

2023-2028

Regional Tourism Promotion Strategic Plan



Southwest New Brunswick Service
Commission
Regional Destination Marketing Office
June 29, 2023

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Introduction

History and Methodology

In 2023 the province of New Brunswick undertook a significant Local Government reform. As outlined in the white paper “Working together for vibrant and sustainable communities”, the province restructured local and regional service commission boundaries; in addition to the boundary changes, the Regional Service Commission’s service delivery model was enhanced to provide a forum for regional collaboration on the province’s key economic and wellbeing priority pillars. This service delivery model change ultimately provided leadership and strengthened regional collaboration capacity to support these provincial pillars by delivering five additional services, including regional Tourism promotion, Economic Development, recreation infrastructure cost sharing, community development and transportation.

Since the release of the white paper and the LG reform, all eight local governments of Southwest New Brunswick were now presented with an opportunity to cooperate on Regional Tourism promotion and contribute annually to the development and implementation of a Tourism Destination Marketing Organization for the Southwest Region under RSC 10 (SNBSC). With the role of SNBSC under the province of New Brunswick’s Regional service delivery act expanding to provide tourism promotion for its members within the RSC 10 boundaries, SNBSC was required to establish a Regional Destination Marketing Organization (RDMO) which will act as the regional body that promotes tourism in the area.

The primary purpose of the RDMO related to the RSC is to be an industry-driven collaborative body that develops and implements a regional tourism strategy and aims to connect regional tourism stakeholders in the territory covered by the RSC. The Board of SNBSC determined that the RSC 10 RDMO takes the form of an internal department of the RSC. As such, along with a dedicated staff person, SNBSC has established a Tourism Marketing Committee to provide a forum for local governments and tourism stakeholders to cooperate on regional tourism promotion and play a vital role in coordinating their regional tourism economy.

With the new RDMO framework in place, a Tourism Strategy is the first step in creating a blueprint to set long-term, sustainable growth of the regional tourism industry. To that end, in concert with the SNBSC, Gemtec, a consultant hired to assist with the development of the regional tourism strategy, a series of workshops and engagement sessions were held to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to help shape the future direction of SNBSC as a Regional Destination Marketing Organization (RDMO), focusing on initiatives that can be implemented within a short time period. The workshops—in addition to the information and feedback provided by the local governments, tourism organizations and operators; existing Provincial and National strategic plans; reports relevant to travel trends and visitor motivators; and supplemental research and analysis on market conditions and target market insights conducted by Environics Analytics—served as the basis for this 2023 – 2028 Southwest New Brunswick Tourism Strategy.

The following strategy presents a tourism vision for Southwest NB, its opportunities and challenges, and priority activities that could be implemented over the next five years (2023 – 2028). It is intended to serve as a guide as it proceeds with implementation. This strategy should be reviewed and updated to reflect changing tourism objectives, priorities and market conditions. Also, results should be tracked regularly such that an updated strategy, with learning from the current year’s activities, can be even more effective in increasing regional benefits.

Situation analysis

Key insights

Travel Trends and Outlook

Overall, the tourism sector is seeing positive growth globally, in Canada and NB, with projections for continued positive growth and recovery according to 2022 industry outlook reports prepared by Destination Canada. At the onset of the new tourism services being developed, SNBSC undertook detailed research and analysis of the visitors to SW New Brunswick, their travel patterns, seasonality, and the origin of travel to establish baseline visitor data to the region, validating the industry outlook report findings. It also gave insights into travel trends and motivators for the visitors to SW New Brunswick and echoed patterns and trends noted on a global, national and provincial scale. The increasing interest in seeking out memorable, authentic experiences, growing environmental concern, and the appeal of nature (in an increasingly urban world) are all trends that could increase the appeal of Southwest New Brunswick as a travel destination. Visitors to NB, specifically the Acadian Peninsula and Fundy Coast (including SWNB), are motivated by and participate in the types of experiences and activities that Southwest NB offers. Nature (e.g., parks, beaches, the Bay of Fundy), alternative accommodations (Glamping, unique stays), wellness, food and drink, and outdoor activities (e.g., hiking, hunting & fishing, scuba diving, motorized trails, camping and watersports) are key drivers for these visitors.

