



**ESCARPMENT  
CORRIDOR ALLIANCE**



South Georgian Bay  
**INNOVATION**  
Fund

*SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY'S*  
**CONSERVATION  
ECONOMY  
REPORT**



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***A VISION & TOOLKIT FOR AN ECONOMY  
BUILT AROUND PROTECTING, CONSERVING  
& RESTORING LOCAL LANDSCAPES***



We are grateful to live, work, and learn on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Ojibway, and Anishinabek. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.

We acknowledge and deeply appreciate their historic connection to this place since time immemorial. We also recognize the contributions that Haudenosaunee, Ojibway, Anishinabek, and other Indigenous peoples have made, both in shaping and strengthening this community in particular, and our province and country as a whole.

This recognition of the contributions and historic importance of Indigenous peoples must also be clearly and overtly connected to our collective commitment to do our part to advance reconciliation in our communities. We must work together to ensure our communities advance relationships with Indigenous peoples built on meaningful consultation rooted in truth and imbued with justice.

**GCHI-BIMADINAA**

**The Great Cliff That Runs Along in Anishinaabe**

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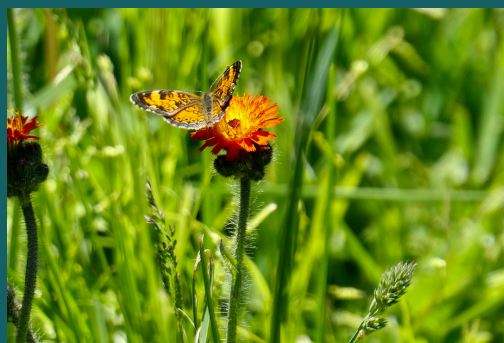
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## Acknowledgements

The South Georgian Bay Conservation Economy Report would not have been possible without the support, expertise, and contributions of many dedicated individuals and organizations.

First, we extend our deepest gratitude to Dr. Natalie Knowles, a wilderness conservationist and global expert on conservation economy models, whose knowledge and passion shaped this groundbreaking report. Dr. Knowles' thoughtful approach and extensive research laid the foundation for a nature-first vision of economic growth for South Georgian Bay.

We are also thankful to the Escarpment Corridor Alliance, specifically Board Members Mike Robbins and Martin Rydlo, for their steadfast leadership and advocacy. Their commitment to advancing conservation principles in economic development was instrumental in guiding the report's focus and ensuring it addressed the unique needs of our region.

A special thank you goes to the South Georgian Bay Innovation Fund for their generous financial contribution, which made this report possible. The fund's mission, spearheaded by Barbara and Larry Hall, is to enhance the quality of life for people in South Georgian Bay—through innovative social entrepreneurship across social, economic, environmental, and cultural sectors—which aligns perfectly with the objectives of this report. Their support allowed us to engage a global expert and helped shape the comprehensive toolkit for creating a conservation economy.

We also acknowledge the five municipalities and two counties that manage the region's landscapes, as well as the businesses and not-for-profit organizations that participated in the regional survey earlier this year. Their insights enriched the report and grounded its recommendations in real-world challenges and opportunities.

As the first report of its kind, we hope it serves as a foundation for ongoing discussions, research, and evolution. Together, we can foster a collaborative, sustainable future for South Georgian Bay that respects our natural heritage while promoting economic prosperity.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this important work.

Escarpment Corridor Alliance Board of Directors



**ESCARPMENT  
CORRIDOR ALLIANCE**



## Conservation Economy Vision

**TO BUILD AN ECONOMY CENTERED ON PROTECTING, CONSERVING AND RESTORING OUR SHARED NATURAL AND CULTURAL ASSETS SO THAT THIS INCREDIBLE REGION CAN CONTINUE TO PROSPER, THEREBY PROVIDING FOR OUR WIDE COMMUNITY OF CONSTITUENTS LONG INTO THE FUTURE.**

Southern Georgian Bay and the Niagara Escarpment region draws a wealth of residents, visitors, and local businesses for the rich small-town culture, healthy lifestyle, and beautiful landscapes. From the original Indigenous communities including the Haudenosaunee, Petun, Anishinabewaki, Wendake-Nionwentsio, Odawa, Huron Wendat, Mississauga right up to the new Canadian immigrants of today, residents and visitors alike understand that the rich, diverse and beautiful natural ecosystems along the escarpment and bay form the backbone of our region.

Largely situated within a UNESCO Biosphere Region, our hills and valleys, great lakes and weaving rivers, fields, farms, forests and fauna, provide the land, water and biodiversity that support our local culture, agriculture and food production, tourism and recreation activities, health and well-being, energy production, construction and manufacturing sectors. This understanding calls for a recentring of our society and economy to support conservation of South Georgian Bay's key natural assets that form the basis of our lifestyles and livelihoods, so that the region can continue to provide for us in perpetuity.

As the region grows rapidly, we must actively shape this growth, pursuing not just more but better outcomes that contribute to the ongoing health and resilience of our community's economy through the landscape on which our economy is built. Rather than extract and deplete the natural capital of the region (geology, soils, air, creeks/rivers, forests, and all living organisms), a conservation economy sustains the community on income earned from activities that conserve and restore. Creating a conservation economy means redirecting funds and support away from industries that are destructive and extractive to the landscape, and instead mobilizing governments, businesses and individuals towards economic activities and initiatives that protect and preserve our shared natural assets.

Conservation has often been falsely pitted as counter to economic development. Yet, **an economy built around protecting, conserving and restoring local landscapes to be more natural, resilient and wilder, can actually open up opportunities for much greater employment, business opportunities and economic diversity, where the benefits stay within the local economy.** Conservation economies do not seek to exclude people from the landscape, rather open it up for much greater public engagement with the natural world. The following presents how policies, planning and resources can be put in place to support products, services and experiences that stimulate new employment and business opportunities while supporting local community stewardship of natural resources and ecosystem services for the benefit of future generations.



## KEY RESULTS

**Over 130 Business Owners, Investors & Management shared their perspectives on the value of South Georgian Bay's Natural Assets for Local Businesses and our Economy.**

- 65% of Participating Businesses have operated in the region for over 10 years!

**“We need outdoor space to operate a business like ours”**

2024 BUSINESS SURVEY RESPONDENT

**57% of businesses or organizations operate in South Georgian Bay because of the natural assets provided by the region**

- Over 30% provide services related to outdoor recreation, while another 30% provide hospitality services to visitors coming to experience the region

**“Our values-based clients are attracted to living in the area”**

2024 BUSINESS SURVEY RESPONDENT

**45% of businesses generate more than half their revenues directly from South Georgian Bay's natural assets.**

- 28% of local businesses derive between three quarters and *all* their revenue from local natural assets and landscapes.

**“My business is not necessarily tied to nature, however, the work-life balance is. I am happy to work here and have the beauty, serenity and active possibilities available to me”**

2024 BUSINESS SURVEY RESPONDENT

**60% of business owners choose to operate in South Georgian Bay because of the small town, active and nature-based lifestyle**

- An additional 20% note that the active outdoor lifestyle further attracts employees and clients





©MarkZelinski.com from the book "Heart Of Turtle Island: The Niagara Escarpment"

## We are one of only 19 Canadian UNESCO Biosphere Regions

The Niagara Escarpment is one of 19 UNESCO Biosphere regions in Canada (and one of 738 in the world) celebrating our geographic, cultural and biological diversity. Biosphere reserves are designated in areas with high conservation value, and where communities are actively working to conserve biodiversity, implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals and engage with nature in healthier ways!



