

Ministry of Tourism and Culture: Promoting our Beaches and Coasts

Presentation to
the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Workshop on April 15, 2010



Discovering Ontario: A Report on the Future of Tourism

“Water defines us, surrounding us on every border from the mighty St Lawrence River to the vast Great Lakes...Water is at the heart of Ontario’s tourism industry.”

~ Greg Sorbara, Chair, Ontario Tourism
Competitiveness Study



Importance of the Great Lakes

- Research conducted for the *Discovering Ontario* report found that the outdoors is one of Ontario's greatest tourism assets and holds enormous growth potential.
- The Great Lakes system (including connectors like Niagara, Welland and the St. Lawrence) is seen as one of the world's natural wonders.
- Niagara Falls is already a world-renowned destination.
- The Great Lakes can support a wide variety of tourism-related activities:

Cruise Ships

Hiking

Fishing

Aquatic Sports

Camping

Boating



Ontario Tourism Competitiveness Study

- The Study, through a combination of best practice research, policy development and public consultations:
 - Engaged Ontario as a whole in a process to consider the future of tourism in our province
 - Raised the tourism industry's profile and created a platform for new initiatives
 - Delivered a focussed agenda – for the public and private sectors to support the long-term viability of tourism in Ontario
- The final report: *Discovering Ontario: A Report on the Future of Tourism* was released February 11, 2009 and was the product of:
 - 13 formal consultation sessions in 12 cities with more than 500 stakeholders
 - 200 presentations and written submissions
 - 13 commissioned research studies as well as internal research
- Final report made recommendations in 4 key areas:
 - Change how government and industry work together – build industry capacity
 - Set standards for success – early focus on training
 - Invest in private and public tourism product
 - Reach out to consumers before they get here and make it easy for them once they arrive – redefine marketing roles at provincial and local levels.



Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs)

- RTOs announced December 18, 2009
- \$40 million annually to tourism regions, once established
- \$25 million for next 2 years to assist with transitioning
- Manage development and marketing to promote tourism growth in the region
- Opportunity to incorporate more emphasis on Great Lakes from the RTOs' individual perspectives



The Great Lakes and MTC's Agencies and Attractions

- MTC oversees the activities and accountabilities of many attractions and agencies that promote tourism, economic growth and job creation
- Great Lakes provide the setting for two historic attractions operated by the Ministry: Huronia Historical Parks and Fort William Historical Park;
- Great Lakes provide the setting for three tourism agencies
 - Niagara Parks Commission,
 - St. Lawrence Parks Commission; and
 - Ontario Place Corporation



Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation

- The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation (OTMPC), the Ministry's tourism marketing agency, develops and implements marketing programs to promote Ontario to key domestic and international markets as a year-round travel destination.
- As RTOs are established, the OTMPC will work collaboratively to develop and execute aligned marketing programs.
- OTMPC website: <http://www.ontariooutdoor.com>





- Home
- Things to Do
- Places to Go
- Getaway Ideas
- Travel Guides
- Meeting Planners

Search

Go! [Advanced Search](#)

[Accommodation Search](#)

Register

Explore, indulge, discover
[Log in](#). Or are you a [New User?](#)

- Travel Tools**
- [Ask the Concierge](#)
 - [Events Calendar](#)
 - [Travel Information Centres](#)
 - [Travel Tips](#)
 - [Weather](#)
 - [Transportation](#)
 - [Driving Directions](#)
 - [Currency Converter](#)
 - [Contact Us](#)

[Français](#)

Things to Do : [Natural Wonders](#) : Awe-inspiring Natural Wonders

Awe-inspiring Natural Wonders

Touch the shores of four Great Lakes. See incredible land formations. Explore immense stretches of beach. Be awed by rare plant and animal life. Discover the wonders that naturally await you in every corner of Ontario.

Nature Trails Echo Valley Observatory

On a clear Muskoka day, you can see an entire universe open up before you. Distant planets. Entire nebulas. Far off galaxies. See them all right here in a world within a world: Ontario.

[Nature Trails Echo Valley Observatory](#)

Wasaga Beach

Bask on a glorious 14 km (8 mi.) stretch of pure white sand at [Wasaga Beach](#) - the longest freshwater beach in the world. Dip your toes into the warm, shallow waters of Georgian Bay. Make friends with the wind as your surfboard skims across the water. Or explore a wondrous parabolic sand dune system.

[Ontario Provincial Parks](#)
[Wasaga Beach](#)

Bruce Peninsula

Come to land's end and explore rugged limestone cliffs rising dramatically from the brilliant blue waters of Georgian Bay. Discover grottos and strange formations sculpted by waves thousands of years ago. Hike and camp near Cyprus Lake in [Bruce Peninsula National Park](#). Seek spacious beaches at Singing Sands of Dorcas Bay on the Lake Huron side of the peninsula.

