

Explorers' Edge Annual General Meeting

July 15, 2020



Board of Directors **Welcome**



EXPLORERS'
EDGE

Explorers' Edge **Mission**

To develop a **profitable** and **thriving**
tourism **industry** in the region.

Operating **Principals**

- **Build new audiences**
- **Change perception of the region as a summer destination**
- **Engage multiple operators in every initiative**
- **Increase four season business**
- **Leverage significant strategic partnerships**

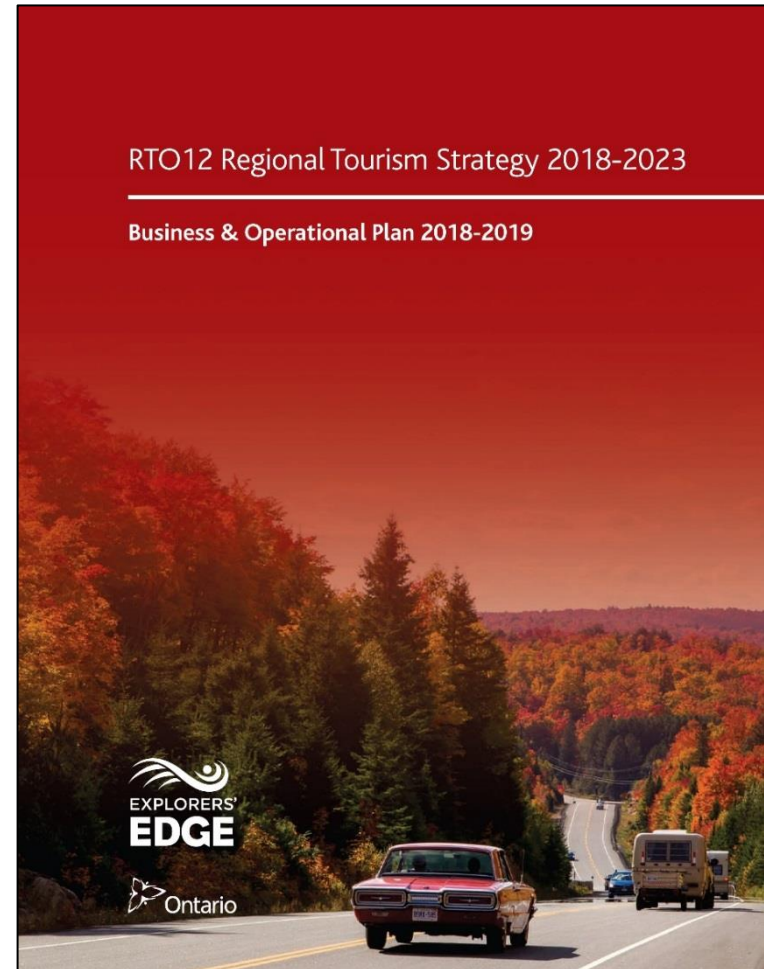
Guiding **Principals**

Leverage strategic collaborations to develop programs to significantly increase the volume of visitors to the region.

Use strategy and process as guiding beacons to ensure our success.

Regional Tourism Strategy **Year Two**

- **Dispersion**
- **International Audiences**
- **Workforce Development**
- **Product Development Framework**
- **Tourism Entrepreneurs**