©MarkZelinski.com from the book "Heart Of Turtle Island: The Niagara Escarpment"

### WHAT IS A CONSERVATION ECONOMY?

**A CONSERVATION ECONOMY** UNDERSTANDS THAT FULLY FUNCTIONING ECOSYSTEMS, NATURAL PROCESSES, AND ABUNDANT FLORA AND FAUNA SHAPE THE LANDSCAPE, PROVIDE INCALCULABLE VALUE TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND FORM THE FOUNDATION OF OUR ECONOMY.

**A CONSERVATION ECONOMY** SEEKS TO FIND WAYS TO WORK AND LIVE WITHIN NATURE, EMBRACING AND ENCOURAGING PEOPLE, CULTURE AND ECONOMIC CONNECTIONS TO THE LANDS AND WATERS.

**A CONSERVATION ECONOMY** IS PROSPEROUS, INNOVATIVE, AND ENTREPRENEURIAL, CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISITORS, RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS ALIKE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY IN THE SOUTHERN GEORGIAN BAY REGION.

**BUSINESS OWNERS CHOOSE TO OPERATE IN SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY BECAUSE THEY...**

2024 BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS



“The environment is life giving and life supporting. Without those conditions, where is there any business?”

2024 BUSINESS SURVEY RESPONDENT

## The Incalculable Value of Nature

When we see a standing forest, an open field or untouched beach, a capitalist economy looks for an opportunity to develop, extract or exploit for personal monetary gain. In contrast, a conservation economy sees how each patch of nature can generate long-term collective value. By protecting a large corridor of nature, we protect natural processes and ecosystem functions that would cost hundreds of millions if we had to replace them with artificial sources. Biodiversity, ecosystem services and natural infrastructure perform essential roles in our lives, communities and economies, and in many cases are irreplaceable and of incalculable monetary value. Key values of nature include:

- **Health & Well-Being Benefits**

Mental health is strongly linked with time in nature; provides the natural recreation infrastructure for outdoor recreation for physical health, promotes a healthy lifestyle and preventative healthcare, reduces health care costs and pressure on regional health-care system, air and water quality, nutrient retention in foods

- **Cost-Effective Natural Disaster Resilience & Climate Adaptation**

Natural vegetation provides essential carbon sequestration helping to combat climate change, trees create significant temperature moderation and combat urban heat islands, wetlands act as effective flood mitigation & management systems, vegetation reduces erosion

- **Irreplaceable Ecosystem Services**

Air filtration and quality, water filtration and quality, groundwater wind/snow protection/fencing e.g. on roads this can reduce white-out driving conditions and road maintenance costs

- **Local Culture & Knowledges**

Connection-to-place, Community Cohesion, pro-environmental value development, spirituality, inspiration for art, music, dance, etc., natural materials for traditional or contemporary artisans, cultural exchange with tourists, traditional indigenous knowledge of the region, natural history, wild schools

- **Renewable Energy**

Nature can provide clean, affordable, reliable and renewable energy in the form of harnessing the power of solar, wind, hydro, waves, geothermal, methane capture and more...

- **Fresh Food & Agriculture**

Soil health and microbiome, natural fertilizers and pesticides, pollinators, fresh food grown, harvested berries, mushrooms, leeks, etc., maple syrup, hunting and fishing, reduce waste/pollution from transporting food, increase food sovereignty & food security

Learn more about [Biodiversity & the Economy](#) from the Ontario Biodiversity Council's Report!



## POPULATION BY THE NUMBERS\*

CURRENT RESIDENTS:

**95,786**

CURRENT POPULATION DENSITY:

**40 PEOPLE/KM<sup>2</sup>**

GROWTH SINCE 2016:

**+13.4%**

EXPECTED GROWTH BY 2030:

**+21.6%**

\*TOC, TBM, CLEARVIEW, WASAGA  
BEACH, GREY HIGHLANDS AND  
MEAFORD 2021 CENSUS

Ask **not** “what can we  
**get from** the South  
Georgian Bay &  
Escarpment corridor?”,  
but “how can we  
**contribute** to the  
region’s continued  
**health and  
prosperity?”**

## Current Challenges

03

### Costs of Our Current Economic Model

Southern Georgian Bay has one of the fastest growing populations across Canada. this rapid growth is already leading to over-tourism, irresponsible development, industrialized resource extraction, and loss of wilderness and agricultural lands. Current economic development decisions consistently prioritize “sectors that export goods and services as particularly valuable as they bring new money into the community” without fully understanding what is being extracted, both literally and figuratively. In focusing solely on expanding short-term metrics of GDP, revenues, and quarterly profits, important ecological values including biodiversity and carbon sequestration, and urgent social needs such as affordable housing for residents and tourism workers, remain unaccounted for.

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Some people believe sustainability  
means to maintain the status quo,  
when, in fact, the status quo is not  
currently sustainable

HENDERSON, 2014

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#### 1. ECONOMIC LEAKAGE

Economic leakage refers to the diversion of value out of an economy. Mass-tourism and sprawling development across the region are increasingly monopolized by large national or multinational corporations with a high propensity for leakage out of our local economy. While tourism organizations globally promote economic trickle down benefits for local communities, estimates show only 5–20% of international mass-tourists' spending remains in the destination economy. Natural resource extraction sectors including mining and quarries remove irreplaceable natural resources, causing significant ecological damage while providing limited low-quality jobs or economic benefits to the region. Most economic benefits flow into the pockets far outside the region.

## 2. SUBURBAN SPRAWL

Residents identify unrestrained suburban sprawl and land-use change across the region is degrading the environment and negatively impacting agriculture lands and public access to recreation activities, such as the waterfront and escarpment. Current policy and planning frameworks continue to accelerate housing development approvals. These decisions rarely address affordable housing or environmental impact, and instead prioritize rapid sprawl (see above - *economic leakage*) and mass-tourism revenue generation (further exacerbating *over-tourism* challenges - see below).

Housing is increasingly unattainable in The Blue Mountains.

The average home purchase cost in The Blue Mountains increased from \$637,047 in 2016 to \$913,577 in December 2020. With the current climate crisis, ongoing growth, and unattainable housing prices, sustainability planning is necessary to ensure the Town is harnessing the community's power to propel The Blue Mountains into a liveable future.

BLUE MOUNTAINS, 2022

### HOUSING BY THE NUMBERS\*

CURRENT HOUSING UNITS:

51,603

PERMANENT OCCUPANCY RATE:

79%

PROPOSED GROWTH IN HOUSING:

+29,451

HOUSING COSTS:

94%

ABOVE CANADIAN  
AVERAGE

“We come here to escape from city life”

2024 BUSINESS SURVEY RESPONDENT

Instead of recreating the suburbs by sprawling across disconnected patches of farmland and sensitive escarpment lands, our growing resident and visitor populations can be housed by increasing density in already settled or disturbed areas.

Policies must reflect this by

1. Encouraging occupancy of existing homes,
2. Prioritizing density intensification in existing settlement areas (e.g. suites & carriage houses)
3. Revitalizing industrial zones, and
4. Regulating development and increasing charges for sprawl onto agricultural or ecological lands.



### 3. INVISIBLE BURDEN OF OVER-TOURISM

The Southern Georgian Bay Escarpment region receives over 3 million visitors annually. While touted as an engine of economic growth, this region must be careful to uncover and account for tourism's hidden costs and ensure protection of the vital assets drawing visitors in the first place. These costs include energy, water, waste and sewage costs for large visitor populations, as well as greenhouse gas emissions, costs to maintain natural areas, loss of ecosystem services and biodiversity, increased cost of living for residents and more.

Communities experience "over-tourism" when the impact of tourism, or parts thereof, excessively influence perceived quality of life of citizens, visitors, local businesses and governments in a negative way. This can be seen locally through pressure on local social services (e.g. health system, sewage system); ecological impact; crowding on natural recreation amenities (e.g., mountain bike participation growth and trail maintenance); and increasing cost-of-living.

