



**Working together on Tourism issues in
Northwestern Ontario**

**NWOTA/KDCA Working Group
PO Box 65
Morson, Ont. P0W 1J0
Ph/Fax (807) 488-5514**



Visitation and Visitor Spending Differences in Ontario

Discovering Ontario: A report on the future of tourism

Within the Kenora and Rainy River Districts which are defined as the Travel Region of Sunset Country Travel Area tourism supported directly and indirectly 12, 235 full-year jobs, \$451 Million in economic activity, Wages and Salaries in excess of \$393 Million, and \$185 Million in Federal, Provincial and Municipal taxes.

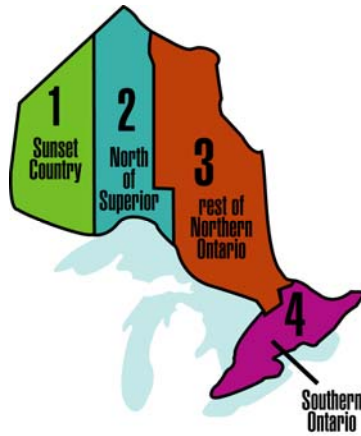
There are approximately 440 tourism accommodation businesses within the region. In fact, 43% of the tourism income in Northern Ontario is generated in NW Ontario, and primarily within Sunset Country.

Tourism in Sunset Country is heavily reliant upon our American visitors who contribute 81% of all tourism expenditures.

In February, 2009, the Government of Ontario released The Sorbara Report, *Discovering Ontario: A report on the future of tourism*, with four broad strategic proposals and 20 specific recommendations to revitalize and grow tourism in the province. NWOTA and KDCA are pleased with the vast majority of these recommendations. If the Province follows through on these recommendations with investments in both the South and the North, tourism will benefit. However, the recommendation to collapse the successful Sunset Country Tourism Travel Area into one giant organization from Sault Sainte Marie to the Manitoba border is an error.

An analysis of Ontario visitation and more importantly visitor spending, the regional divisions proposed by The Sorbara Report will have a major negative impact on the future effectiveness of marketing efforts within the Sunset Country Travel Area region.

Ontario can be divided into 4 travel areas when comparing visitor origins. The Sunset Country Travel Area (SSCTA) is the only region with distinctly different visitor characteristics. SSCTA is heavily dependent on the high value U.S. visitor.



Map of Ontario

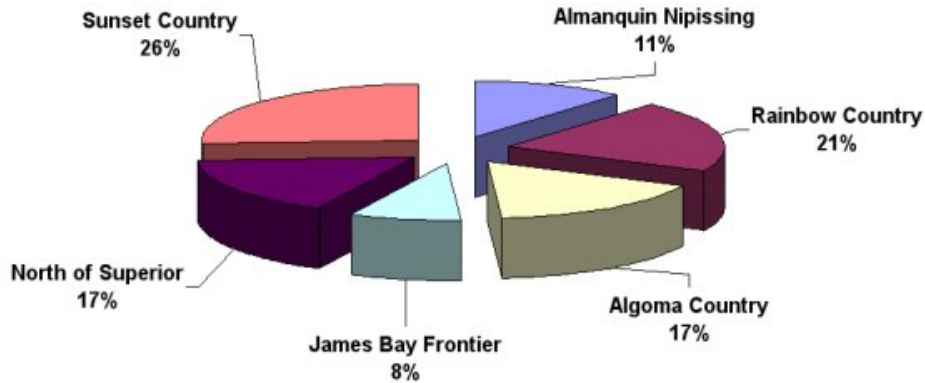
Visitor				
<u>Region</u>	# 1	# 2	# 3	# 4
Other Countries	0.7%	1.2%	0.8%	1.8%
U.S.	58.8%	22.3%	13.0%	17.7%
Canada	40.5%	76.5%	86.2%	80.4%

Visitor Spending				
<u>Region</u>	# 1	# 2	# 3	# 4
Other Countries	1.2%	2.1%	2.1%	15.0%
U.S.	80.8%	23.1%	19.9%	24.3%
Canada	18.8%	74.9%	78.0%	60.5%

Visitor and Visitor spending across Ontario are fairly consistent in all regions except Sunset Country Travel Area. East of Sunset Country Travel Area the majority of visitor spending is from Canadians while in Sunset Country the majority of visitors spending is from the U.S.

Sunset Country Travel Area will generate over 50% of the new Region 11 tourism expenditures. The question is “Will Sunset Country Travel Area receives 50% of the governments marketing effort?”

Sunset Country Travel Area is severely restricted by the lack of access infrastructure including roads, trains and air transportation, making it very difficult for Canadians to travel throughout the Sunset Country Travel Area region.



% of Total tourism expenditures, Northern Ontario Travel Regions

The second concern is the Destination Marketing Fees (DMF) proposed. With Sunset Country Travel Area generating a major portion of Region 11’s DMF, how will we be assured that we receive it back to market our unique destination to our unique visitors?

The third concern is the uniqueness of tourism experience offered in Sunset Country Travel Area as compared to the other travel regions in Ontario. Because of that uniqueness we can demand a higher value for our vacation experience. We feel there should be a 12th region, and it should be The Sunset Country Travel Area.

Recommendation

Addition of Region 12

Because Sunset Country Travel Area has a unique visitor base and is a very unique wilderness destination we would recommend that a 12th region be added that matches the boundaries of Sunset Country Travel Area. This will benefit the industry both within and outside of Sunset Country Travel Area as resources will not have to be split into different markets.