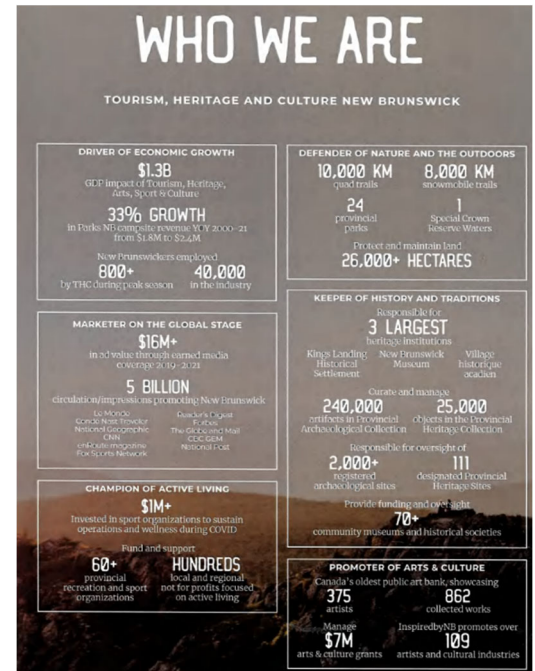
Unique identity and position

SNBSC is looking to position itself for people seeking a unique connection with iconic natural features, its people, culture, and outdoor recreation activities. The region borders the United States, is cradled by the Passamaquoddy and Fundy bays and boasts dense Acadian Forest, picturesque sandy beaches, dramatic wave-swept coastlines, abundant rivers, lakes, estuaries, and ancient rock formations. It's a significant territory of the Bay of Fundy and home to several iconic features and landmarks, including:



- The Fundy Isles with accessible islands to visit and stay
- the only place in the province to whale watch and experience marine wildlife and birds such as puffins,
- Old Sow - the largest tidal whirlpool in the western hemisphere,
- The St. Croix River - one of Canada's 41 Canadian Heritage River systems,
- A part of the UNESCO Stonehammer Geopark located at Lepreau Falls, ancient rock formations where fossils of plants and footprints of animals after the Lower Carboniferous period can be found.

NB's Tourism Industry Performance

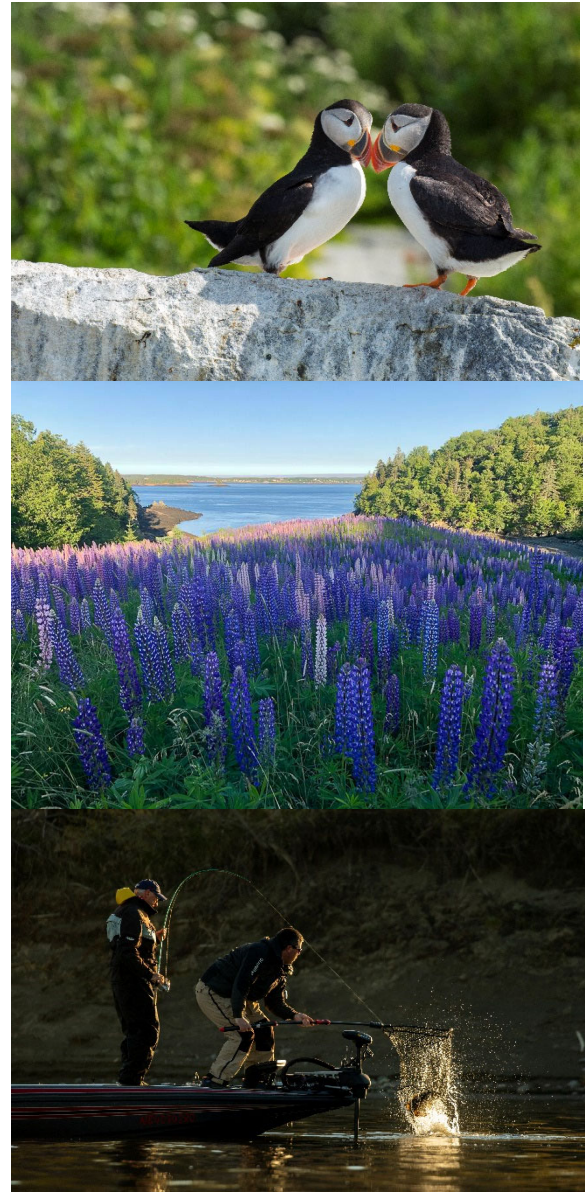


The determination of a unique identity for Southwest New Brunswick, and the selection of iconic experiences to feature and highlight, will be valuable to create a unique brand and help set Southwest New Brunswick apart from other options.

Establishing the brand position will be an immediate priority and goal to set the stage for long-term success and to activate meaningful, impactful, and engaging marketing campaigns. It will be important that the brand identity aligns with the Provincial tourism strategy plans, initiatives, and brand guidelines to leverage co-marketing programs and campaigns to their fullest potential. Still, as a starting position, the RDMO committee has identified that it is important to show that in addition to its natural wonders and iconic landmarks, what makes southwest new Brunswick a preferred destination is its people, culture, quaint communities, solitary wilderness, rich biodiversity, diverse landscapes, expansive outdoor activities, and its food experience.

There is also no shortage of wildlife, with an abundance of large and small game, and marine life thanks to its pristine landscape and diversity, southwest New Brunswick has an extensive network of parks and trails, including an emerging regional provincial Signature trail, The Coastal Link, and a future international motorized trail network between ATV Maine and QuadNB. Southwest New Brunswick offers easy access to forests, rivers and tidal waters for a variety of water and land-based activities, and with 3 coastal provincial parks with public beaches, 1 international park, home of Canada's Premier seaside resort town-Saint Andrews, 8 Nature Preserves, several cultural and historic sites, botanical gardens, aquariums, museums and art galleries, visitors are provided with a variety of activities to see and do.