[Bruce Peninsula National Park](#)

Great Lakes

Carved out by retreating glaciers from the last ice age, the four Great Lakes that touch Ontario offer endless opportunities for recreation and adventure. Be awed by the wilderness and remote beauty of Lake Superior. Cruise past the picturesque lighthouses that dot the sandy shores of Lake Huron and Lake Erie. Visit charming ports-of-call on Lake Ontario - the smallest of the Great Lakes.



Did you know?

Ontario shores touch four of the five Great Lakes that comprise the world's largest body of freshwater with a combined surface area of 246,000 km² (93,480 sq. mi.)

Meet in Ontario

- [Meeting Planners](#)

Things to Do

- [Aboriginal](#)
- [Accommodations](#)
- [Arts and Culture](#)
- [Festivals and Events](#)
- [Fishing](#)



- HOME
- OUTDOOR GETAWAYS
- SIGNATURE LANDSCAPES**
- PLACES TO STAY
- TRAVEL TIPS & TOOLS

The Beaches of Southern Ontario

Stretches of Sand as Far as the Eye Can See

- View a Map of this Landscape
- View a Map of All Landscapes
- Explore Beaches of Southern Ontario Getaways



Sandy beaches dot the string of coastal parks on the shores of Lake Ontario, Lakes Huron and Erie in southern Ontario.

Most provincial parks in this region feature long and wide expanses of sand dunes and marsh areas that are a bird watchers paradise. Enjoy the unique marine heritage of this region which includes amazing fishing ports, lighthouses and interpretive tours.

Sand Dunes to Explore

Marvel at the largest freshwater sand dunes in the world at Sandbanks Provincial Park. Two of the finest bay mouth and coastal sand dune systems in Ontario are found here. A hiking trail allows you to explore this unique ecosystem, with distinctive dune plants that thrive only in this environment. [Wasaga Beach](#), the world's longest freshwater beach is nestled in and around 14 kilometres of white sandy shore on the southern coast of Georgian Bay. It boasts a beautiful area of rare inland sand dunes, covered now with vegetation, including many rare species of wildflowers. Hiking and biking can be found in the 2,900-acre Blueberry Plains nature reserve on over 50 kilometres of trails. In the winter these trails are groomed and track-set for cross-country ski enthusiasts.

Historic Ports and Lighthouses

Many southern Ontario beaches are located near working harbours. The communities of Southampton, Port Elgin, Port Stanley, for example, all have beautiful beaches perfect for exploring history. Some, like the Southampton beaches near the [Chantry Island Lighthouse](#), offer an opportunity to explore lighthouses and historic Presqu'île Lighthouse near the family-oriented beaches of the nearby provincial park.

SEARCH

VIEW ALL GETAWAYS

FIND YOUR GETAWAY BY

EXPERIENCE:
All Getaways

SEASON:
Select...

LENGTH OF STAY:
Select...

CITY:
Select...

START A NEW SEARCH

DO YOU NEED HELP USING THE GETAWAY FINDER?

VIEW A MAP OF ONTARIO





THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE THIS

The Great Ontario Outdoor Adventure

- HOME
- OUTDOOR GETAWAYS
- SIGNATURE LANDSCAPES**
- PLACES TO STAY
- TRAVEL TIPS & TOOLS

Beaches of Southern Ontario Getaways

All Beaches of Southern Ontario Getaways Results 1 - 3 of 3

Fall Owls and Wine in Prince Edward County
 A day to remember with migrating saw-whet owls in Prince Edward County! Experience a nocturnal owl banding demonstration with Field Naturalist, Terry...

[View Getaway](#) **Trip Duration :** 1 day
 from \$68.00 CAD / \$52.00 USD

Spring Songbirds and Wine in Prince Edward County
 A day to remember with migrating songbirds in Prince Edward County! Experience a wildflower walk and banding demonstration with Field Naturalist, Terry...

[View Getaway](#) **Trip Duration :** 1 day
 from \$68.00 CAD / \$52.00 USD

Trail Hiking in Oakville
 Hiking at your back door! Take advantage of the many easily accessible hiking trails along the shores of Lake Ontario - The Bruce Trail, Heritage Trails,...

[View Getaway](#) **Trip Duration :** 1 day, 1 night
 from \$120.00 CAD / \$120.00 USD

SEARCH

[GO »](#)

[VIEW ALL GETAWAYS](#)

FIND YOUR GETAWAY BY EXPERIENCE:

All Getaways

SEASON:

Select...

