, and interests. Volunteers can then be better matched to the required roles.



Market Ready Trail Creation, Wayfinding and Sustainable Maintenance Pathways

Best Practices and Recommendations in Volunteer Sustainability and Attraction

B. Look to establish connections with regional high schools and post-secondary schools (relevant programs or student associations)

- i. Do some outreach at local high schools. Ontario boards require that secondary students complete a certain amount of volunteer hours to graduate.
- ii. Multiple Outdoor Recreation/Conservation programs exist in regional High Schools and Post-Secondary institutions. Coordination with these programs (and investigation into liability limitations) could result in class participation in projects and/or individual student engagement.

C. Look to establish connections between regional trail network and local businesses, especially with those who stand to benefit from trail users (Restaurants, outdoor recreation shops, accommodations).

- i. Awareness material (fact sheets, spending statistics, distance from trail to business listings...) needed to demonstrate benefit of trail users to business.
- ii. Include call to actions on trails, directing users to participating businesses. Strategy required to ensure trail users communicate with participating business that they became aware of business/support business due to trail visitation/social media (ie: discount for “selfie” at trailhead/lookout).
- iii. Set up an “adopt a trail” program for local businesses and organizations. A section of trail can be maintained/cleaned/inspected by a group once or twice per year as required. Ensure the business/organization is recognized on signage and on your website/social media.
- iv. “Adopt a Trail” program could also involve financial support/sponsorship, as donating time/labor may be difficult/impossible.



Market Ready Trail Creation, Wayfinding and Sustainable Maintenance Pathways

Best Practices and Recommendations in Volunteer Sustainability and Attraction

D. Trail volunteer recruitment/awareness material creation (posters, digital posters, trail signs).

- i.** To be distributed to and promoted by local businesses (especially within locally owned outdoor recreation shops) and public spaces (townships).
- ii.** To be used by trail vested communities through social media channels.
- iii.** Identify local outdoor recreation aligned “social media influencers” and ask for assistance raising awareness (could share/post digital poster and/or promote importance of volunteerism/support).
- iv.** Place along trail to raise awareness.

E. Trail maintenance event such as a BBQ has proven to be a successful strategy to both recruit and retain trail volunteers, as well as increase participation in trails maintenance/inspections.

- i.** Early day maintenance, followed by food and refreshments at a designated location.
- ii.** Encourage current volunteers “bring a friend”.



Market Ready Trail Creation, Wayfinding and Sustainable Maintenance Pathways

Best Practices and recommendations in Volunteer Sustainability and Attraction

Suggestions for **retaining** volunteers:

F. Prepare a Trail Volunteer Retention “best practices” reference tool for trail managers. This tool could include the following:

- i.** Ensure your volunteers have proper training, with safety always being top of mind.
- ii.** Be organized. Ensure you have everything you need to complete the task at hand and have allowed a realistic time frame to complete a task. If you estimate that a trail maintenance session will take three hours, make sure you stop after three hours. Positive experiences will help retain volunteers.
- iii.** Communicate properly. Ensure that you have up to date contact information for all volunteers. If there is a change of plans, ensure volunteers are notified as soon as possible.
- iv.** Receive input from volunteers. Volunteers who feel that their input is welcomed and valued are more likely to remain. You may not always follow through with their recommendations, but it is important to consider their opinions.
- v.** Share the chain of command. For sustainability purposes, it is best not to always hold the reins tight when running a volunteer group. Giving other people leadership roles makes them feel valued and gives you options for succession planning.
- vi.** Thank your volunteers. Whether it's with a free meal after a maintenance session or a free t-shirt, a small gesture goes a long way in showing your volunteers gratitude for their efforts.



Market Ready Trail Creation, Wayfinding and Sustainable Maintenance Pathways

Best Practices and recommendations in Volunteer Sustainability and Attraction

G. Trail Volunteer Training

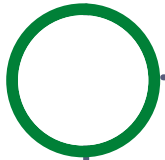
With support from trails vested communities/organizations, funding applications for trail maintenance/construction capacity building could help to bolster both the safety, capacity, and retention of local trail volunteers.

- i. This effort could also reduce further trail costs, reducing/removing the need for external trail maintenance/construction contractors for some projects.

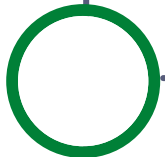


North Shore Recreational Trails

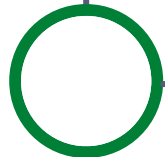
Market Readiness Checklist



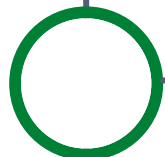
Trail Classification: It is recommended that trails are properly classified according to the Parks Canada Trail Classification System.



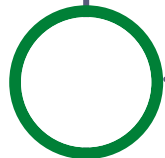
Land Use Permission: Permission granted by public and private landowners for the entirety of the trail.



Active Trail Management: Trail is managed by an active volunteer committee or community representatives.



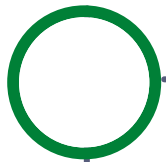
Maintenance/Inspection: It is recommended that trails are inspected and maintained according to the intervals described in the Parks Canada Trail Classification System.



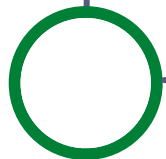
Signage: It is recommended that trailhead sign and route markers follow the standards described in the Parks Canada Trail Classification System. Trailhead sign clearly describes hazards, conditions, distance, and provides visitor safety information.