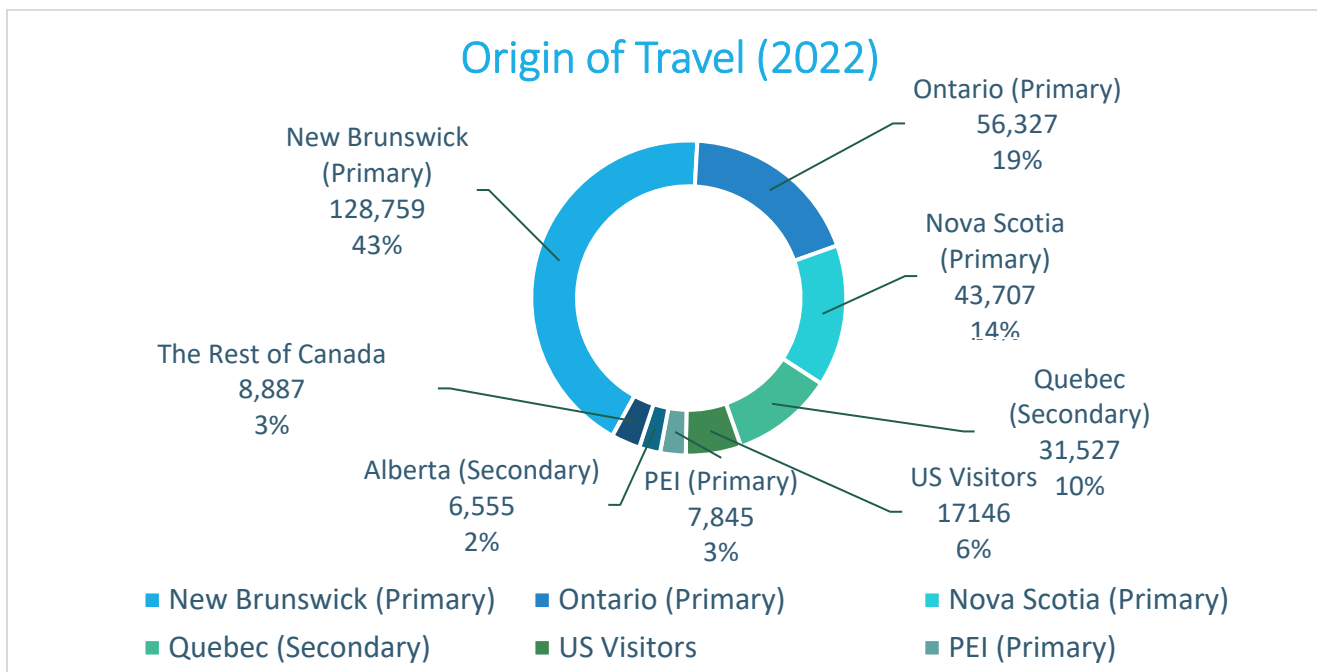
For that reason, the RDMO committee has set the starting position to refine further and build from during the brand development process:



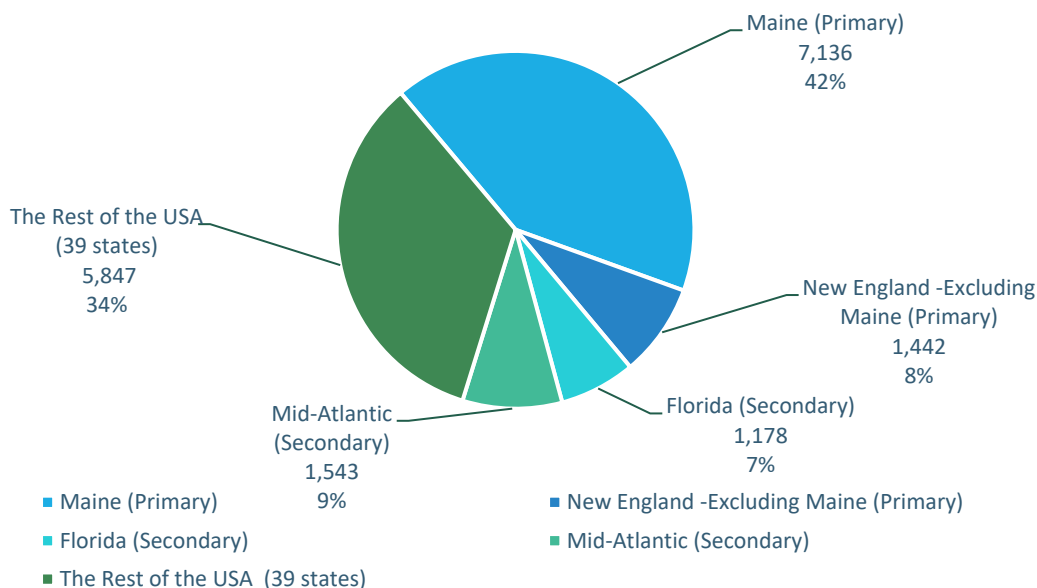
"Our aim is to provide an unforgettable experience for those seeking an escape from the chaos of everyday life. Whether they're individuals, couples, or families, Southwest New Brunswick is the perfect destination for guests who crave authentic journeys and genuine encounters. Our region boasts a rich history, stunning scenery, and awe-inspiring coastlines. Visitors can witness breaching whales and marvel at breathtaking skylines. Here, people can fully embrace local culture and immerse themselves in the natural beauty of our area. We encourage our guests to use all their senses: to appreciate every flavour, texture, scent, and sight that our region has to offer. Southwest New Brunswick caters to travellers who appreciate the beauty of nature and the comfort of cozy cottages, tents under the stars, or luxurious coastal hotels. Our region is perfect for those willing to take the road less travelled, appreciate the journey, and fully unwind."