LENGTH OF STAY:

Select...

CITY:

Select...

[GO »](#)

[START A NEW SEARCH](#)

[DO YOU NEED HELP USING THE GETAWAY FINDER?](#)

[VIEW A MAP OF ONTARIO](#)



Lake Superior Coast Getaways

Featured Getaways

Rail or Fly-In Wilderness Retreat

Rent a modern cabin for a few days and enjoy whichever opportunity best suits your desires: canoeing, boating, swimming, or simply viewing and taking...

[View Getaway](#)

Trip Duration : 3 days
from \$400.00 CAD / \$400.00 USD

The Coast of Pukaskwa - Horizons Adventures

This is a true wilderness trip. Over 90 kilometers of beaches, headlands, rocky cliffs and waterfalls are separated by legendary rivers such as the Cascade...

[View Getaway](#)

Trip Duration : 8 days, 8 nights
from \$1,350.00 CAD / \$1,350.00 USD

All-Women's Sea Kayaking Trips on the Great Lakes

Wild Women Expeditions - Canada's largest outdoor adventure company for women - offers superb kayaking trips on either Lake Huron's majestic North Channel...

[View Getaway](#)

Trip Duration : 5 nights or longer
from \$880.00 CAD / \$880.00 USD

All Lake Superior Coast Getaways

Results 1 - 10 of 41

A Rail, River and Sea Weekend Getaway

This unique sea kayak and canoe weekend adventure includes a ride on the Algoma Central Railway through the steep cliffs of the great Canadian Shield...

[View Getaway](#)

Trip Duration : 3 days (35 kilometres or 21 miles)
from \$570.00 CAD / \$485.00 USD

SEARCH

GO »

[VIEW ALL GETAWAYS](#)

FIND YOUR GETAWAY BY EXPERIENCE:

All Getaways

SEASON:

Select...

LENGTH OF STAY:

Select...

CITY:

Select...

GO »

[START A NEW SEARCH](#)

[DO YOU NEED HELP USING THE GETAWAY FINDER?](#)

[VIEW A MAP OF ONTARIO](#)



Promoting Ontarians' Enjoyment of the Great Lakes

- Investments in tourism bring significant economic and social returns to Ontario communities and the Ministry helps to revitalize communities including Great Lakes waterfronts to promote tourism, economic opportunities and Ontarians' enjoyment of the Lakes.
 - Premier-ranked Tourist Destination Framework
 - Recreational Infrastructure Canada program
 - Celebrate Ontario Grant program
 - Tourism Development Fund



Promoting Ontarians' Enjoyment of the Great Lakes (cont'd)

- MTC's Investment Development Office (IDO) works with stakeholders to encourage investment and development:
 - Promotes Great Lakes cruising experiences that will generate tourist interest in the surrounding areas, and increase revenues for the province
 - Provides shore excursion training programs to improve the quality and quantity of the shore excursion offering in the Great Lakes region.



The Waterfront Trail

- The Waterfront Trail runs for more than 700 km from Lake Erie to the Quebec border, along the shore of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River.
- The Trail includes:
 - 31 communities
 - 182 parks and natural areas
 - 152 arts and cultural heritage attractions
 - 37 major annual waterfront festivals
 - 170 marinas and yacht clubs



War of 1812

A Signature Heritage Tourism Event

- Commemorating the bi-centennial of the War of 1812 and celebrating 200 years of peace between Canada and the U.S.
 - Greater focus and awareness on the historical importance of the Great Lakes
 - Provides opportunities to attract visitors to Ontario's heritage experiences and attractions connected to the Great Lakes and our waterways
 - MTC working with six regional groups, other ministries and other levels of government, including in the U.S., to develop a War of 1812 commemoration strategy
 - \$1 million in funding over the past 4 years to plan and support local celebrations – many of which involve the Great lakes
 - Tall Ships tour of the Great Lakes - MTC involvement and support TBD.



Importance of the Health of the Great Lakes to MTC

- Failure to take action to protect the health of the Great Lakes has long-term implications for tourism:
 - Reduced water levels affect beaches and the potential for Great Lakes cruising;
 - Growth of nuisance and toxic algae cause beach and waterfront fouling and unsafe drinking water; and
 - Ecosystem changes over time will negatively affect recreational fisheries.
- Environmental threats to the Great Lakes (e.g., dropping water levels, water quality, invasive species, changing shorelines/bottomlands, etc.) have implications for cultural tourism, and for the conservation of cultural heritage resources, notably marine heritage sites and coastal heritage landscapes