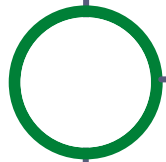
Market Readiness Checklist



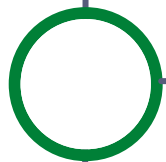
Accurate Mapping/GPS Data: Accurate GPS data exists for the trail. This information is used in all promotional material and signage for the trail.



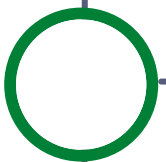
Insurance: Trail managers hold insurance coverage meeting/exceeding Hike Ontario's insurance standards.
<https://hikeontario.com/programs/insurance/>



Points of Interest: Trail offers rewarding experience (lookout(s), waterfalls, scenic portions, interpretive signage) meeting/exceeding the effort to reach them.



Online Presence: Actively updated online presence (Website or social media page) for the trail, where visitors can get up-to-date information about the trail and can contact a trail representative for questions/comments about the trail.



[OPTIONAL] Connection/Support from Municipality(ies): Trail managers are partnered with a regional municipality for both promotion and support of trail. This is a key factor in sustainability of a trail.



PARKS CANADA TRAIL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Trail Type Classification (for Asset, Resource Conservation, and Visitor Experience Management)

General Description and Technical Details				
Element / Trail Type	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	TYPE 3	TYPE 4
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paved or hard packed surfaced double track trail, all weather use, with no obstacles in surface. Use compacted crushed rock, mineral soil, asphalt or chip-seal trail surface. Minimum trail width of 1.5 metres. Provide interpretive and directional signs, benches, and viewing areas where appropriate. Machine- or hand-built and maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural surfaced packed single track trail or double track trail. Use natural mineral soils or rock for surfacing or native material from site. May be a gravel surface. Minimum trail width of one metre. Provide interpretive and directional signs, benches, viewing areas where appropriate. Machine- or hand-built and maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural surface single track trail. Trail tread may be constructed or established by clearing a corridor and marking the route. Whenever possible use natural native material from site. Minimum trail width of 0.25 metre. Provide minimal signage. Hand-built and maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No construction. Suggested trail route. Trail tread may consist of wildlife paths or any wet area. Provide minimal or no signage or facilities. Not maintained.
Park Zone (Applies to National Parks only)	Zone II, IV, and V (Special Environment, Outdoor Recreation, and Park Services)	Zone II, III, IV, V (Wilderness, Natural Environment, Outdoor Recreation and Park Services)	Zone II, III, IV, V (Wilderness, Natural Environment, Outdoor Recreation and Park Services)	Zone I, II, III, and IV (Special Preservation, Wilderness, Natural Environment, and Outdoor Recreation)
Typical Visitor Type	Suitable for all visitors including those with no trail experience. Visitor may be provided for trail or may not be provided proper equipment and related.	Suitable for most visitors with some basic trail experience who are generally provided proper equipment and related.	Suitable for visitors who have trail experience and are provided proper equipment and related.	Suitable for visitors who have exceptional trail and navigation experience and are well provided proper equipment and related.
Trail Rating	Easy or Moderate	Easy, Moderate, or Difficult	Moderate, Difficult or Rugged	Difficult or Rugged
Image				
	Crushed rock or natural mineral soil surface	Crushed rock or natural mineral soil surface	Natural mineral soil surface	Suggested route
Distance (km/mi)	Typical distance of trail does not exceed 40 km. In certain cases a Type 1 trail may exceed 40 km. Flat to gently rolling.	Typical distance of trail does not exceed 20 km. In certain cases a Type 2 trail may exceed 20 km. Gently rolling with short steep sections.	May exceed 20 km.	N/A
Trail Profile (General description and Special elevation gain)	0 - 100 metres May be greater in certain situations.	0 - 1,000 metres	Rolling with steep sections that may continue for long periods. 0 - 1,000+ metres	N/A
Trail Surface (Material Type and Typical Average Width)	Paved or surfaced • Hard packed and stable	Surfaced or natural • Fine and stable	Natural • May be loose in areas	N/A
Quality of Marking (General Signage and Interpretive Provided) Obstacles or Stairs	Trailhead information, interpretive panels, view markers, trail orientation maps. • Maximum information provided. Few or no obstacles, no stairs or minimal use of stairs.	Basic trailhead information, view markers, and trail orientation maps. • Moderate information provided. Intrusive obstacles, stairs may be present.	Basic trail head information and minimal view markers, or no signage provided. • Minimal or no information provided. Obstacles common, stairs may be present.	N/A
Water Facilities	Parking lot, washroom, bridges, benches • Maximum visitor facilities	Parking lot, outdoor toilet, bridges • Moderate water facilities.	Bridges or other water crossing including fording • Minimal water facilities	N/A • No visitor facilities
Level of Use	High to Very High	Moderate to High	Low to Moderate	Low