Very often the local community, the hosts, are left out of decision making for destinations as governments, destination marketing organizations and tourism industry players take over planning and marketing. Instead, **Destination Stewardship** calls for community, government and civil society all having an equal say and involvement.

**“We must protect the long-term residents  
from being over-run from tourism”**

2024 BUSINESS SURVEY RESPONDENT

#### Traffic, Congestion & Parking:

The Southern Georgian Bay Escarpment region is reaching vehicle-based carrying capacity, including parking at ski areas, trailheads, beaches, congestion in community downtowns, traffic and commute times, and wear on road infrastructure, well before reaching recreation and tourism ecological or social carrying capacity. Through efficient planning that prioritizes public and active transportation networks, Southern Georgian Bay can increase public access to nature while reducing vehicle traffic, and parking congestion (see below - *transportation*)

#### TOURISM BY THE NUMBERS\*

ANNUAL VISITORS:

**3,200,000**

AVERAGE DAILY VISITORS:

**13,000**

SOURCE MARKET:

**99% ONTARIO**

Quarries in Ontario profess bringing economic benefits including jobs and revenues to rural areas but key leakages from and costs to the region are often ignored including:

- decreasing property values for homeowners in the region
- increased heavy road use creating municipal costs to maintain roads
- limited local jobs often low-skilled and low-paying, while high-paying jobs exported to urban or international head-offices
- revenues, profits and taxes leak out of regional economy to head offices in urban or international locations

Mining provides only 0.42% of local jobs employing only 185 people, yet these extractive sectors can have irreparable harm to the natural environment which provides employment to thousands through agriculture, tourism, wellness, education and recreation sectors

## Economic Activities that DEplete NATURAL CAPITAL

Include:

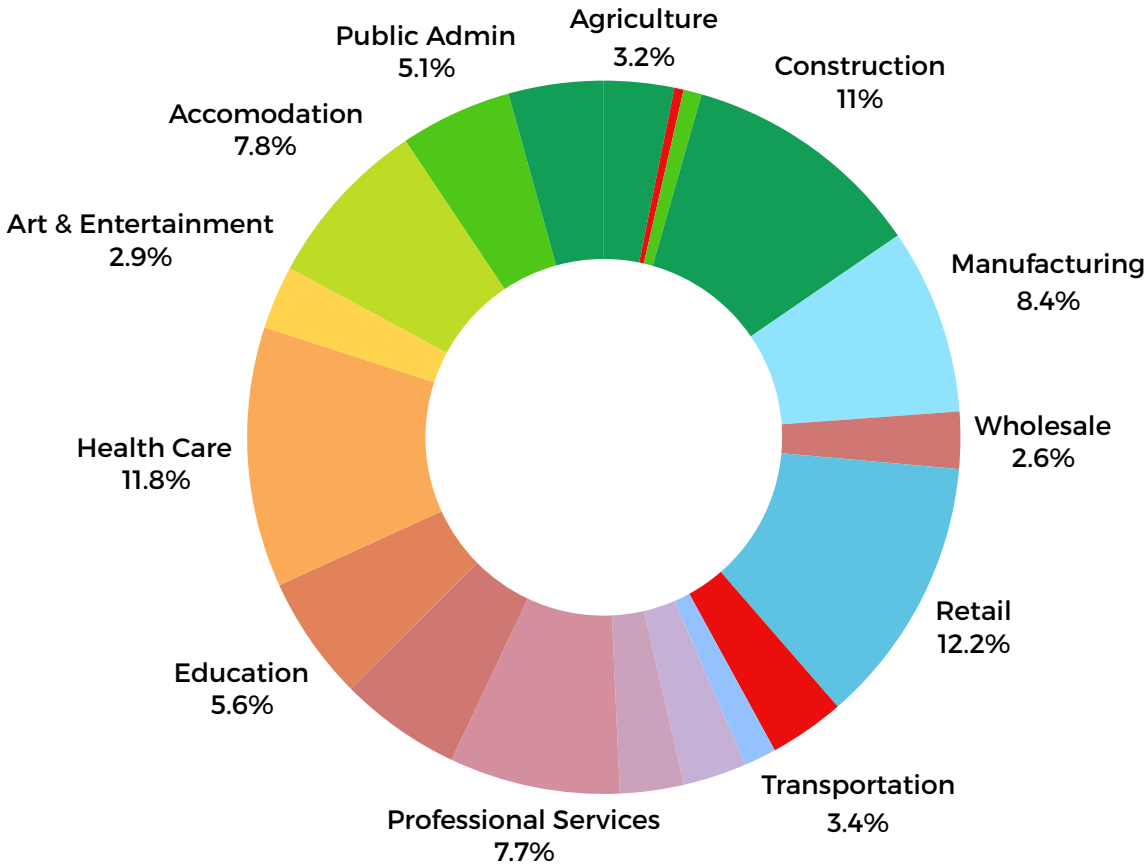
- Highway development & road infrastructure across intact natural and agricultural areas
- Industrial-scale & clear cut forestry
- Industrial development & sprawl (particularly by non-local corporations)
- Industrial-scale commercial fishing
- Mass-tourism (including multinational corporate hotels & branded resorts, urban chain hotels, cruise tourism)
- Mining, gravel pits & quarries
- Urban or sub-urban development in intact natural areas or agricultural lands

These activities deplete our renewable and non-renewable natural capital and promote economic leakage (see above), and therefore must be avoided where possible. Incentives for further development of these activities such as public resources, subsidies and supportive policies must be removed. Where these activities are deemed necessary, the activities must be re-imagined to reduce negative environmental and social impacts, and economic leakage in alignment with the conservation economy.





SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY LABOUR FORCE BY SECTOR





## A Conservation Economy

04

### Building NEW OPPORTUNITIES WITH NATURE

A conservation economy identifies place as the central organizing concept. In moving beyond economic development as solely a job creation and economic growth engine, **a conservation economy sees destination stewardship as a key principle.** Investment in local experiences, products, services and people who protect and enhance our unique destination is what creates a healthy and resilient economy. Drawing inspiration from nature itself, a conservation economy doesn't seek to prioritize one overarching "right way", but rather follows the seasons, fits the ecosystems, and finds strength and resilience through diversity, decentralization and democratizing economic activity.

#### UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

1. Adventure Tourism & Outdoor Recreation
2. Indigenous Cultural Tourism
3. Character Accommodation
4. Agri- & Cultural Tourism

#### LOCAL PRODUCTS

1. Craft Food & Beverage
2. Arts & Culture
3. Building & Architecture

#### SUSTAINABLE SERVICES

1. Housing & Construction
2. Knowledge, Education & Innovation
3. Transportation







## LOCAL SPOTLIGHT: OUTDOOR RECREATION

South Georgian Bay provides natural outdoor recreation infrastructure and assets that are essential to many organizations who thus have a vested interest in maintaining them. Direct beneficiaries include:

- **Recreation Clubs**  
From [Scenic Caves Nature Adventures](#) to [Highlands Nordic](#), our ski, golf, hunting & fishing, biking clubs, associations and providers across South Georgian Bay are direct proponents of a conservation economy and have the opportunity to participate directly through the lands and waterways they manage, use or own.
- **Outdoor & Sports Retail**  
From Kamakaze to VO2 to Squire Johns to Georgian Bay Surfclub to Summit Social House - Coffee & Bikes, our equipment providers help residents and visitors explore our Niagara Escarpment and Georgian Bay.

## A Conservation Economy

04

### UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

Visitors, residents and business-owners are drawn to the Southern Georgian Bay region for **"stunning natural landscape", "quality of life", "small-town feeling"**. These characteristics valued by residents and visitors alike create direct value within tourism and recreation sectors, and require careful stewardship of the destination's wider socio-ecological system including natural, cultural, public recreation resources, social services, and stable climates, to maintain.