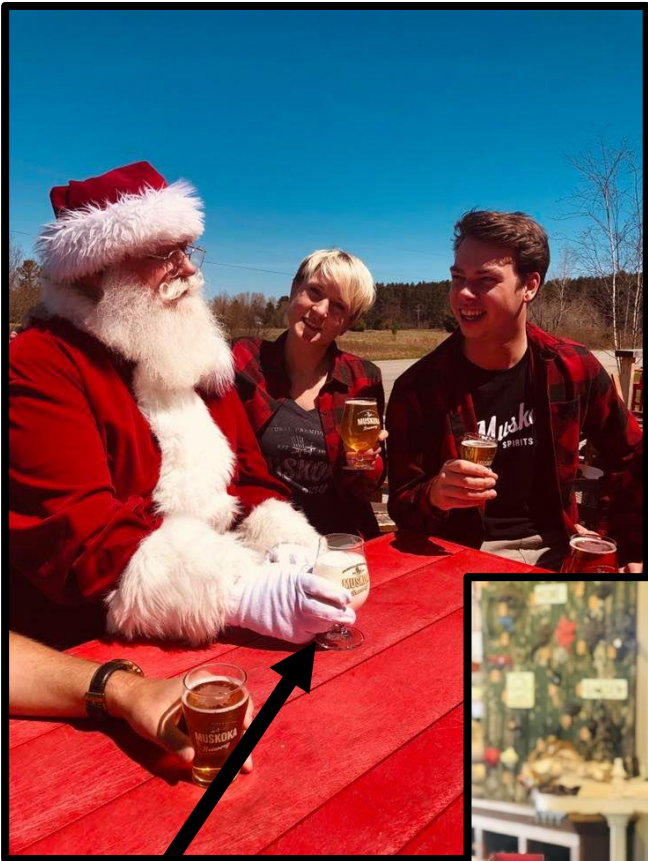
The Year In Review: Fiscal **2019-2020**

“From crisis to crisis, with a **mountain summit** in between...”

Flood Crisis **Communication**

- **April 28 thru May 1:** telephone outreach and site visits conducted by staff for affected operators in the region – Muskoka & Almaguin Highlands hit hardest
- **May 1: operator survey** was developed and deployed to grasp impact of the flooding on tourism businesses – **60 responses**
- **May 2:** RTO Board briefed & the Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport contacted for presentation of immediate and longer term recovery steps briefing on in Toronto **May 5**
- **May 2 thru May 14:** RTO12 staff commenced touring the entire region to launch an ‘Open For Business’ social media campaign, which was – and continues to be – posted to our social assets.





(Milk for Santa
at the Brewery...)

Media Messaging / Destination Ontario

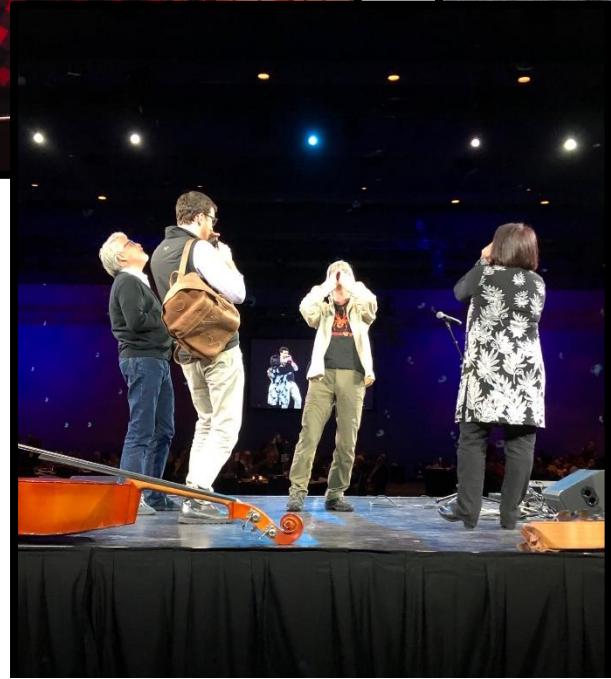
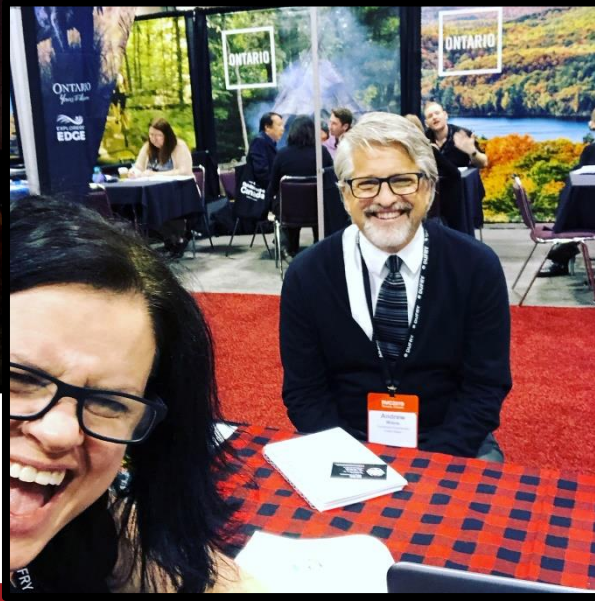
- RTO Survey & Recommendation Report to Ministry
- Muskoka Heritage Place ~ K96FM
- Cleveland's House ~ Fresh Radio
- Bracebridge, Patterson Kaye Lodge ~ Breakfast Television
- Destination Ontario
 - Toronto Star Content
 - Social Posts