Level of Service, Visitor Safety and Visitor Experience Tools

Element / Trail Type	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	TYPE 3	TYPE 4
Level of Service	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
Inspection	Weekly/monthly or upon visitor comment	Seasonal or as required upon visitor comment	Yearly or as required upon visitor comment	N/A
Detailed Clearing	As required	As required / seasonal	Yearly	N/A
Infrastructure	Main bridge, boardwalk, viewing platform	Moderate bridge, boardwalk, viewing platform	Low or none (bridge, boardwalk)	N/A
Trail Materials and Surface Preparation	Asphalt, concrete or crushed rock • Repair cracks, fill holes, repack surface, create drainage, clear corridor	Crushed rock or natural mineral soil and rock • Fill holes, repack surface, create drainage, clear corridor	Natural mineral soil and rock or natural ground cover • Create drainage, clear corridor	N/A
Equipment	ATV, mechanized equipment, horse, hand or bicycle	ATV, mechanized equipment, horse, hand or bicycle	Non-motorized, horse, hand or bicycle	N/A
Visitor Education	Visitor may not understand all risks and may not be self-reliant in the event of an incident.	Visitor may have a general understanding of some risks and may be partially self-reliant in the event of an incident.	Visitor has an understanding of most risks and may be self-reliant in the event of an incident.	Visitor has an understanding of risks and will be self-reliant in the event of an incident.
Risk Mitigation	Maximum effort made to mitigate risk.	Moderate effort made to mitigate risk.	Low effort made to mitigate risk.	Low to little effort made to mitigate risk.
Risk Identification (Outlets and Viewings)	High detailed explanation of risk - typically provided at trailhead, on maps and at areas of risk along the trail.	Moderate detailed explanation of risk - only significant risks identified. Information typically provided at trailhead and at areas along the trail.	Low detailed explanation of risk - only site-specific or annual risks. Information typically provided at trailhead.	Low detailed explanation of risk - only site-specific or annual risks. Information typically provided at trailhead.
Risk Inspection	Weekly/monthly or upon visitor comment. Risk inspection can occur during level of service inspection.	Seasonal or as required upon visitor comment. Risk inspection can occur during level of service inspection.	Yearly or as required upon visitor comment. Risk inspection can occur during level of service inspection.	N/A
Targeted Visitor	Family-friendly, suitable for all visitors looking for an easy trail experience.	Suitable for most visitors who are generally active and have some basic trail experience.	Suitable for visitors who love trail experience and are active.	Suitable for visitors who have exceptional trail experience and are very active.
Enjoying the Trail	Example: This trail is an easy walk through a canopy forest and will bring you to a beautiful sand beach along Lake Superior.	Example: An enjoyable hike that will allow you to discover the animals of the boreal forest. Observe a beaver lodge, be on the lookout for a wide variety of songbirds and if you are lucky, you might catch a glimpse of some moose!	Example: A challenging trail that winds through a canopy of ferns from valley bottoms to scenic hill tops. Enjoy lunch while taking in some scenic views, be on the lookout for whales and seals.	Example: A challenging and spectacular route that the park recommends for experienced backcountry travelers. Route-finding skills are essential since there are no trails or route markers to show the way. Weather in the mountains can also quickly reduce visibility.

PARKS CANADA TRAIL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Trail Rating Classification (for the Visitor)				
Element / Rating	EASY	MODERATE	DIFFICULT	POOR
Trail Rating Definitions	<p>Definition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for all visitors including those with no trail experience. Visitor may be prepared for trail or may not be prepared (proper equipment and water). • Well packed surface with no obstacles and minimal stairs. • Estimated time to complete the trail is no longer than two hours. • Little or no elevation gain or loss. <p>Symbol</p> 	<p>Definition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for most visitors who have some basic trail experience and are generally prepared (proper equipment and water). • Mostly stable surface with infrequent obstacles, stairs may be present. • Estimated time to complete the trail is no longer than two hours. • May experience moderate elevation gain with some short steep sections. <p>Symbol</p> 	<p>Definition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for visitors who have trail experience and are prepared (proper equipment and water). • Variety of surface types including non-established surface. • Estimated time to complete the trail may exceed five hours. • May experience major elevation gain with long steep sections. <p>Symbol</p> 	<p>Definition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for visitors who have exceptional trail and navigation experience and are well prepared (proper equipment and water). • Non-established trail with only a suggested trail route, not maintained. • Estimated time to complete ranges from 1 day to 14 days or longer. • May experience a variety of terrain including wet areas, loose rocks, exposure, and black bears. <p>Symbol</p> 
Rating Details	<p>Distance (return)</p> <p>0 - 5 km</p> <p>Trail Profile</p> <p>Flat to gently rolling</p> <p>Typical pavement type</p> <p>0 - 100 metres</p> <p>Trail Surface (material type and average width)</p> <p>Paved or surfaced</p> <p>• Hard packed</p> <p>Trail Crossing Points</p> <p>1.0 - 3.0 metres</p> <p>Quality of Marking (amount of signage and information provided)</p> <p>Minimal information provided</p> <p>Obstacles or Stairs</p> <p>Few or no obstacles, minimal use of stairs</p> <p>Visitor Facilities</p> <p>Parking lot, washrooms, bridges, benches</p> <p>• Maximum toilet facilities</p> <p>Recommended Experience Level or Service</p> <p>Little or no experience required</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Distance (return)</p> <p>0 - 15 km</p> <p>Trail Profile</p> <p>Gently rolling with short steep sections</p> <p>Typical pavement type</p> <p>100 - 500 metres</p> <p>Trail Surface (material type and average width)</p> <p>Surfaced or natural surface</p> <p>• Firm and stable</p> <p>Trail Crossing Points</p> <p>0.5 - 1.5 metres</p> <p>Quality of Marking (amount of signage and information provided)</p> <p>Basic trail head information, route markers, and trail orientation maps</p> <p>• Moderate information provided</p> <p>Obstacles or Stairs</p> <p>Infrequent obstacles, stairs may be present</p> <p>Visitor Facilities</p> <p>Parking lot, washrooms, toilet, bridges</p> <p>• Moderate toilet facilities</p> <p>Some experience recommended</p> <p>Moderate</p>	<p>Distance (return)</p> <p>0 - 15+ km</p> <p>Trail Profile</p> <p>Hilly with many steep sections that may continue for long periods</p> <p>Typical pavement type</p> <p>500+ metres</p> <p>Trail Surface (material type and average width)</p> <p>Natural surface</p> <p>• May be loose or may not exist</p> <p>Trail Crossing Points</p> <p>0 - 1.0 metres</p> <p>Quality of Marking (amount of signage and information provided)</p> <p>Basic trailhead information and minimal route markers, or no signage provided</p> <p>• Minimal or no information provided.</p> <p>Obstacles common, steep sections</p> <p>Visitor Facilities</p> <p>Washrooms or other water crossing including fording</p> <p>• Minimal toilet facilities</p> <p>Experience recommended</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>Distance (return)</p> <p>NA</p> <p>Trail Profile</p> <p>NA</p> <p>Typical pavement type</p> <p>NA</p> <p>Trail Surface (material type and average width)</p> <p>NA</p> <p>Trail Crossing Points</p> <p>NA</p> <p>Quality of Marking (amount of signage and information provided)</p> <p>NA</p> <p>Obstacles or Stairs</p> <p>NA</p> <p>Visitor Facilities</p> <p>• No toilet facilities</p> <p>NA</p> <p>NA</p>