#### 1. ADVENTURE TOURISM & OUTDOOR RECREATION

Characterized by low-volume, longer-duration visits to more remote destinations by tourists with strong willingness-to-pay for unique nature, cultural or activity-focused experiences, adventure tourism is the fastest growing tourism sector globally. Because of the focus on local activities and products, unique experiences and specific knowledge and skills from guides, as much as 65.6% of adventure tourist revenues remain in the local economy.

Investment in outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism assets aligns with resident and municipality desires for parks & trails, recreation & bike paths, and environmental sustainability. Helping people explore outdoor experiences provides immeasurable benefits including community cohesion, education and confidence building, mental and physical health. Creating connected biking and hiking trail systems with coordinated management across the jurisdiction would improve the user experience, including maintenance, navigation, signage & interpretation, while improving ecological impacts.

**"Our business attracts folks who are interested in nature and the beauty of the environment of South Georgian Bay."**

2024 BUSINESS SURVEY RESPONDENT



### 2. INDIGENOUS CULTURAL TOURISM

Investing in Indigenous owned and operated experiences provides a key opportunity to put truth and reconciliation into action while enhancing learning opportunities and celebrating our local cultural heritage. Chef Zach Keeshig from Owen Sound is bringing Indigenous cuisine to the region while Cape Croker Park owned and operated by the Cheppewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation provides campgrounds, hiking, and water sports along the cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment.

### 3. CHARACTER ACCOMODATION

Staying in the Southern Georgian Bay Escarpment Region can be an incredible and unique experience. Prioritizing policies that allow and incentivize unique accommodations that reflect the diversity of the region will draw high-value and return visitors, increase the number of jobs and small local businesses that keep economic value within the region. Character accommodations, including inns, guest houses, home-stays, glamping, eco-lodges and more, also often reflect the conservation economy values with low impact and small footprints, historic, restored and repurposed buildings, and allow immersive experiences within the local environment.

### 4. AGRI-TOURISM & CULINARY TOURISM

Travel to take part in an agricultural activity including farmer markets, farm-to-table and locally sourced restaurants, and to stay in local rural accommodations is a major part of Southern Georgian Bay's tourism offering, yet is consistently overlooked by policy and investment in favour of mass-tourism. See below - *Craft Food & Beverage*, for opportunities to link local farmers and producers with the tourism, recreation and accommodation services.

### LOCAL SPOTLIGHT: HEALTH & WELLNESS

Whether training for ski or bike or golf season or recovering from an injury our GYMS like Active Life, Chalks, Peak to Shore, YOGA studios such as Everlove, Cedar & Sage, and our many HEALTH PRACTITIONERS including massage, physiotherapy ensure our population of active residents and visitors stay healthy and safe.

“We recognize the importance of natural outdoor environments for our patient's mental & physical health and well-being”

2024 BUSINESS SURVEY  
RESPONDENT



## LOCAL SPOTLIGHT: FOOD & BEVERAGES

It's easy to eat and drink local!  
Across all our municipalities, an  
ever growing contingent of **local  
farms & orchards:**

The New Farm  
Blackash Farms  
Curries  
Good Family Farms  
Sideroad Farms

**at farmers markets in every  
municipality & filling grocery  
stores:**

Kimberley General Store  
Nottawa General Store  
Ravenna General Store  
Goldsmiths

**feeding farm-to-table  
restaurants:**

Nomad Chef  
Sumac & Salt  
Justin's Oven  
Hearts  
Flying Chestnut  
The Gate

**and provisioning local breweries  
& beverage producers:**

Spye Cidery  
Creemore Brewery  
Rienhard Foods  
Collingwood Brewery  
Heretic Spirits  
Black Bellows Brewing Company  
Duntroon Cyder House & Farm  
Thornbury Cider  
Georgian Hills Vineyards  
Side Launch Brewing Company  
Northwinds Brewery

**with so much fresh food & drinks  
we can't list them all!**

## A Conservation Economy

04

### LOCAL PRODUCTS

The Southern Georgian Bay Escarpment region's rich natural resources for local people and businesses including clean fresh water, diverse forests, fertile soils and abundant species have been providing food, clothing, art, building materials, and more for time immemorial. Inspired by our nature, a conservation economy looks to produce locally sourced goods using methods that regenerate these natural resources and ensure no-pollution, and no-waste.

#### 1. CRAFT FOOD & BEVERAGE

**Agriculture & Farming:** The Escarpment has a long history of providing fresh local delicacies including salmon & steelhead, corn, venison, maple syrup, apple cider, strawberry and raspberry pie, asparagus, bread, ramps, fiddleheads, turkey and more. A resurgence of young farmers and entrepreneurs are bringing small-scale farming back to life while new crops like hops and grapes are opening up opportunities for independent breweries and wineries.

**“Our orchard depends entirely on  
maintaining a healthy and diverse  
biological environment for growing”**

2024 BUSINESS SURVEY RESPONDENT

**Restaurants & Culinary Experiences:** Bringing these foods and drinks direct to market through farmers markets, community supported agriculture programs, farm-to-table culinary, farm & country stores, pick your own experiences can ensure our farmers and local businesses don't lose value along the supply chain while reducing waste and emissions from transporting fresh products long distances. Educating people on how to sustainably forage, fish, grow and find the natural bounty within our forests, fields and waters around us can also create incredible culinary experiences that build strong connections with nature and the destination.



“As a realtor, I’m selling the attributes of the Georgian Bay lifestyle”

2024 BUSINESS SURVEY  
RESPONDENT

## LOCAL SPOTLIGHT: HOUSING

Peak Living, Natural Blends and many other local construction companies, architects, landscapers, interior designers and realtors, work hard to find, build and maintain our residents homes for residents and visitors who come here for the rural, small-town outdoor lifestyle.

“We need more housing, however, there still needs to be a balance and protections for our green spaces and wetlands. You can have both.”

2023 COMMUNITY SURVEY  
RESPONDENT

## A Conservation Economy 04

### SUSTAINABLE SERVICES

THE SOUTHERN GEORGIAN BAY ESCARPMENT EXPERIENCE AND LIFESTYLE ARE SUPPORTED BY A RANGE OF SKILLED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SERVICES PERFORMED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE REGION.

#### 1. HOUSING & CONSTRUCTION

Providing affordable and sustainable housing for local residents that come to live, work and play across the Southern Georgian Bay escarpment, rivers, and lakes is a priority for the conservation economy. This can be achieved by reducing vacancy rates (including second-homes) while prioritizing new building projects that restore, refurbish and repurpose existing buildings into interesting and applicable housing, education and business spaces.

**Local Craftsmanship:** Incorporating local materials, eco-mimicry and renewable energy in architecture and landscaping can provide solutions to growth with a low ecological footprint while maintaining the character of the region. This type of innovative sustainable building supports skilled builders, crafts- and trades-people, and local businesses who understand how to work within the landscape and care about the place they live in.

**Infil Development & Liveable/Walkable Neighbourhoods:** Encouraging infill development within existing downtowns, as well as new mixed-use walkable neighbourhoods. For example, Guelph, in 2013, needed more room and was considering expanding its borders with sprawl-style developments, but chose instead to make it easier and cheaper for developers to build infiltration developments, or buildings that encourage walkable, mixed-use neighbourhoods. See [toolkit](#) below for more info.



## 2. ARTS & CULTURE

The Southern Georgian Bay region supports and inspires incredible artists that create both art and experiences. As well as craftsman creating a range of high quality locally produced products from clothing to soaps and beauty products to traditional crafts that reflect the conservation economy. Re-fill centers, antiques and upcycling, vintage fashion, repair shops and more further support the conservation economy by keeping our goods out of our landfills.