Our Market

In 2022, Southwest New Brunswick comprised 11% of the provincial market share and nearly 32% of the Provincial fundy Catchment area. The strongest market for SW New Brunswick is the near-in markets (one to two hours away), with NB and Maine's residents being the primary short-haul drive market. The primary markets for the long-haul market are ON, NS, PEI and New England. The Secondary markets are AB, QB, Florida and Mid-Atlantic.



Origin of Travel USA (2022)



Tourism NB will be campaigning and actively marketing the province with the Bay of fundy as a key experience to our current primary and secondary markets, targeting visitors with profiles that match most of the current Canadian, Maine and New England target markets in Southwest Nb. Since the region falls within the Fundy Bay catchment, where possible, SNBSC will leverage the existing provincial destination marketing efforts and partnership programs for the primary short-haul and long-haul markets and create captivating and impactful campaigns and plans to reach the identified target visitors in the primary market where the visitor profile is not a primary market focus for TNB. The demographic profile and persons of some visitors in our primary long-haul market, where there is an opportunity to capture more market share based on the region's travel offerings, note a slight difference in visitor profiles compared to the province's marketing plans.

These include:

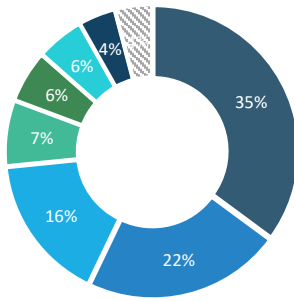
- Upscale Suburban Families (ON, NS, PEI)
- Seniors with Middle Income (NS, PEI, ON)
- Middle Age Upscale families (New England)
- Families with Modest income (New England)

The above target markets will require a deeper dive into their preferences, social values, and explorer quotient to create unique marketing tactics and offerings to attract a larger share of this market compared to the provincial marketing campaigns. In addition, SNBSC will also create campaigns which will appeal to existing visitors and complement the existing marketing efforts of the province which are:

- Outdoorsy Suburban Families (ON, QB, NS, PEI)
- Young Urban cultural Enthusiasts (ON, QB, NS, PEI)
- Outdoorsy rural Families (NS, PEI)
- Road Tripping Families (New England)
- Exploring empty nesters (New England)

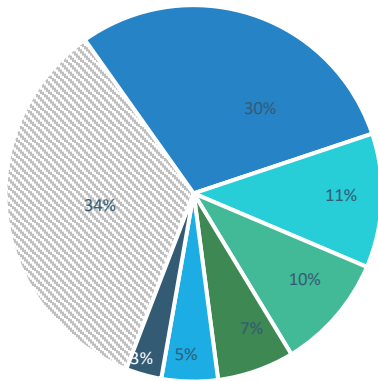


2022 USA Visitor Profile Composition (%)



- Maine Seniors & Mature Spring Visitors
- Maine Younger to middle age families
- Affluent Empty-Nesters [Florida & New England]
- Florida Senior Summer Visitors
- Florida Upscale Families
- New England Families with Modest Income

2022 Canadian visitor profile composition (%)



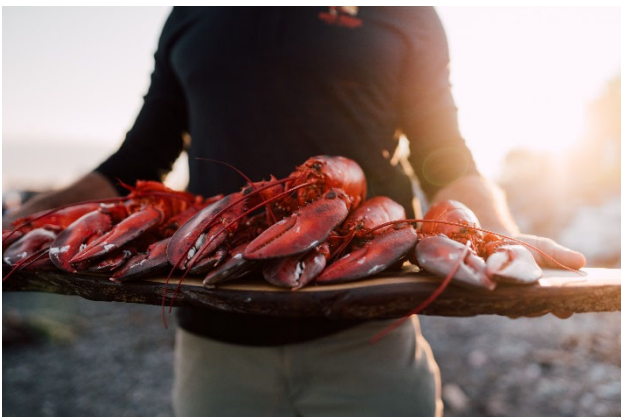
- Non-Target
- Seniors with Middle Income
- Upscale Suburban families
- Younger urbanites
- Ontario High income families
- Quebec Middle-aged families
- Diverse Singles and Couples w/ modest income