TRAILHEAD SIGN EXAMPLE (FOR REFERENCE ONLY)



Trail Description

(25-30 words) Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nullam suscipit molestie tempor. Praesent vel luctus lectus, eget consectetur arcu. Fusce sed sodales augue vivamus pharetra.

Description du sentier

(25 à 30 mots) Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nullam suscipit molestie tempor. Praesent vel luctus lectus, eget consectetur arcu. Fusce sed sodales augue vivamus pharetra.

GENERAL ATTRIBUTES / ATTRIBUTS GÉNÉRAL

DISTANCE / DISTANCE 00.0 km / 00.0
DURATION / DURÉE 0-0 h / 00^{mn}
DIFFICULTY / DIFFICULTÉ Moderate / Modérée

ELEVATION / ÉLEVATION

START / DÉBUT 000 m
END / FIN 000 m
MINIMUM 000 m
MAXIMUM 000 m
CLIMB/DESCENT / MONTÉE/DÉVALÉE +000 m / -000 m



REGULATIONS / RÉGULATIONS

	Bikes yield to hikers.	Les vélos cèdent aux randonneurs.
	Dogs must be on leash.	Les chiens doivent être en laisse.
	Take only pictures, leave only footprints.	Prendre seulement des photos, ne laisser que des empreintes.

MARKET READY TRAILS IN THE REGION

(All trail listings provided by trail managing organization/community)

NEYS PROVINCIAL PARK, MARATHON



Dune Trail - 1.3 km loop (30 minutes), Easy

This short, self-guided interpretive trail acquaints you with the sand dune ecosystem of the park. As you walk along this short trail, take note of the delicate dune vegetation and then compare it with the plants of the boreal forest at the back of the loop.

Lookout Trail - 2 km (1 hour), Moderate

This trail takes you up onto scenic rocky highlands, overlooking Ashburton Bay and the broad expanse of Lake Superior. Along the way, the trail weaves through a myriad of habitats including thick spruce forests, a shaded creek valley, bare rocky exposures, and sandy dunes.

Under the Volcano Trail - 1 km return (1 hour), Difficult

Find the Under the Volcano trailhead where the Point Trail ends. Choose your own adventure along the rocky coastline with its unique geologic, glacial, and volcanic history. Rocks are slippery when wet. Sturdy shoes are recommended.

Hike back the way you came or carry on along the challenging Kopa Cove Trail. Plan your trip accordingly and hike within your abilities.

Point Trail - 1km, 2 km return (1 hour), Easy

The trail begins at Prisoner's Cove, curves along the shore, and ends at rocky Prisoner Point and a view of formidable Lake Superior. Notice the delicate plants that have made this inhospitable place their home. Rocks are slippery when wet. Sturdy shoes are recommended.

PUKASKWA NATIONAL PARK, MARATHON



Boardwalk Beach Trail

1.2km with 0.2km of boardwalk • 2m elevation gain/loss • 30-minute hike return from Visitor Centre. Accessible trail; boardwalk and stable gravel surfaces. Enjoy a boardwalk stroll to Pukaskwa's famous Horseshoe Bay and discover the delicate beauty of the nearby sand dunes. Experience a sunset at Horseshoe beach and embrace the sounds of the rolling waves.

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Hattie Cove Fire Walk via the Coastal Hiking Trail, Easy

0.7km • 2m elevation gain/loss • 20-minute hike return from Visitor Centre Natural surface; few tree roots. Wander through the 2012 Hattie Cove Prescribed Fire area and learn about the role of fire in a boreal ecosystem! Roughly one hectare in size, see for yourself how quickly regeneration occurs in the boreal forest.