“As an artist, writer and poet, the integrity and quality of our natural and built landscapes is foundational to my approach to my work”

2024 BUSINESS SURVEY  
RESPONDENT

## LOCAL SPOTLIGHT: REVITALIZATION

From reclaiming a single piece of wood to an entire grain terminals and grain terminal, South Georgian Bay has abundant materials to be restored, and the unique expertise and experience to do any project:

BeReclaimed & AGDesign specialize in reclaimed materials for use in furniture and building while the Town of Collingwood is working with StreetCar Developments to reinvision the iconic Grain Terminals

**Non-timber forest products** refer to products other than timber derived from forest including forest based foods, ornamental products, and extracts used to make pharmaceuticals and personal products. This is a relatively untapped opportunity in Southern Georgian Bay for entrepreneurs to harvest value sustainably from our forests for food, art, building, without harming the landscapes and ecosystems

## 3. BUILDING & ARCHITECTURE

From the Shipyards in the Bay to the cabins and caves across the Escarpment, this region has a rich history to be told through the restoration of traditional buildings. A conservation economy also helps write a new story through finding innovative ways to share resources to eliminate waste, reuse and repurpose materials such as from building demolition, dilapidated barns and unused stone fences. Incorporating rewilding, biomimicry, and green design practices into buildings and landscaping can further enhance biodiversity conservation and connectivity.





### 2. KNOWLEDGE, EDUCATION & INNOVATION

The South Georgian Bay Escarpment region has a growing knowledge economy. From traditional Indigenous knowledge to innovative green technology, our region can be a hub for innovation and education. Outdoor "wild" schools can enhance youth connection with nature; interpretive trails and guided tours can help preserve and share our natural and cultural history; partnering with Georgian College and other post-secondary education can develop a conservation economy workforce; a Conservation Innovation Center can attract multi-sector expertise and collaboration across the region.

### LOCAL SPOTLIGHT: KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

South Georgian Bay's conservation economy can enhance and be enhanced by the growing knowledge economy driven across many sectors and initiatives from the Business Development Centre in downtown Collingwood to The Foundry to the Georgian Bay Accelerator and the Institute of South Georgian Bay's Green Economy Hub.

### LEARNING FROM OTHERS: BANFF FARE FREE TRANSIT

Banff's "Local [Public Transit] service that's fare-free has evolved to become a fixture in the way people move through the area. The pedestrian-only zone in the city centre has become an attraction and way of encouraging walking, cycling and using transit", says a local Banff resident. In contrast, South Georgian Bay residents face "increased parking costs and app-based reservation system for parking at recreation sites including roadside trailheads [that] is confusing, ineffective and stops people from getting outdoors".

### 3. TRANSPORTATION

Regions similar to ours across North America have seen wide-spread success with pedestrian-only zones, public transportation and active transportation networks. Transportation solutions require public-private and cross-jurisdiction collaboration to ensure cohesive management, planning and ease of use.

**Public transportation** will help solve congestion problems and reduce land area required for parking. To be viable, public transit must be recreation-friendly including access to remote trailheads, seasonally appropriate gear (e.g., mountain bikes, skis), work across municipalities and cater to low-density use.

**Active transportation** requires investment in trail networks interconnecting communities. The Georgian Trail's success linking Meaford to Stayner should be considered a model for other trail networks that connect with Blue Mountain Village, Creemore, Kimberley and other the villages that dot Southern Georgian Bay.

By reducing personal vehicle use we can create more space for nature: **every 125 parked cars fills up 1 acres** which could otherwise be bike lanes, agriculture, recreation space or natural landscapes.

## Bringing the Vision to Life

As citizens of Southern Georgian Bay, we have the opportunity to choose our path forward and must create space for the multi-faceted values of nature within our economic narrative. We can shift towards a conservation economy built on collective responsibility and collaborative action and sustain our incredible socio-ecological system.

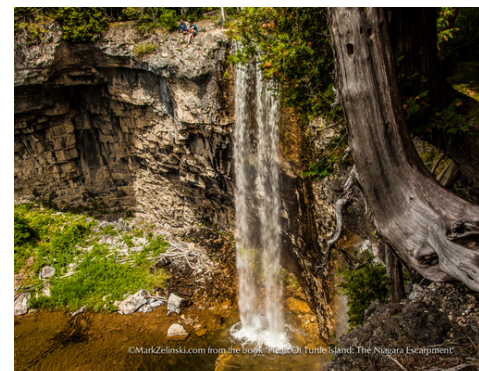
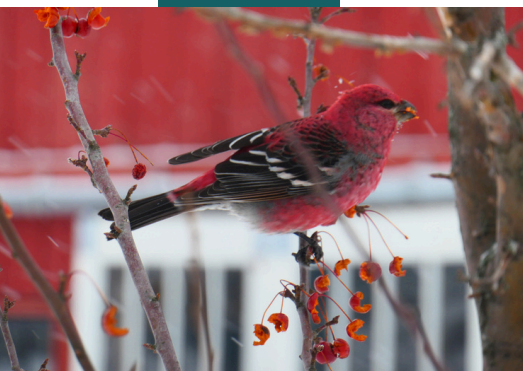
This transformation requires a radical shift from privatizing and extracting activities to those founded in collaboration and contributing to our commons. Reorienting towards our collective right to health, well-being and prosperity over tourists' rights to vacation and corporations rights to extract resources and value away from our landscape and community.

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### INNOVATION, INSPIRATION & INSIGHTS

Just as no single ecosystem or species can exist on its own, an overarching conservation economy framework that is applicable across all stakeholders and socio-ecological contexts likely does not exist. Instead we propose bringing our residents, businesses, and visitors together to co-create an economy that celebrates who we are and supports the communities and environments we rely on. Guided and inspired by nature, a conservation economy's strength and resilience comes from creating a mosaic of diverse, unique and interacting activities built with (not from) the landscape. We hope to inspire innovation, collaboration and leadership to bring the conservation economy to life within and outside the Southern Georgian Bay region.

The following provides recommendations on how all stakeholders across Southern Georgian Bay can take steps to turn the conservation economy vision into reality. From harnessing the power of individual action to building new business opportunities to initiating higher levels of government policy, learn how you can be part of the Southern Georgian Bay's conservation economy.





## 1. Policy Plan

### WHAT POLICY, PLANNING AND REGULATIONS CAN WE IMPLEMENT TO PRIORITIZE AND INCENTIVIZE OUR CONSERVATION ECONOMY?

Our municipalities and counties are poised to implement the principles of a conservation economy. Collingwood identifies itself as a "model testing ground for green initiatives of all kind", Grey County's Made In Grey campaign promotes celebrating who we are, while the Town of Blue Mountains guiding question asks "How might we build upon the unique attributes of the Town of the Blue Mountains while creating a shared path towards a future of increased livability, vibrancy and health of all living systems in our community?". By working together our regional governments can set the groundwork for a cohesive conservation economy.

