

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MATAWA FIRST NATIONS HOST COMMUNITY SESSIONS TO DEVELOP 20-YEAR REGIONAL TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN

THUNDER BAY, ON: Matawa's Economic Development Unit today hosted a Tourism Strategy Meeting and Off-Reserve Community Session to hear views and opinions on a Regional Tourism Strategic Plan. Over the past few months, input has also been received through a series of workshops in all the nine Matawa communities.

Funded through the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs [Rural Economic Development Program](#), the purpose of the project is to set a vision, goals and strategies for long-term development in the tourism sector as one of the economic drivers available to Matawa communities and to help expand and build local industry.

Components of the 20-year plan will include:

- product development including enhancing mainstream tourism experiences within an Indigenous cultural element;
- training and capacity development in all facets of the tourism industry including business management, marketing, hospitality and guiding;
- cultural authenticity for target markets like connected explorer and knowledge seekers;
- marketing and branding distinguishing Matawa communities from those of other tourism providers;
- promoting ease of access for target markets in highway access and remote communities; and,
- financing requirements to establish and sustain a tourism industry

The Matawa Tourism Strategic Plan is expected to be completed by March 31, 2018.

Matawa currently supports the Native Camp Operators Alliance comprised of a group of remote, fly in fishing and hunting outpost camps owned and operated by Indigenous Peoples from the Matawa communities promoted by [Moccasin Trails Adventures](#). The camps are located within three of the five largest watersheds in Ontario, all of which drain into either Hudson Bay or James Bay.

QUOTES

"We are excited to be finalizing the strategy and look forward to supporting the Matawa First Nations to help develop Indigenous employment and deliver additional economic opportunities to this region. We are increasingly hearing that travelers from Germany, Asia and other places overseas are seeking out authentic Indigenous experiences which allow them to view this country through the eyes of the traditional owners. The implementation of the tourism strategy will allow for that to happen in one of Canada's most unique places—the Matawa traditional territories."

– David Paul Achneepineskum, CEO, Matawa First Nations Management

QUOTES CONT'D

“The development of Matawa First Nations cultural attractions and products will signal an exciting new era for Northwestern Ontario. Our tourism vision will be built from communities who have a story to tell, tourism can showcase our identity, culture, and language, it represents who we are as peoples of the land. With Ontario capturing 30 percent of Canada’s annual total Indigenous tourism and spending output totaling \$1.7 billion, we plan to develop, market and grow the industry in our area.”

– Jason Rasevych, Economic Development Advisor - Matawa First Nations Management

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Matawa First Nations Management is a Tribal Council providing a variety of advisory services and programs to 8 Ojibway and Cree First Nations in James Bay Treaty No. 9 and 1 First Nation in the Robinson-Superior Treaty area. Follow us on Facebook or Twitter @MatawaFNM.

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