Rendez-vous **Canada**

- **May 28 – 31, 2019**
- Activation Zone / VR headsets & campfire
- Tour Operator Meetings (30+)
- Luncheon Event (1500 delegates)





Indigenous Tourism Development

- FedNor Partnership
- Foundational Work
- Cultural “Product” Inventory
- First Nation Outreach
- Work with **Indigenous Tourism Ontario**
- Case Study Development
 - Waaseyaa Cultural Tours
 - Dokis First Nations Trail Systems



New York Travel Trade Mission

- Sales Trip with Destination Ontario/Sandra Rice **June 11-13**
- Includes meetings with AAA, catchment travel agents, and event at the Consulate General of Canada
Learning experience for future marketing to Designated Marketing Areas (NY, Boston, Chicago and Washington, D.C.)



2019 Regional Tourism Summit: **Parry Sound**

- **June 18, 2019**
- Open Mic – focus on business successes and innovation
- Introduction of the Workforce Thrusters Strategy / Catalyst Housing concept



Commercial Air Service **Porter Airlines**

Launch in April 2019

500+ media hits & a estimated 35 million impressions from
our own media release



Commercial Air Service **Porter Airlines**

- 3-Year Commitment
- Seasonal Summer Service
10 Weeks
- Inaugural Flight June 27, 2019
- 4-Year Marathon



Commercial Air Service **Dispersion**

- **Bus Shuttle Service**
- **Five Main Routes**
- **Booking Widget (RFP)**
- **185 bookings**



Commercial Air Service **Dispersion**

- Voucher Program
- \$9,500 Regional Spend (triggers additional spend)
- Tracking & Dispersion



Commercial Air Service **Dispersion**

- Packages – TICO Licence
- Muskoka Travel Service
- Monday Day Trip



Commercial Air Service – YQA Site Development

- Ambassador program grew organically with RTO staff
 - Gravenhurst Chamber of Commerce assist!!
- YQA dialogue with Len O'Connor
 - Travel services
 - (Coffee & Water)
 - Rain Contingency Plan
 - (Umbrellas, Tents, Staff)



Commercial Air Service – YQA Site Development

- Shuttle Service
 - Parking & Pickup / Signage
- CATSA Relations
 - Weekly dialogue & information sharing
- Travel Packages – testing for TICO




Marketing Program: **Benchmark Year**

- Delayed launch meant switch to domestic marketing to ensure load factors met
- DMAs had been targeted until then (NY, Boston, Chicago, Washington, D.C.)
- Campaign ran mid-May to mid-August
- \$170K spend with **44K leads to [Flyporter.com/Muskoka](https://flyporter.com/muskoka)** (approx. \$3.90/lead)
- EE site traffic was 97% over plan with 215,000 site visits
- Leads acquisition was 65% over plan with 448 email sign-ups
- Cost per link click (CPLC) was \$0.83, well below the \$1.48 estimate used to build the annual plan

Marketing Program: **Benchmark Year**

Explorers' Edge Sponsored · 🌟

Off the dock and up the CN Tower in no time. Muskoka to downtown Toronto in 20 minutes with Porter Airlines for an amazing city getaway.