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS INCLUDE:

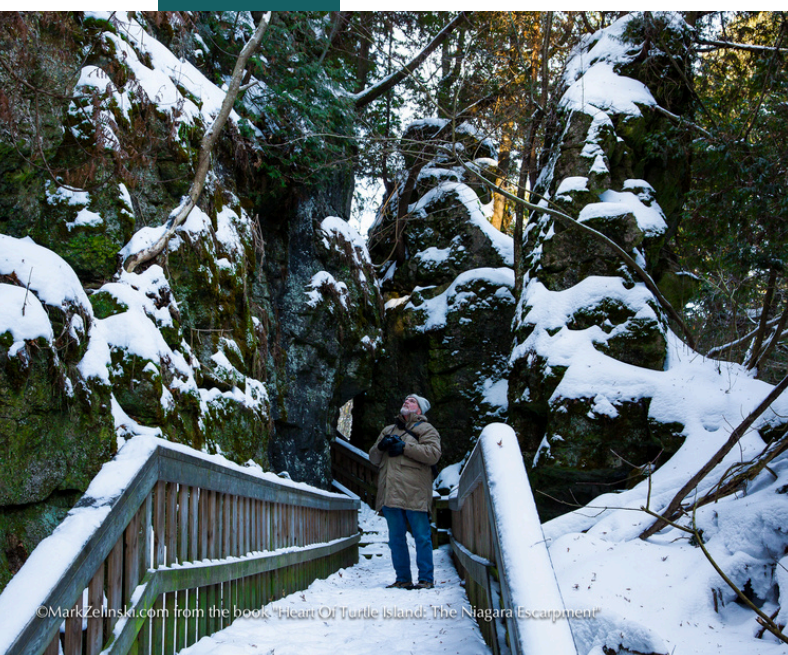
- **Protect & Conserve Natural Spaces and Agricultural Lands**
  - **Create new legally protected areas (provincial, municipal).**
  - Prioritizing areas of ecological significance, connectivity, recreation sites, areas of potential irresponsible development, waterfront and wetlands.

#### More than just parks...

In 2021 The Magpie River was recognized as a legal person with nine legal rights, including the right to flow, to maintain its biodiversity and to take legal action.

**What landscapes or waterways in South Georgian Bay could benefit from acquiring personhood?**

- Continue to build on support services for conservation economy businesses (such as the T3 Tourism Coaching Program program run by Community Futures South Georgian Bay, Made in Grey initiative, Ontario Tourism Growth Program and in conjunction with organizations like the GB Accelerator) focusing on developing businesses that diffuse visitor and resident pressures on Instagram attractions by encouraging exploration of the hidden gems in the region's backroads.
- Agricultural policies that prioritize practices that enhance biodiversity and soil health including: small-scale or artisanal farming; forest gardens and permaculture; organic and regenerative agriculture; pesticide free-farming, no-till farming
- Legislature, policy and incentives for conservation, rewilding and co-planting of native species in urban and rural regions.



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- **Strategically Strengthen Tourism**

- **Adopt and support municipal, county and provincial targets, policies and initiatives within the regional tourism industry that reflect the preservation of the local environment, communities & businesses.**
  - **Adopt regional to international sustainability recommendations such as those by the RT07 Sustainability Working Group.**
  - Conduct tourism planning following innovative sustainable tourism frameworks including: conscious travel, regenerative tourism, de-growth tourism, post-capitalist tourism, slow travel, destination stewardship, tourism living-systems (see - Banff/Canmore tourism plan)
  - Work across tourism and agriculture ministries to better connect tourism sector with regional agriculture sector including incentives and support for agri-tourism, farm-to-table, farmers markets and other initiatives that boost both sectors.
- **Assess regional socio-ecological system limits and establish regional carrying capacities to avoid over-tourism** and over-development, including understanding and limiting tourists growth based on development sprawl, accomodation & impacts on affordable housing, social services, hospital and health system capacity, water, trails & recreation sites, etc.
- **Destination Marketing Organizations focus marketing to attract ideal tourist profiles** who will participate in the conservation economy, with a focus on regional tourists to reduce travel-related emissions.
  - Encouraging short terms stays in appropriate natural areas, farms and villages for smaller groups and with appropriate guard rails & policies such as those created by Town of the Blue Mountains or Prince Edward County
  - Developing 'backroad' itineraries that have developed appropriate parking locations in villages and trailheads (example: Ravenna, Loree Forest in the Town of the Blue Mountains)
- **Build off the Beaver Valley Destination Stewardship initiative model** to bring the wider South Georgian Bay community, government and industry together under a set of Guiding Principles, to see the whole picture, share responsibility, and co-create a tourism vision, leadership and solutions for responsibly stewarding our shared home.

- **Enhance Recreation Infrastructure**

- **Strengthen interconnected trail and recreation management between and across Municipalities & Counties**
- Municipalities & Counties work together to create more protected & interconnected ecosystems/parklands
- Building off the success of the Georgian Trail and Bruce Trail, encourage creation of active transportation networks across the region so that all villages and recreation sites can be linked via safe/non motorized routes including Blue Mountain Village, Kimberley, Ravenna, Creemore, Pretty River Park, Kolapore and other key escarpment areas.
- Ensure appropriate public transit access, parking infrastructure (including paid where appropriate such as Loree Forest, Sunset Point, Delphi Beach) to manage excess vehicle parking and limit over-tourism impacts
- Enhance Responsible recreation education, job opportunities and engagement in conservation
- Increase investment in educational assets that focus on cultural, scientific and environmental experiences and awareness.



- **Promote Responsible Development**

- Regulations to encourage diverse small-scale character accommodation.
- Regulations on construction waste disposal to incentivize salvaging, reusing and repurposing wood and other construction materials throughout the housing development supply chain.
- Stop suburban sprawl across Georgian Bay waterfront, Escarpment UNESCO biosphere region, and surrounding farmland.
- Create planning policies that encourage infill development/densification of settlement areas with clearly laid out attainable accommodation construction targets
- Support mixed use walkable neighbourhoods within existing suburbs and in revitalization of industrial areas

## CASE STUDY: SPRAWL VERSUS INFIL DEVELOPMENT

Guelph: in 2013, needed more room and was considering expanding its borders with sprawl-style developments, but chose instead to make it easier and cheaper for developers to build infiltration developments, or buildings that encourage walkable, mixed-use neighbourhoods. When you look at Guelph's finances from 2013 to 2019, it's clear that the city has developed in such a way as to create more wealth for itself. **How can we adopt a development model in South Georgian Bay that prioritizes infill and avoids sprawling onto our greenspaces?**

Check out [this video on the economic costs of sprawl](#)

- **Commit to a Conservation Economy**

- Municipalities can commit to planning, funding, managing and evaluating our economy using globally recognized innovative frameworks and metrics of success that align with a Conservation Economy and place South Georgian Bay as leaders in tourism sustainability. This could include:
  - universal basic services,
  - nature's contributions to people
  - buen vivir
  - happiness index,
- By moving away from GDP growth as the primary metric for evaluating our local economy, we can prioritize health, wellbeing, and prosperity for all residents, visitors and the landscape on which our communities and economies are built.

## 2. Ground Game

### WHAT CAN LOCAL BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON THE GROUND DO TO ACTIVELY BE PART OF OUR CONSERVATION ECONOMY?

#### Support On-Site Conservation & Sustainability

- Support initiatives that preserve, restore, and enhance local ecosystems, natural and cultural sites. This can include tree plantings, removing invasive species, removing dams on streams as well as other projects such as those organized by the [Blue Mountain Watershed Trust](#)
- Reducing waste production (especially plastics) and actively encouraging guests to help by taking a [sustainability pledge](#). Work with organizations like RTO7 Sustainability Working Group to adopt regional best practices
- Build houses & buildings that are sensitive to the environment and recognize its importance to protecting the very reason people want to live, work and play here...this applies to single dwellings and larger developments (think of the alpine, mediterranean, Icelandic characteristic buildings that enhance the land's characteristics)

#### Creative Cross-Sector Collaborations

- Collaborate and support other local businesses to make it easier for visitors to choose locally owned companies.
  - Connect with other businesses through the South Georgian Bay Green Economy Hub, Business Development Center and more.
  - Developing [local business maps](#) or joint “backroad” experiences like the [Collingwood Craft Beverage Tour](#) can encourage visits to small businesses while relieving pressure on over-crowded destinations and reducing economic leakage.
- Source local products including food, drink, soaps, art, building materials, choosing seasonal, sustainable ingredients and materials.
- Promote multi-day itineraries & packages that encourage overnight stays and exposure to unique, seasonal specific local experiences such those created by [South Georgian Bay Tourism](#)
- Encourage partnerships between agriculture, culinary and hospitality sectors to create stronger Farm-to-Table & Indigenous culinary experiences similar to the focused efforts by [Prince Edward County](#).
  - Build off of existing successes such as [The New Farm, Sumac & Salt](#) and [Naagan](#).
- Leverage the growing body of evidence including that released by the [Nature Conservancy of Canada](#) and [PaRx](#) about the prescribing power of nature
  - Build on emerging efforts to integrate health & wellness with nature such as the [Green Prescription Pilot Project](#), a collaboration between [Free Spirit Tours](#) and the South Georgian Bay Community Health Centre.