As there were no pre-existing marketing plans with targeted visitor campaigns for the region, the visitor data information gathered by SNBSC will also be used to establish key insights to drive strategic marketing plans, which should be reviewed annually to ensure plans and tactics meet the market's needs. Establishing an annual marketing plan and campaign strategy will be an immediate goal and priority to activate the tourism strategy and drive results toward the SNBSC's Tourism division's Key performance indicators, which are:

1. Encouraging visitation by improving the visibility of the destination to increase the total number of visitors to the Region.
2. Increasing average length of overnight stay duration from baseline 2.5 nights
3. Become a major contributor to the Provincial and Fundy Catchment tourism landscape by Increasing the market share (%) of visitors to the region.

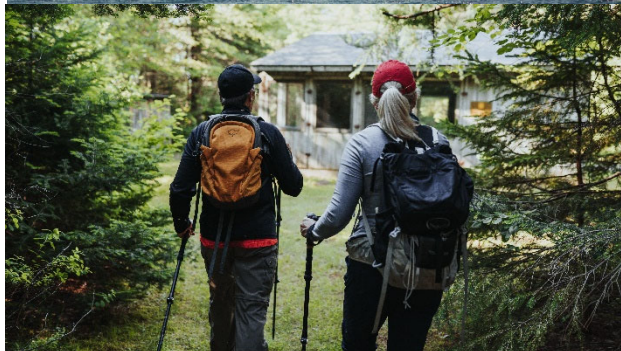
Our Capacity for Growth



The Southwest New Brunswick region of the province has faced barriers to actualizing the full economic potential of the Tourism industry, namely as a result of voluntary funding and levy models, challenges in having all local governments leverage tourism cooperation and collaboration within the region, or be able to afford to invest in the economic opportunity such as tourism due to its population size. As a result, the current tourism landscape in SW New Brunswick while thriving in some parts, is fragmented, uncoordinated, lacks a unified distinct voice in the provincial tourism landscape and sees some local DMO's working in silos (Not always intentionally) with limited funding and resources.



SW New Brunswick has momentum built in the leisure market, with the strong potential to develop sports tourism, events, experiential food & culture, and adventure tourism markets. There is an opportunity to continue to grow the existing market and enter new ones. Still, product capacity, workforce availability, lack of tourism operators, and visitor support services pose a significant barrier. The region's accommodators focus strongly on the Leisure market yet cannot reach their full potential due to low accommodations in some parts of the region. In contrast, others are faced with shortened seasonality due to workforce availability.



New growth in sport tourism, events, experiential, adventure markets, and the overnight market will require new hotel accommodations, workforce development and growth, housing to accommodate the tourism workforce and multi-modal transportation solutions. These challenges to actualize growth in the Tourism Markets should be explored and prioritized through the Economic Development and Transportation divisions of SNBSC as a regional priority, as well as championed through strong collaboration with the Opportunities NB, the Department of

Tourism, Heritage and Culture, The Regional Development Corporation and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.

The accessibility of getting to SWNB for long-haul visitors poses challenges namely with air transportation costs being the largest barrier, followed by low car rental availability/operators and no shuttle or bus service or operators to the region from the Saint John or Fredericton International airports. Despite this, the region is well positioned for ground transportation and water ferry services with four international points of entry along its border, 3 water vessel wharves which currently receive passenger ferry, pleasure & commercial vessels, the occasional small cruise vessel, and major highway corridors to major urban centers (Fredericton, Saint John, Bangor) via Hwy 1, 3 and 9.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

The following analysis outlines some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for SW New Brunswick as a destination, as raised at the May 6, 2023 workshop and through various stakeholder meetings from January to April 2023.

Strengths

» PROXIMITY TO METRO CENTERS: Centrally located between 3 Metro centers, Saint John, Fredericton and Bangor, ME, SW New Brunswick is easily accessible via transportation corridors and networks such as Highways 1 and 3, and US highways 1, 9 and 189. It also forms part of the Quoddy Triangle within the Passemoquoddy Bay which water routes link St. Andrews, Campobello and Grand Manan Islands to Eastport, ME.

» NATURAL WONDERS: The Bay of fundy; the only place in the province to whale watch and have experiences with marine wildlife and birds such as puffins; Old Sow, the largest tidal whirlpool in the western hemisphere; the St. Croix River, 1 of Canada's 41 Canadian Heritage River system; UNESCO Stonehammer Geopark at Lepreau falls where fossils of plants and footprints of animals after the Lower Carboniferous period can be found.

» SOLITARY WILDERNESS AND QUIANT COMMUNITIES: Off the beaten path, comprised of smaller rural communities and villages, the vast territory of SW New Brunswick is largely undeveloped leaving plenty of room to escape the crowds and tourist traps, and connect with nature. The small communities have a pace of times past compared to urban life nowadays, where everything is a bit slower and Sundays are still a day of rest for most, usually spent with loved ones and enjoying the simple pleasures of life.