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Beach Trail

2km • 5m elevation gain/loss • 1 hour hike return from Visitor Centre. Natural surface with sandy sections; frequent driftwood obstacles, Moderate. Meander along Pukaskwa's sandy, driftwood beaches that are nestled amongst Lake Superior's coves and harbours. Middle Beach is the perfect place to splash around or simply sit and play in the sand.

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Southern Headland Trail

2.2km • 15m elevation gain/loss • 1 hour 15-minute hike return from Visitor Centre Natural surface with built stairs; some obstacles, loose rock and tree roots, Moderate Experience the wild shore of an inland sea. This rugged trail juts into Lake Superior with views of Hattie Cove, Pulpwood Harbour, and Horseshoe Bay. Look for tiny arctic-alpine plants, lichens and other unique life forms shielded amongst the rock formations.



PUKASKWA NATIONAL PARK, MARATHON

Manito Miikana

2km • 17m elevation gain/loss • 1 hour hike return from Visitor Centre. Natural surface with built stairs; some obstacles, loose rocks and tree roots, Moderate. Want to slip away for a moment of peace and relaxation? Hike Manito Miikana, “the Spirit Trail.” Peek through a rocky ravine as you climb up for panoramic views of Lake Superior and the Pic River Dunes. Rest and enjoy the beauty from two viewing decks along the trail.

Bimose Kinoomagewnan

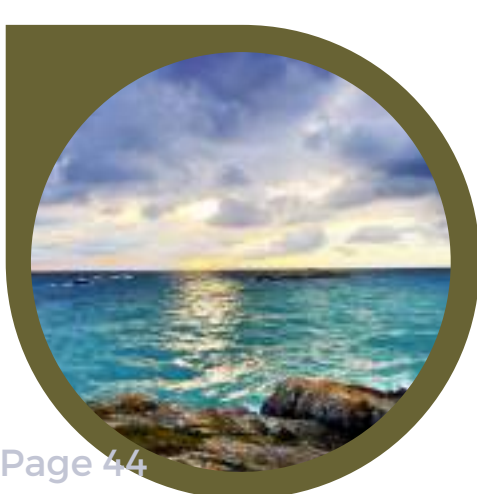
3.7km • 12m elevation gain/loss • 2-hour hike return from Visitor Centre. Natural surface with built stairs; some obstacles, loose rocks and tree roots, Moderate. Learn the Seven Grandfather Teachings from Ojibway elders and youth on Bimose Kinoomagewnan, the “Walk of Teachings”. Read elders’ stories about love, honesty, respect, wisdom, truth, humility, and bravery in local culture. See how the next generation understands these teachings through their accompanying artwork as you hike peacefully around Halfway Lake.

Coastal Hiking Trail - 60km, linear, Difficult

Get ready to experience the wildest hike on the wildest shore of all of the Great Lakes. Pukaskwa National Park’s 60 km Coastal Hiking Trail is an adventurer’s dream that offers a challenging but rewarding premiere Ontario wilderness experience. The trail climbs steep Lake Superior coastline, meanders through sandy and cobble stone beaches, and treks through rugged boreal forests. Visitors who are properly equipped for backpacking this difficult terrain will enjoy relaxing campsites, beautiful beaches and awe-inspiring views. The Coastal Hiking Trail is a part of the Trans-Canada Trail.

Mdaabii Miikna - Loop, 24km return, Difficult

Looking for a memorable backcountry weekend getaway? Mdaabii Miikna, ‘go to the shore trail’ in Anishinaabemowin, delivers everything that Pukaskwa has to offer in a fraction of the time it takes to complete the Coastal Hiking Trail! This loop trail is accessed south of Playter Harbour and north of the White River Suspension Bridge via the Coastal Hiking Trail. It features serene boreal forest and the impressive Lake Superior coastline at Picture Rock Harbour.



ROSSPORT, SCHREIBER, TERRACE BAY

Rosspport Coastal Trail – 1.5km, linear, Difficult

A true coastal trail with plenty of opportunities to dip your feet in Superior. It is mainly flat but does have some stretches crossing uneven surfaces such as a small creek and rocky shoreline. Enjoy breathtaking views of Lake Superior, beautiful beaches, and scenery of some of the many islands of the Rosspport archipelago. *Directions: Starting at the east end of Rosspport Village at Wardrobe Park, the trail meanders east along the shore of Lake Superior to end at the Roadside Park Rest Area just east of Rosspport on Hwy 17. Follow the white painted boot prints to stay on track.*

The Casque Isles Trail - 53km, linear, Difficult

(Day hike segments listed on the following page)

The Casque Isles Trail is an adventurer's dream come true, and then some—one of the top 10 best hikes in Ontario! This is the must-hike trail in Northwestern Ontario.

The trail weaves 53 km (33 miles) along the north shore of Lake Superior, highlighting some of the most stunning vistas of Lake Superior, and linking the communities of Terrace Bay, Schreiber and Rosspport together. You'll be swept away as you hike from one beautiful bay to the next.

Signed and groomed by the passionate volunteers of the Casques Isles Hiking Club, the Casque Isles Trail is an important section for both The Great Trail and the Voyageur Hiking Trail.



POPULAR DAY HIKE SEGMENTS OF THE CASQUE ISLES TRAIL

Mclean's - 14km, Difficult: Between Rossport's **A1** and Rainbow Falls Provincial Park's **A4** access points.

.....