### Engage & Support Employees

- Create a conservation or sustainability committee amongst employees, encourage ideas developed by staff, and celebrate engagement in improving the sustainability of your business.
- Provide employees with perks and benefits that tie to local experiences, products and services.
- Adopt a regional charity or conservation initiative and give employees the time off and resources to volunteer and get involved on the ground.
- Provide a charitable matching program for employees that donate to regional charities or conservation initiatives.
- Develop partnerships between seasonal businesses to provide year-round stable employment and career development
  - Existing examples include collaborations between summer (agriculture, golf) and winter (ski) operations.
- Provide training, education and career development in sustainable aspects of your operations to ensure the long-term viability of both the region and your business
  - Georgian College South Georgian Bay offers programs in Environmental Sustainability; Environmental Technologies; Health, Wellness and Sciences; Indigenous Studies; and certificates in Supply Chain Management
  - Online sustainability programs and certifications are available in a range of industries.
- Provide staff with affordable accommodation options.

### SECTOR SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Tourism, Hospitality & Recreation Businesses:

- Seasonal businesses can partner to provide full-time year round employment, and encourage shoulder season activities with visitors
- Protect, restore and rewild available land surrounding businesses
- Partnerships between agriculture and hospitality sectors can create a strong Farm-to-Table culinary experiences and resilient businesses.
  - Prioritize seasonal menus and locally sourced ingredients
  - Eliminate transportation, packaging and waste where possible
- Partnerships between local accommodations, activities, and restaurants that encourage and incentivize visitors to focus on our local businesses and entrepreneurs rather than corporate chain providers.
- Encourage overnight stays at unique character accommodations that are locally owned and expose visitors to our local culture and history
  - Examples include: Penny's Motel, Dorchester Hotel, Craighleith Manor B&B, Vander Marck, etc.
- Use local craftsmanship and promote local artists within restaurants, lodges and hotels, including architecture, landscaping, art, live music, soaps and other artisanal goods and services etc.

**Food, Beverage & Agriculture Sector:**

- Partnerships between agriculture and hospitality sectors to create a strong Farm-to-Table or Market systems which increase resilience and profitability of agriculture businesses by increasing direct sales and eliminating transportation costs.
- Prioritize practices that enhance biodiversity and soil health including: small-scale or artisanal Farming; forest gardens and permaculture; organic and regenerative agriculture; pesticide free-farming, no-till farming;
- Partner with conservation organizations for help with rewilding and co-planting native species to improve biodiversity, pollination, soil health
- Maintain or enhance windrows to support biodiversity and habitat connectivity, reduce wind and soil erosion.
- Prioritize native crops and products
- Promote local manufacturing and eliminate transportation, packaging and waste where possible

**CASE STUDY: LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY**

Nunavut has prioritized a return to harvesting country food (e.g. caribou, muskox, Arctic char), local processing, preparation and distribution, provides nutritious sustainable food to local people and economic value at over \$200 million to the region.

Locally, entrepreneurs like [Barefoot Brian](#) are teaching locals and visitors alike of all our edible wild plants, while [The New Farm](#) and [Farmacare Regenerative Agriculture](#) is a certified organic and regenerative family farm on the Niagara Escarpment, that produces quality organic vegetables for restaurants, retail stores and wholesale customers, working to build a just, equitable and inclusive local food system.

**Architecture, Construction & Landscaping Sector**

- Revitalize and repurpose existing infrastructure for residential, commercial and public uses including barns, old homes, industrial buildings
  - Tremont Studios in Collingwood has revitalized the Tremont House, a hotel built in 1889 during the booming railway and shipbuilding era, into a vibrant artist collective and studio, with a restaurant and public events to meet local artists.
  - Collingwood Terminal revitalization proposes preserving the iconic facade of the Terminals while creating a vibrant hotel, commercial and public use space. These examples
  - The Dorchester, VanderMarck, Somewhere Inn and others preserve and showcase both the history of the region and
- Maintain space for nature and support biodiversity within building and landscaping including preserving wetlands, planting native and pollinator species, integrating edible gardens and orchards, rewilding and co-planting.



### 3. Individual Action

#### HOW CAN VISITORS AND RESIDENTS LEARN ABOUT, PARTICIPATE IN AND BENEFIT FROM OUR CONSERVATION ECONOMY?

Experiencing the natural beauty and mountain culture draws tourists and residents alike to these locations, thus we all have a vested interest in participating in local conservation.

- **Homeowners & Residents**

- Explore your own backyard and get to know the incredible wildlife, plants, ecosystems of the Southern Georgian Bay.
- Join or start a community engaged in exploring, enjoying and learning about the region. Examples include:
  - Hiking: [Blue Mountains Bruce Trail Club](#); [Beaver Valley Ramblers](#)
  - Biking: [Collingwood Off Road Cycling](#); [Collingwood Cycling Club](#),
  - Running: [Collingwood Run Club](#); [Thornbury Run Club](#)
  - Birding, Crosscountry skiing, Surfing, SUPing, Fishing and more
- Rewild your property, lawn or balcony by planting a vegetable garden, native flowers, grasses, and trees.
- Plant Trees (or replant - 2 trees for every tree that dies) with indigenous species
  - Programs such as [Forests Ontario tax abatement and tree planting projects](#) or [Maple Leafs Forever](#) can help subsidize costs and labour.
- Place your land into a land conservation easement with a conservancy like Bruce Trail, Escarpment Biosphere and others that operate in the region
- Join conservation groups like the [ECA](#), [Blue Mountain Watershed Trust](#), [Clearview Sustainability Network](#) and [others](#) in the alliance
- Invest time in learning and getting involved in local policy and making sure our government hears from us on the ground. We are all stewards of our community and destination stewardship must work from the ground up.

- **Visitors & Guests**

- Buy local: choose to stay at small local accommodations, buy from locally owned and operated businesses, support local artists and artisans, guides, and activity operators, eat local foods and enjoy local restaurants and bars.
- Visit Kimberley Education Center, Tremont Studios, and other cultural sites.

- **Staff Employees**

- Create a conservation or sustainability committee amongst employees, encourage ideas developed by staff, and celebrate engagement in improving the sustainability of your business.
- Educate visitors and clients on the opportunities to explore the region's natural and cultural assets and support the conservation economy.

## Key Terms & Concepts & Resources

### Adventure Tourism

Outdoor activities that present the participant with risk and challenge. Adventure tourism is divided into two types: hard adventure and soft adventure.

### Agritourism

Agritourism covers a wide variety of recreational, educational and other leisure activities and services, provided by farmers and ranchers and experienced by consumers who value the activity or service they receive and seek it out. Agritourism may be defined as activities, events and services related to agriculture that take place on or off the farm or ranch, and that connect consumers with the heritage, natural resource or culinary experience they value. There are three general classifications of agritourism activities: on-farm/ranch, food-based, and heritage activities.

### Buen Vivir (Sumak Kawsay)

Literal translation is collective well-being or collective good living. Buen Vivir is a new paradigm of social and economical commons, based on ideas of balance, harmony and that true well-being is only possible as part of a community. Counter to economic indicators such as GDP which prioritize market valuations, individual and competition, Buen Vivir is community centric, ecologically balanced and culturally sensitive. See examples in [Ecuador](#) and [other South American contexts](#)

### Carrying Capacity

The number of people, animals, or crops which a region can support without environmental degradation.