» PEOPLE AND CULTURE: Having a reputation for being friendly, the people are warm, welcoming, fun, helpful, and loving. If you are a CFA (come-from-away), you can notice the friendly, welcoming smiles when visiting. People shouldn't shy away from locals having a say and telling a tale; they love getting to know who is visiting. Home of the ancient Peskotomuhkati and Maliseet people for thousands of years and a mixture of French, English, Scottish and Irish settlers, our connection to the Fundy and Passamaquoddy bays, and the past agriculture settlements which now form our small communities is deeply rooted in the cultural fabric. The Ocean, waterways, fishing and agriculture have been a way of life for thousands of years, and a deep appreciation and respect for the water and lands are still reflected in our rural communities today.

» **ATTRACTIONS AND TOP DESTINATIONS:** whale watching, 3 provincial parks, 1 international park, 8 Nature Preserves, several cultural and historic sites, botanical gardens, aquarium, museums and art galleries, visitors are provided with a variety of activities to see and do.

» **FESTIVALS AND TOURNAMENTS:** SW New Brunswick has several annual festivals and sports tournaments, with St. Andrews and St. Stephen positioned as experienced hosts that offer the resources to assist in event planning- Indulge wine and food, Paddlefest, International Homecoming, Chocolate fest, and Minor hockey tournaments. New River Beach, through Parks NB Hosts an annual Sandcastle competition that draws close to 10,000 spectators. Emerging festivals and events such as the Fall fair, Fogfest, sea glass and kitchen party festivals will benefit from event promotion and sponsorship support to increase their offering.

» **SPORT AND OUTDOOR RECREATION:** SW New Brunswick boasts an extensive network of parks and trails, including an emerging regional provincial Signature trail, The Coastal Link, and a future international motorized trail network between ATV Maine and QuadNB. Easy access to forests, rivers and tidal waters for kayaking, canoeing, surfing, scuba diving, paddling, fishing, and hunting; and several golf and public beach facilities.

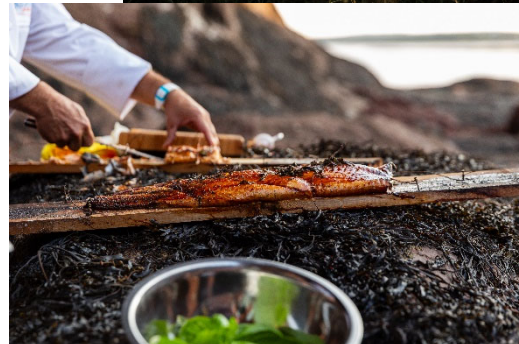
» **NATURAL LANDSCAPE:** The southernmost shoreline of New Brunswick and the gateway to the province's most Iconic Maritime islands, the Fundy West isles, SW New Brunswick is known for its rich biodiversity and diverse landscapes. SW New Brunswick borders the US and is cradled by the Passamaquoddy and fundy bays with dense Acadian Forest, picturesque sandy beaches, dramatic wave-swept coastlines, abundant rivers, lakes, estuaries and ancient rock formations. There is no shortage of wildlife with abundant large and small game and marine life thanks to its pristine landscape and diversity. Lupins, fiddleheads and Blueberries are some of the region's more abundant florae and berries.

» **FOOD AND CUSINE:** SW New Brunswick is a reputed cuisine destination, with 3 of New Brunswick's top chefs and restaurants in the region and many other notable restaurants. Distinct regional draws for its Atlantic Street food (takeout), and with a strong aquaculture industry, restaurants offer fresh from dock Atlantic seafood.

Opportunities

» **PARTNERSHIPS:** Neighbouring communities and regions with similar or complementary product offerings are potential partners for developing marketing opportunities, eg: Same-day cruise excursions from Saint John's cruise port.

» **ACCESSIBILITY:** Proximity of the Fredericton and Saint John International Airports, along with Saint John airport's planned 650-



acre logistics hub expansion, with bigger jets and more destinations on the horizon, YSJ will help ease visitor travel and improve the overall travel experience to SWNB. Infrastructure upgrades to St. Stephen and Grand Manan airports, extended ferry services between the mainland and the islands, and infrastructure upgrades to existing wharves in Campobello and Grand Manan would create new private charter flight and cruise market opportunities, as well as extend the seasonality of visitors to the region. Due to the territory size and distance between communities, day trip excursions and itineraries between communities from major accommodation and restaurant hubs is possible.

» EXCHANGE RATE: The current low Canadian dollar makes US visitors a more viable target.

» AWARENESS: Opportunity to benefit from the “Halo effect” created by marketing efforts done at the provincial level to maximize the effectiveness and reach of our ad dollars.