Schreiber Channel - 13km, Difficult: Between Rainbow Falls Provincial Park's A4 and Schreiber Beach's A5 access point.

.....

Mt. Gwynne - 7km, Difficult: Between Schreiber Beach's A5 and Worthington Bay Road's A7 access points.

.....

Death Valley - 10km, Difficult: Between Worthington Bay Road's A7 and Cottage Road's A8 access points.

.....

Hydro Bay - 3km, Difficult: Between Cottage Road's A8 and Hydro Bay Road's A9 access points.

.....

Lyda Bay - 6km, Difficult: Between Hydro Bay Road's A9 and A10/A11 (Aguasabon Falls/Terrace Bay Beach) access points.



RAINBOW FALLS PROVINCIAL PARK

Rainbow Falls Trail - 1.1km, 2.2 km return, 2 hours, linear, Moderate

A series of stairs and platforms follow Rainbow Falls down to a sturdy bridge over the cascades. The trail then leaves the river and climbs to a lookout overlooking Lake Superior and Whitesand Lake. The trail ends on the second scenic lookout, at which point it continues onward as the Schreiber Channel Segment of the Casque Isles Hiking Trail.



Superior Trail - 1.1km, 2.2 km return, 2 hours, Difficult

This trail winds along the top of a granite ridge to a beautiful view of Lake Superior.



DORION, HURKETT, RED ROCK, NIPIGON

Hurkett Cove Trail – 2km, linear, Easy

Located within Hurkett Cove Conservation Area, this trail is a naturalist's treasure. Over 180 different bird species have been observed at this site, coined the "Pelee of the North." An easy, short walk with little elevation brings you through the forest, along the shores of Lake Superior's Black Bay to the rich marshland that draws so many of these birds during their migration. See songbirds along the trail, raptors overhead, and waterfowl and shorebirds in the Cove or along the Black Bay shore. A pavilion with picnic tables and displays can be found just north of the parking lot.

Ouimet Canyon Trail - 1km, loop (with two lookout platforms), Moderate

Located within Hurkett Cove Conservation Area, this trail is a naturalist's treasure. Over 180 different bird species have been observed at this site, coined the "Pelee of the North." An easy, short walk with little elevation brings you through the forest, along the shores of Lake Superior's Black Bay to the rich marshland that draws so many of these birds during their migration. See songbirds along the trail, raptors overhead, and waterfowl and shorebirds in the Cove or along the Black Bay shore. A pavilion with picnic tables and displays can be found just north of the parking lot.

Deer Lake Mountain Trail – 6.6km, loop (with lookout spurs), Difficult

This is a wilderness recreation trail. The wooded trail gradually climbs to the top of a cuesta and circles the perimeter with incredible views in all directions before returning to the trailhead. Trail spurs to cliffs overlooking No Good Lake and Lofquist Lake are optional. A beaver dam must be crossed on the No Good Lake spur trail.

Red Rock Mountain Trail – 4.9km, loop, Difficult

Hike this scenic trail to enjoy spectacular panoramic vistas. This is a foot and bike path that runs along the crests and valleys of the Red Rock Mountain. This trail takes advantage of all sides of the mountain, offering nearly a full 360-degree view of the region and a variety of the area's stunning geological features. This trail provides stellar views of a variety of stunning features of this portion of Lake Superior and a great chance to sit back, relax and enjoy from any of the three platform lookouts.



MARKET READY TRAILS IN THE REGION

DORION, HURKETT, RED ROCK, NIPIGON

Nipigon River Recreation Trail – 10.1km, linear, Easy, Moderate, and Difficult segments

Experience the shoreline of the Nipigon River from Nipigon to Red Rock and along Nipigon Bay on Lake Superior, the world's largest freshwater lake. Suitable for ages 8 and up (depending on abilities) this is a well-maintained, rugged, wilderness recreation trail.

If you don't have much time, consider taking a shorter 40-minute (2.6 km return) hike starting at the Red Rock trailhead to the viewing platform at Lloyd's Lookout, then hike a few minutes further to relax in the Parks Canada red chairs. Or, start at the Nipigon Marina trailhead and hike 2-3 km of flat terrain along the edge of the Nipigon River. If you plan to hike the entire trail, it is recommended you start at the Red Rock Trailhead. Shuttle service is available in Nipigon, call 807-887-1008..



Clearwater Loop – 1km, loop, Easy

For those seeking a short outing close to town, the Clearwater Creek Loop is an ideal hike for all skill levels. Accessible from the Nipigon Marina, this short loop over flat terrain has multiple bird feeders and interpretive signs offering information about the species of trees you will find along the way. It is rare to take this walk without seeing signs of wildlife or getting a chance to spot various species of birds and small mammals. For those looking for a longer walk, the Clearwater Loop is also connected to the Nipigon River Recreation Trail, which will take you along the Nipigon River to either Sawmill Point, or all the way to the town of Red Rock.



DORION, HURKETT, RED ROCK, NIPIGON

Mazukama Falls - 3.1km loop, 6.7km with lookout spur, Difficult

This is a wilderness recreation trail. This day hike has been described as magical. The challenging Mazukama Falls Loop trail climbs steeply for 500 m and passes beside the many cascades and waterfalls of Mazukama Creek as it tumbles off the red rocks of the Kama Cliffs through huge old growth cedars. For those seeking a panoramic view of Nipigon Bay, take the steep climb up “The Stairway of the Saints” to the top of Kama Cliffs and hike to Wingtip Lookout, 250 m above the trailhead. Allow an additional 2 hrs to do this spur trail.