MUSKOKA.FLYPORTER.COM
Toronto Getaways
Just 20 minutes from Muskoka... [BOOK NOW](#)

👍❤️😮 Andrew Ryeland and 1.3K others

Explorers' Edge Sponsored · 🌟

Book your flight to Muskoka with Porter Airlines and then get to your final vacation destination on one of 5 new shuttle routes that ...[See More](#)




EXPLORERSEEDGE.CA
The Explorers' Edge Shuttle Service at Muskoka Airport

👍❤️😮 712 89 Comments 144 Shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

Explorers' Edge Sponsored · 🌟

Get to Ontario's favourite vacation destination this summer in no time with Porter Airlines.



EXPLORERSEEDGE.CA
Fly to Muskoka With Porter Airlines This Summer

👍❤️😮 2.9K 441 Comments 480 Shares

Marketing Program

- Retargeting with MTMA, Parry Sound Tourism, Santa's Village, The Kee to Bala, Huntsville Adventures (TESTING)
- 4,500 entries for the 54.40 contest (also goodwill with Nieuport Aviation)
- Outbound contest/marketing with Moose FM in Parry Sound and Muskoka



TIAO Summit

TWO THOUSAND NINETEEN
ONTARIO
TOURISM
SUMMIT
Growing Tourism in Ontario
TOURISM MATTERS



- Kate Monk presented on social media at the Ontario Tourism Summit in October
- James Murphy facilitated panel of winter tourism operators from our region
- 2021 Summit to be hosted at Deerhurst Resort

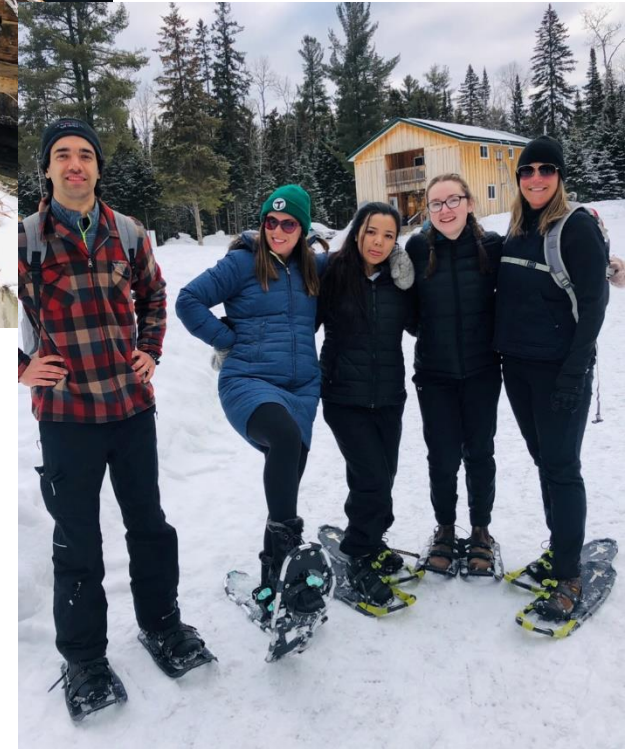
Workforce Development: Education

- Work-Integrated Learning
- Georgian College
 - Curriculum Development by RTO12
 - Tour & Package Sales
 - TICO training
 - “Master Classes” from regional tourism professionals



Georgian Fam Tours

- Summer July 2019
 - Parry Sound - 23 Students
- Fall September 2019
 - Huntsville – 28 Students
- Winter March 2020
 - Almaguin Highlands – 50 Students