» CONVERSION AND STRATEGIC SALES: As more consumers consider New Brunswick as a top vacation destination, SW New Brunswick can promote regional operators and help potential visitors build their itineraries from many items in our strengths section. Doing so will be one way to maximize their time in market rather than moving on to other regions.

» WEB, MOBILE AND SOCIAL MEDIA: SWNB can leverage increasing consumer use of digital and social media channels to gather earned consumer-generated content, as well as a means to communicate conversion opportunities such as itineraries, incentives, and travel tours/packages.

» EXTENDED SEASONALITY: the Q1 and Q4 leisure, sport and experiential market has high potential and opportunity by owning our cold. Work with operators to create and promote – polar dipping, ice fishing, winter camping, sledding, cross-country skiing, snowmobile, maple tap, winter wonderland getaways, guided trail tours



Weakness

» LACK OF BRANDING AND IDENTITY: Visitors lack awareness of many of SW New Brunswick's key tourism attractions and what to do when visiting. The current brand identity and online presence on provincial platforms are inconsistent with the provincial strategy and campaigns. It also does not wholly represent the region's Unique Position statement (UPS) so that it can stand out within the competitive NB tourism landscape; lack of owned and earned marketing content aligned to the provincial brand guidelines and strategy contributes to the weak brand presence in the market.

» INCONSISTENT STRATEGY: Tourism investment, partnerships and programming have been historically inconsistent, fragmented, and unorganized resulting in an underperforming tourism sector in most parts of the region.

» LACK OF VISITOR SERVICES AND COLLATERAL: Of the 8 sub-regions in the territory, there are only 2 Municipal Visitor information centers operating with dedicated staff. Most communities house visitor information at municipal offices, local shops or museums and do not have visitor experience ambassadors; there is no regional visitor collateral created such as maps, visitor guides, self-guided tours, or itineraries; most MVIC's do not promote attractions or itineraries in other parts of the region to encourage visitors to stay in the region longer.

» LIMITED INFRASTRUCTURE: There are insufficient accommodations, no indoor year-round multi-visit venues, and no major cultural celebration and events centre; tourism/wayfinding signage is lacking in some areas; poor walkability to restaurants and services in some parts; insufficient public restrooms in most communities; guest services such as fast and stable wi-fi in some of the more remote communities is not available.

» STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS: SW New Brunswick has an emerging economic base but significant workforce shortage and availability, product capacity, lack of tourism operators, and much of the region unable to commit to an official Community tourism plan to advance tourism interests has posed significant barriers to have a well balanced and thriving tourism framework and industry.

Threats

» COMPETITION: Alternative destinations in the Fundy and River Valley catchment with established tourism programs offer similar products and experiences that divert tourism dollars away from the Southwest New Brunswick economy.

» DEVELOPMENT: easy access to nature is a draw to SWNB and development near the coastline and environmentally sensitive areas may put that at risk.

» CLIMATE CHANGE: The impacts of climate change on tourism are likely to manifest themselves in a number of different ways according to local conditions. Many of these impacts will develop indirectly through increased stress placed on the environmental systems. The most serious impacts will result from sea level rise on the islands and along the coastline. Winter tourism may also be impacted by less snowfall and shorter seasons for industries like snowmobiles.

» AIR BNB REGULATIONS: As hotel accommodations and production capacity is low in most parts of the regions, Air BnB's, VRBO and other similar owner-host accommodations have filled critical accommodations needs. That said, many jurisdictions across Canada have imposed regulations and bylaws sometimes prohibiting these types of accommodations or in other cases requiring operators to obtain business licenses, taxes, and special permits and oblige to landlord-tenant laws. New Brunswick has yet to impose such regulations, bylaws and policies; however, some local governments across NB including the province are considering such, which may be disruptive and see this stock of accommodations drop which will further exacerbate the accommodation demand.

Strategic Plan

Our plan is to harness and leverage the work and opportunities of Tourism NB's strategy, the invitation, while focusing on our strengths to address the gaps and weaknesses that have been identified. Tourism marketing and destination development involve envisioning, strategic planning, and effective marketing of a specific area and activity to attract tourists and day-trippers. It involves improving the quality of tourism services, amenities, businesses, and practices through careful planning and capacity-building to ensure that all destinations in Southwest New Brunswick are well-prepared to make informed strategic decisions, overcome obstacles, and seize opportunities. This strategic plan is a blueprint for SNBSC and its stakeholders to reap the tourism sector's full economic and community benefits. As a living document, it provides guidance for the organization to establish its new service to serve to the betterment of the entire tourism industry in Southwest New Brunswick.

Southwest New Brunswick Tourism Values, Vision, and key priorities:

At the May 2023 workshop, stakeholders gave feedback that Southwest New Brunswick has made progress in building its tourism industry. However, the lack of consistent and cohesive regional tourism efforts and the absence of a defined and united regional vision over the past 15 to 20 years has caused delays. The stakeholders expressed that SNBSC has the potential to create a fresh and innovative service for regional tourism marketing. They emphasized that growth and expanded tourism development can be achieved through collaboration and alignment of goals among all regional stakeholders, communities, and other divisions of SNBSC and Tourism NB.