Kama Cliffs Trail – 7.3km, loop, Difficult

This trail mountain bike/hike trail is moderate difficulty with one section considered difficult. It offers some natural wonders that are sure to impress. As the name implies, this trail will bring you to the top of the Kama Cliffs, visible from Highway 17, overlooking Nipigon Bay and its many islands. This is one of the most ideal spots for a picnic, so be sure to give yourself enough time to sit back and enjoy the view from up top.



SLEEPING GIANT PROVINCIAL PARK

Burma Trail - 11.4 km, linear, Moderate

Great for bird watching and wildlife spotting, this trail between Marie Louise Lake Drive and Thunder Bay Lookout Road passes through stands of mature Red and White Pine, by the shores of small interior lakes, and over rocky outcrops. Bicycling is allowed on this trail.

Head Trail - 1.4 km , Difficult

This is a steep ascent to the head of the Giant and rewards hikers with spectacular views. Gardner Lake Trail - 4 km, return. Known for its moose viewing opportunities, this trail takes you down an old logging road to Gardner Lake.

Joe Creek Nature Trail - 1.6 km, return, Easy

This trail follows picturesque Joe Creek down a series of small waterfalls from Highway 587 to Lake Superior.

Kabeyun Trail - 36 km, Difficult

Ideal for overnight backpacking as well as shorter, day hikes, this scenic coastal trail starts at Thunder Bay Lookout, rounds the tip of the peninsula (the Sleeping Giant's feet) and ends at the trailhead at Highway 587. Beaches and coves offer respite along the route and Lake Superior is an ever deep blue presence. The section between the Sleeping Giant's feet and Lehtinen's Bay, twists, and turns over the boulders of a talus slope. This section is especially treacherous in wet weather. Bicycling is allowed on a section of this trail from the trailhead to Lehtinen's Bay.



SLEEPING GIANT PROVINCIAL PARK

Middlebrun Bay Trail and Finlay Bay Trail - 5.1 km, Easy

This hike takes you to a secluded sandy beach at Middlebrun Bay with a fen (wetland), full of plants that grow only in this type of habitat. An extension of the trail at the end of the beach leads to Finlay Bay.

.....

Pickerel Lake Trail - 11 km, Linear, Difficult

In the winter, this scenic trail passes through one of the park's impressive White Pine stands is part of the network of cross-country ski trails. You can join this trail at several locations, including the parking lot at Rita Lake. Bicycling is allowed on this trail.

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Piney Wood Hills Trail - 1.4 km , Linear, Moderate

Winding through open mixed forest into pine-forested hilly terrain, this trail ends at a viewpoint over Joeboy Lake.

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Plantain Lane Trail - 0.5 km , Linear, Easy

A section of the old abandoned Silver Islet Road takes you over a small bridge on Sibley Creek. The view from the bridge is one of the park's many treasures.

.....

Ravine Lake Trail - 1.5 km return, Loop, Moderate

This trail climbs steadily to two lookouts over Grassy Lake and the peninsula's south coast. It then travels down to the shore of Ravine Lake, returning through a shaded cedar grove.

.....

Sawbill Lake Trail - 2 km, Linear, Moderate

This trail, part of an old logging road, provides access to the Sawyer Bay Trail from the Marie Louise Lake Drive and includes one moderately steep hill. Bicycling is allowed on this trail.



SLEEPING GIANT PROVINCIAL PARK

Sawyer Bay Trail - 6 km, Linear, Moderate

This abandoned logging road leads to Sawyer Bay at the base of the Sleeping Giant. A number of hills provide views of the Giant and offer abundant wild berries in season. Bicycling is allowed on this trail.

Sibley Creek Trail - 1.7 km, 2.3 km return, Easy

Leading you through a mixed forest to a marsh and stream section of Sibley Creek, this trail is ideal for viewing forest ecosystems.

Sifting Lake Trail - 3.6 km Lollypop Loop, Moderate

You can visit the quiet shores of Sifting Lake on this trail.

Talus Lake Trail - 6 km, Linear, Difficult

Known for its seasonal wildlife viewing this rugged trail travels between the Sleeping Giant and Thunder Mountain, connecting the Kabeyun Trail with the Sawyer Bay Trail. It takes you past three secluded lakes, a sedge meadow, spectacular cliffs, talus slopes and a small waterfall. Be careful in wet weather.

Thunder Bay Bogs Trail - 0.5 km return, Easy

This trail traverses rocky terrain to the shore of a small, still lake. Ensure you include this hike in your visit to the Thunder Bay Lookout.

Twinpine Lake Trail - 4.4 km, Linear, Difficult

This trail connects the Burma Trail with the Kabeyun Trail and passes by picturesque Twinpine Lake. The section from the lake to the coast can often be wet, so be careful.



SLEEPING GIANT PROVINCIAL PARK

Top of the Giant Trail – 3.5 km, Linear, Difficult

This challenging 2.7 kilometre trail takes you to the top of the Sleeping Giant. To get to this trail hike the Kabeyun Trail past Tee Harbour to the Talus Lake Trail, continue north on the Talus Lake Trail to reach the Top of the Giant Trail. The return distance from the Kabeyun trailhead is approximately 22 kilometres. Once on top of the Giant the trail takes hikers to scenic lookouts on both east and west sides of the peninsula with spectacular views of Lake Superior. This hike should only be started by those in good physical condition. Bring water, sturdy hiking boots, warm clothing and a first aid kit.