Ryerson University

School of Hospitality & Tourism Management

- James Murphy / Kate Monk guest lecturers
- Explorers' Edge **VFR Case Study Competition** between Universite du Quebec a Montreal, University of Guelph and Ryerson University teams
- Jack Hopkins – student conference panelist



Workforce **Development**



3 Taylor Road, Bracebridge, ON P1L 1S6
1-800-835-7303
Algonquin Park, Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, Muskoka,
Parry Sound & South Algonquin
www.explorersedge.ca



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

**Social Enterprise Catalyst Housing:
*Concept Research & Report***

Partnership Program

- Parry Sound Cruise Ship Program
- Parry Sound Tourism Signage
- Parry Sound DBA Girlfriends Weekend
- Parry Sound Cycling Event Series
- Parry Sound Hop on Hop off Night
- Parry Sound One of a Kind Christmas Show
- Great Muskoka Paddling Experience
- Ontario Dinner – Huntsville Chamber of Commerce
- Golf Muskoka
- Muskoka Chamber of Commerce Event

Partnership Program

- Almaguin Highlands Winter Product Development
- Huntsville Snowfest - Huntsville Chamber of Commerce
- MTMA – Domestic Content Marketing
- Muskoka Chautauqua
- Deerhurst Resort – Lakeside Lodge
- Commercial Air Service (Bracebridge, Huntsville, Gravenhurst, Loring Restoule)
- Georgian College – FAM Trips
- Fire & Ice Festival Bracebridge

Partnership Program



Huntsville's Winter Wonders Package: Free Gas, Spending Vouchers And Tons of Vacation Fun!

By Kate in Accommodations, Arts & Entertainment, Attractions, Culture, News, Outdoor Adventures on January 17, 2020




f t p +

SOLD OUT

Book your winter getaway to Huntsville, Muskoka and get up to \$350 worth of free gas and spending vouchers to make your stay in Ontario's cottage country even better!

Mid-Week Magic: Huntsville, Muskoka's Winter Wonders Travel Package

By Kate in Accommodations, Arts & Entertainment, Attractions, Culture, Outdoor Adventures on February 4, 2020



f t p +

SOLD OUT

If you've got time during the week, take advantage of Huntsville, Muskoka's Winter Wonders Package and get \$150 in free gas and cash vouchers to spend!

Huntsville's Winter Wonders Travel Package: Great Value & Fun for Families

By Kate in Accommodations, Arts & Entertainment, Attractions, Culture, Outdoor Adventures, Spas & Wellness on January 21, 2020




f t p +

SOLD OUT

Head to Huntsville, Muskoka with the family for a classic Canadian winter getaway and take advantage of up to \$150 in free gas and spending vouchers!

Explorers' Edge
EDGE Published by Kate Edge [7] · January 17 ·

What an amazing getaway package from a ton of businesses in Huntsville, Muskoka! Free gas and spending vouchers for your stay.




EXPLORERSEEDGE.CA
Huntsville's Winter Wonders Package: Free Gas, Spending Vouchers And Tons of Vacation Fun!

751,018 People Reached 34,421 Engagements Boost Post

1.8K 268 Comments 550 Shares

Explorers' Edge
EDGE Published by Kate Edge [7] · February 4 ·

Book a mid-week winter getaway to Huntsville, Muskoka and get up to \$150 in free gas and cash vouchers to spend!




EXPLORERSEEDGE.CA
Mid-Week Magic: Huntsville, Muskoka's Winter Wonders Travel Package

382,726 People Reached 4,947 Engagements Boost Post

463 26 Comments 72 Shares

Explorers' Edge
EDGE Published by Kate Edge [7] · January 21 ·

Serious fun and amazing value - book your 'Winter Wonders' getaway today.



EXPLORERSEEDGE.CA
Huntsville's Winter Wonders Travel Package: Great Value & Fun For Families

309,467 People Reached 2,655 Engagements Boost Post

Tourism Town Halls

4 town hall in two days!