### Circular Economy

In a circular economy, nothing is waste. The circular economy retains and recovers as much value as possible from resources by reusing, repairing, refurbishing, remanufacturing, repurposing, or recycling products and materials.

It's about using valuable resources wisely, thinking about waste as a resource instead of a cost, and finding innovative ways to better the environment and the economy. ([Government of Canada](#))

### Conservation Economy

Wherein economic wealth is harvested from a bioregion's local natural resources in a way that meets local communities' needs yet restores rather than depletes natural and social capital. In a conservation economy, communities take the lead in deciding how to manage land and natural resources while creating new employment opportunities and stewarding ecosystems for the benefit of future generations. See examples in [Haida Gwaii and the Great Bear Rainforest of BC](#) and across [Ontario](#)

### De-Growth

Critiques the global capitalist system which pursues growth at all costs, causing human exploitation and environmental destruction, and instead promotes a radical redistribution, reduction in the material size of the global economy, and a shift in common values towards care, solidarity and autonomy. Degrowth means transforming societies to ensure environmental justice and a good life for all within planetary boundaries.



### Destination Management Organization (DMO)

A destination marketing organization is an organization that promotes tourism for a town, city, region. DMO's promote the long term development and marketing of a destination, focusing on convention sales, tourism marketing, and service. The organization is also responsible for providing the insights and leadership necessary to bring policies and plans into reality and is a key stakeholder shaping who and how regions market their tourism products.

### Destination Stewardship

An on-going process by which local communities, government agencies, NGO's and the tourism industry take a multi-stakeholder approach to maintaining the cultural, environmental, economic and aesthetic integrity of their country, region, or town. In other words, to ensure that the destination retains and enhances the distinctive attributes that make it attractive to both residents and beneficial tourism. ([Destination Stewardship Centre](#))

An approach to destination governance that seeks to balance and meet the economic, environmental and social/cultural needs of a destination; whilst operating within a legitimate governance model with active participation from the public and private sectors as well as the local community ([WTTC](#))

### Economic Impact

The activities overall contribution to national economic activity. It includes the direct, indirect, and induced impacts.

**Direct impact:** the activity's initial expenditures on equipment, materials and services – that is their direct spending associated with the activity.

**Indirect impact:** purchases by suppliers/service providers in the course of providing the goods and services required by the people who participate in the activity.

**Induced impact:** the re-spending of income on consumer goods and services by service providers and workers in the sectors receiving the initial and indirect expenditures.

### Economic Leakage

In economics, leakage refers to capital or income that diverges from some kind of iterative system. Transactions that take or divert money out of an economy. A leakage occurs when there is a withdrawal of funds from the economy that result in a reduction of national or regional income and the trading of goods and services.

### Economic Leakage in Tourism

The proportion of tourist expenditures that does not reach or remain in the destination's economy. "Tourism leakage" is when revenue generated by tourism is lost to other countries' economies. This revenue "leaks" out to other economies when tourist spending goes to businesses and corporations that aren't local to the place being visited. In many places, foreign and international corporations have greater the capital to invest in tourism facilities like hotels and resorts, competing with local businesses and then extracting the revenues out of the economy.

### Ecotourism

Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.

**Employment - Full-time equivalent (FTE)**

The employment of one person for one full year or the equivalent thereof.

**Expenditures**

Money spent on purchasing any goods or services related to the activity.

**Geopark, (UNESCO Global Geoparks)**

UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp) are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. Their bottom-up approach of combining conservation with sustainable development while involving local communities is becoming increasingly popular. At present, there are 213 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 48 countries, and a grassroots initiative is underway to establish Georgian Bay as a UNESCO Geopark in Canada.

**Green Economy**

A low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive economy where growth in employment and income are driven by public and private investment into such economic activities, infrastructure and assets that allow reduced carbon emissions and pollution, enhanced energy and resource efficiency, and prevention of the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. (UNEP)

**Gross domestic product (GDP)**

Measure of the value of total final output of goods and services produced.

**Happiness Index**

The Happiness Index is a comprehensive survey instrument that assesses happiness, well-being, and aspects of sustainability and resilience. The Happiness Alliance developed the Happiness Index to provide a survey instrument to community organizers, researchers, and others seeking to use a subjective well-being index and data. It is the only instrument of its kind freely available worldwide and translated into over ten languages. This instrument can be used to measure satisfaction with life and the conditions of life. It can also be used to define income inequality, trust in government, sense of community and other aspects of well-being within specific demographics of a population.

**Linear Economy**

A linear economy moves in a straight line from resource extraction to waste disposal. The way our economies extract, use, then dispose of resources is putting pressure on our natural systems, communities, and public health. (Government of Canada)

**Nature's Contributions to People**

Tangible and intangible benefits provided by nature to humans, such as carbon sinks, pollination of food crops, purification of water and air or mitigation of floods. All renewable natural materials that offer us food, clothing, energy or medicines are also part of nature's contributions to people. Also known as ecosystem services.



**Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs):**

Areas that are achieving the long term and effective in-situ conservation of biodiversity outside of protected areas. They are geographic areas governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values. Canada accepts and uses the term OECM now.

**Rewilding**

An effort to increase biodiversity and restore the natural processes of an ecosystem that typically involves reducing or ceasing human activity and often the planned reintroduction of a plant or animal species and especially a keystone species. A progressive approach to conservation. It's about letting nature take care of itself, enabling natural processes to shape land and sea, repair damaged ecosystems and restore degraded landscapes. Through rewilding, wildlife's natural rhythms create wilder, more biodiverse habitats. See examples in [Europe where rewilding supports conservation economy development](#)

**Over-Tourism**

The impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or visitors in a negative way (UNWTO 2018;4)

**Regenerative Economy**

An economic system that works to regenerate capital assets, particularly the social and natural capital. A regenerative economy emphasizes the pursuit of net-positive impacts by restoring and regenerating environment, social and economic systems simultaneously. This means moving away from extractive business models and unlocking potential for positive climate, nature, social and economic contributions wherein a regenerative economy adds to rather than depletes capital assets. See case study of regenerative construction by [Unbuilders, BC](#)

**Regenerative Tourism**

Regenerative tourism centres place and its communities to restore harmonious and reciprocal relations between humans and the rest of nature (Bellato et al. 2023). Regenerative tourism understands that visitors and destinations are part of a living system embedded in the natural environment and operate under nature's rules and principles. The concept acknowledges the interconnectedness of various natural and social environments and is designed to give back to the land and people (Hussain 2021). See regenerative tourism frameworks from [Destination Canada, World Tourism and Travel Council](#)

**Sustainability**

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (UN Brundtland Commission 1987)

**Sustainable Development**

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (UN World Commission on Environment and Development)

**Sustainable Tourism**

Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. Additionally, sustainable tourism refers to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability ([UNEP](#) & [UNWTO](#)).

**Tourism**

Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes. The term "usual environment" is intended to exclude trips within the area of usual residence, frequent and regular trips between the domicile and the workplace, and other community trips of routine character. (UN World Tourism Organization)

**Universal Basic Services**

The provision of sufficient public services, as can be afforded from a reasonable tax on incomes, to enable every citizen's safety, opportunity, and participation. Basic Services should be universally available to provide shelter, sustenance, health & care, education, local transport, information access, and legal & democracy support, at a level that enables every member of society to maintain their material safety, and embark on efforts to make their personal contribution to the rest of their society.



**ESCARPMENT  
CORRIDOR ALLIANCE**



**South Georgian Bay  
INNOVATION  
Fund**

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