Wildlife Habitat Trail - 2.4 km return, Moderate

Weaving through an area that has been altered to create habitat for moose, this trail offers plenty of opportunity to view wildlife.



Sea Lion Trail – 0.5 km from Kabeyun Trail, Moderate



This trail branches off the Kabeyun Trail at Perry Bay, 0.5 km from the Kabeyun trailhead. The trail has a difficult access over a rocky outcrop and passes a stony beach on Perry Bay. On-site interpretive signs explain the formation of the Sea Lion.

Regional Trail Offering as a Whole

Strengths

- i.** Lake Superior: Through attraction, or appeal while driving through.
- ii.** Landscape/Topography
- iii.** Existing Trails: (local built)
- iv.** Regional Tourism Coordinator
- v.** Community Support/Linkages
- vi.** Parks (Canada/Provincial)
- vii.** Trans Canada Trail
- viii.** Local Destination Marketing Organization: Superior Country DMO
- ix.** VTA (Insurance and guidance)

Weaknesses

- i.** Landscape/Topography: Costly to build intermediate/easy trails
- ii.** Lack of easy/intermediate trails
- iii.** Communication/safety: phone signal gaps
- iv.** HWY Directional Signage
- v.** Business Linkages
- vi.** Overnight Stay appeal/capacity
- vii.** Lack of “Destination Trails”
- viii.** Lack of Funding Support for Improvement
- ix.** Lack of accommodation
- x.** Volunteer Numbers/Activity Level
- xi.** Construction Quality
- xii.** Promotion
- xiii.** Sustainability through design
- xiv.** “Multi-Use” gaps (cycle, equine)



Regional Trail Offering as a Whole

Opportunities

- i.** Indigenous Experience Integration
- ii.** Trans Canada Trail
- iii.** Regional Trail Organization/Funding
- iv.** Cycle Trail
- v.** Business Partnerships (Packaging, guiding, tours, two-way promotion, Airbnb Experiences)
- vi.** Ontario Parks Partnerships for promotion (both local and “Gateway” parks 1-3 days travel away)
- vii.** Thunder Bay outdoor/hiking group support (capitalizing on recent popularity of trails beyond TBay boundaries)
- viii.** Ski trail promotion (3 products exist in the region: Karhu, Voyageur, Rainbow Falls)
- ix.** Volunteer participation/coordination for expansion of hiking season to include snowshoe maintenance at a promotable level

Threats

- i.** Volunteer Attrition
- ii.** Motorized Use
- iii.** Growing threat of trail injury liability
- iv.** Land use/owner interruption
- v.** Aging infrastructure/replacement or repair funding



APPENDIX F: Financial Benefits of Hiking Trails

Monthly Regional Revenue Generation Potential - Visitor vs. Resident user % range

OVERALL USERS	VISITORS	RANGE OF VISITOR EXPENSES PER MONTH	LOCAL EXPENSES PER MONTH	AVG. TOTAL PER MONTH
Users Per Month (Aug. & Sept. 2016)*	% of Visiting Users	AVERAGE VISITOR DAILY SPENDING(\$9.36CAD)***	NE Minnesota avg./Local, under 30 minutes travel, daily spending (\$6.44CAD)**	TOTAL (Avg. Visitor + Local)
750	10%	\$4,452.00	\$4,347.00	\$8,799
750	20%	\$8,904	\$3,864	\$12,768
750	30%	\$13,356.00	\$3,381.00	\$16,737
750	40%	\$17,808	\$2,898	\$20,706
750	50%	\$22,260.00	\$2,415.00	\$24,675
750	60%	\$26,712	\$1,932	\$28,644
750	70%	\$31,164.00	\$1,449.00	\$32,613
750	80%	\$35,616	\$966	\$36,582

* Based on July-September 2016 IR trail counter results for Nipigon River Recreation Trail and Deer Lake Mountain Trail. Parks Canada.

**Based on Economic Impact of Recreational Trail Use, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

***Based on average \$59.36 Daily Spending Average expense using 2014 Regional Tourism Profiles, Pleasure as Main Reason for Travel Daily Average Expense, RTO 13c, MTCS and the Economic Impact of Recreational Trail Use, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (2009)



In addition to investigating eligibility, deadlines, etc. for the resources listed below, it is recommended that trails organizations/communities regularly check the websites of the following websites for additional “one-time” opportunities: FedNor, NOHFC, Trans Canada Trails, Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries.

Rural Economic Development Fund

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/rural-economic-development-program>

Federal- Active Transportation Fund

<https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/trans/applicant-guide-demandeur-eng.html>

Ontario Trillium Foundation

<https://www.otf.ca/>

Canada Summer Jobs Program

This federal program aims to support young people, particularly those from communities facing barriers to employment, as they transition into the labour market. 15-30 age range. 100% funding for Not-For Profits. Deadline is normally January of each calendar year.

Destination Northern Ontario

Through their wayfinding program, can contribute 50 cent dollars for signage, print/digital guides, etc. DNO’s website also provides resources, research documents (that are helpful to attach to funding applications if applicable) and training opportunities.

www.destinationnorthernontario.ca