Gravenhurst, Parry Sound, Huntsville & South River

60 stakeholders in total

Workforce Discussion

- Catalyst Housing, Regional Currency, Cross-Ministerial Approach, Sustainable Industry
- Education Programs

Rail Discussion

- Next Steps



Minister Brief

- Attempt to unify RTOs and strengthen the RTO model, rather than relying on TIAO or Destination Ontario to do so
- Survey deployed to RTO EDs and Chairs
- Well received by ADM McKinnel / shout out to the RTO12 work
- Chaired the session – asked to continue
- Streamlines the messaging ahead of time and finds common points of interest/output/strategy

🔄 You Retweeted



Michael Tibollo ✓
@MichaelTibollo

Thank you to all the representatives from Regional Tourism Organizations across the province who took the time to meet with me today at [@Rendez_VousCAN!](#)



Ministry of Heritage, Sport, **Tourism** & Culture Industries

- New Ministry Name & Introduction
 - Provided the Ministry with a regional brief
- RTO Council Development and Communication
- Minister meeting with RTO Executive Directors – TIAO Summit
 - Vision Session with RTO
 - Meeting with the Ministry of Finance
 - Outcomes, Culture & Heritage, Economic Development

Minister Brief

- Minister MacLeod Regional Round Table
- Norm Miller, Steamships, Gravenhurst Opera House, Town of Bracebridge, JW Marriott
- Workforce Development Solutions



COVID-19 Crisis Communication

March 14: Recommendations to Finance Minister Bill Morneau via TIAO/TIAC

March 16: Crisis Communications Constituents and foundational strategy development

- Small business owners
- Staff
- Consumers/Travellers
- Students
- RTO12 staff

- **RTO12 Business Group on Facebook**
- **Surveys**
- **CFIB advocacy**
- **Digital Campfire Content**



Relentless Communication

- Helping to explain government programs / CFIB webinar
- Lobbying for tax relief for businesses from area municipalities to ensure liquidity
- Adding voice to calls for greater wage subsidies and cash flow to businesses (not just loans)
- Advocating for a loosening of rules for BTIF grants (eliminate 50 cent collars from Parry Sound Muskoka Community Network so businesses can pivot to e-commerce)
- Met with Minister / TIAO regularly
- Established working group of SMEs for feedback
- Development of Wednesday Webinars
- Mental health assistance for business owners

Minister Brief

- Federal Level - Minister Joly via Terry Sheehan, MPP and Parliamentary Secretary for FedNor



RTO Model: 10 Year **Anniversary!**

“Double tourism receipts by 2020”

\$20Billion industry in 2010
\$36Billion in 2020 (pre-covid)



10 Year Anniversary

Two Additional Subregions

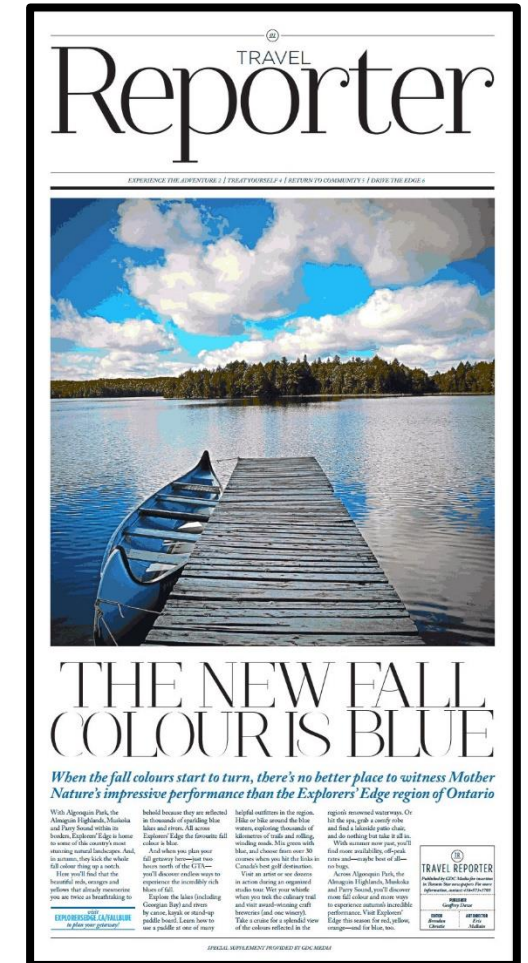
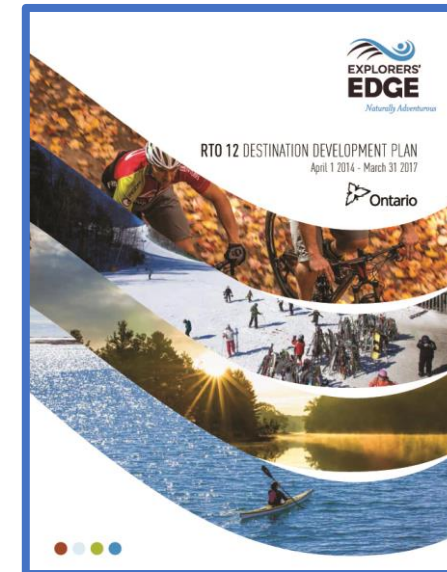
- Port Loring Restoule
- South Algonquin

Domestic Marketing

- Traditional Campaigns
- Content Marketing
- Social Mobile Content Marketing
- Social Media Audience

Guiding Documents

- Three Destination Development Plan
- Trails Inventory
- Package and Itinerary Development
- Product Development Framework
- Research Dashboard
- Commercial Air Service Feasibility



10 Year Anniversary

International Marketing

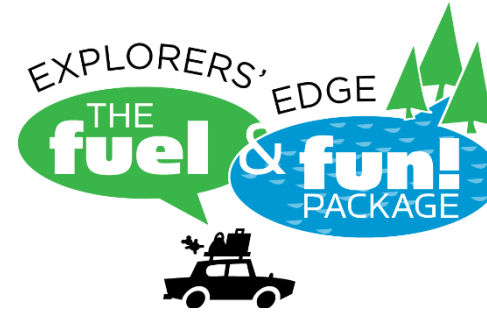
- Canada 150
- Trade Missions
- Great Canadian Wilderness Just North of Toronto

Transacting Tipping Point Voucher Programs

- Fuel and Fun
- Explore The Edge
- Fly & Explore
- Winter Wonders
- Cottage Country Spirit

Regional Partnership

- 182 regional partnerships 2010 – 2020!



2020 – 2030: **The Next Marathon**

- Sustainable Destination Development
- Research
- Product Development 2.0
- Workforce Thrusters Strategy (housing, education, regional currency)
- International Audiences – Commercial Air Service
- Business Pivot – winter retrofitting
- Spatial Distancing

Explorers' Edge Team



- Peter Coish – Kuration
- Stephen Murdoch – Enterprise Canada
- Laura Ross - MHSTCI
- Nuku Kolmar – Better Art Direction & Design
- Scott Adams – Birchbark Media
- Kim Knight – Knight Design
- Jason Rosewell – Linkhouse Media
- Brandy Harris – Harris Gingrich
- Solomon Wong and Marcus Lam - InterVISTAS
- Andrew Smellie – Smellies' Print House
- Adrienne Goldman Book Keeping
- Porter Airlines Team
- Nieuport Aviation and Ports Toronto Teams
- Muskoka Airport Team
- Stuart Morley – Morley Consulting

Thank You

Thank You & Questions

James Murphy

- Executive Director

Kate Monk

- Senior Director, Strategy & Communications

Erin Smit

- Tourism Administration Manager

- Jack Hopkins

- Product Coordinator