Values

The workshop also identified the following values that will guide the decision-making, management and delivery of future services, including shaping the blueprint of the regional strategy:

1. Unity and a willingness to approach tourism development with an open mind are crucial to achieving the tourism vision.
2. Preserving the qualities that make Southwest New Brunswick a wonderful place to live should be a top priority.
3. Tourism has the potential to greatly enhance the quality of life for residents by supporting a variety of businesses and venues, including unique restaurants, quaint shops, and community, cultural, and recreational establishments.
4. Retail and customer service businesses must prioritize tourism, as it serves as a driving force for the entire region.
5. The tourism vision must align with the strategic goals of the Province of New Brunswick.

Vision statement

Position Southwest New Brunswick as a preferred destination of choice and be a leader in sustainable economic growth through a regional-based tourism program. Tourism will enrich the resident and visitor experience in Southwest New Brunswick and expand local jobs and prosperity.

Key Priorities

The following key priority themes were shaped by feedback from stakeholders and further refined by the RDMO Committee members during the workshop held in May:

1. Effectively communicating our offerings
2. Facilitating community coordination
3. Establishing a recognizable brand

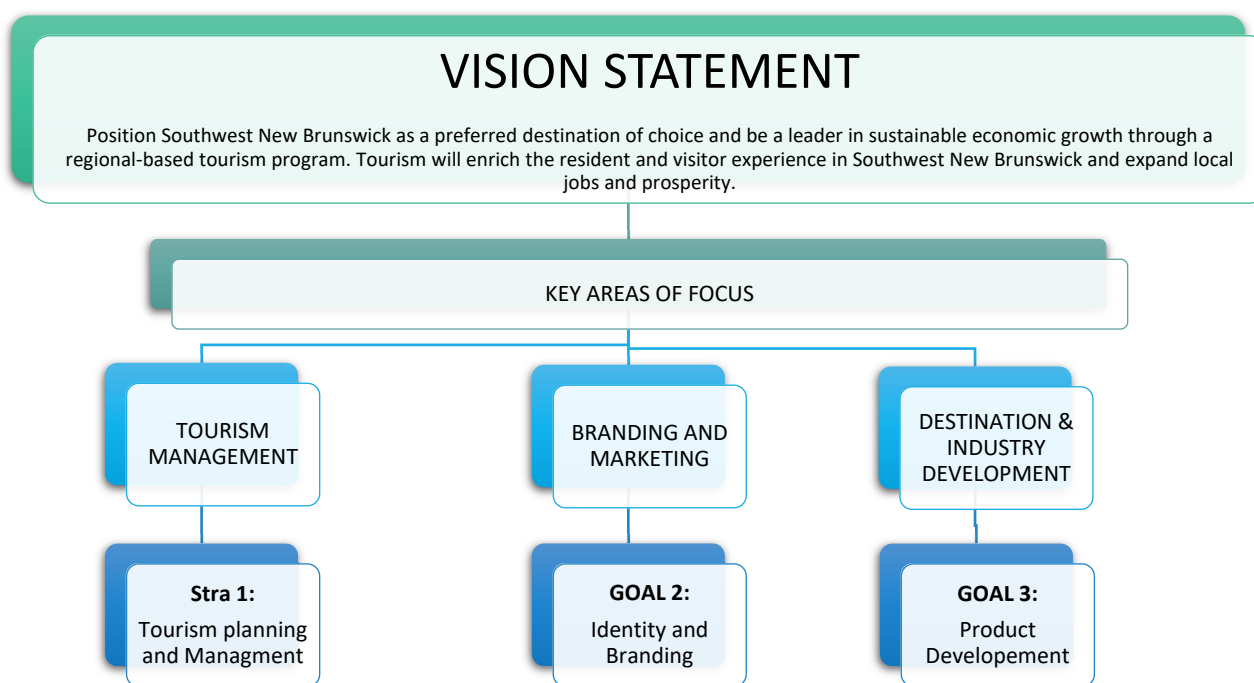
- Offerings that will engage visitors year-round and encourage longer stays.

Goals and Actions

Following SNBSC's vision and values, three main areas of focus were identified. These areas of focus were determined through a combination of workshop participant feedback, stakeholder input, and research conducted by consultants and the tourism division. The areas of focus are:

- Tourism planning and management,
- Branding and marketing,
- Destination and industry development.

These priorities will serve as the foundational goals for the Division and will require specific activities and actions to achieve them.



Tourism Planning and Management

Goal 1: Tourism Planning & Management: Utilize the capacity of the SNBSC Tourism division to implement and manage the 2023 - 2028 Southwest New Brunswick Tourism Strategy.

- Funding support for the Tourism Program ("A" Priority)
 - Identify projects requiring outside funding and explore alternative funding options to offset the cost of paid media and owned asset generation (e.g., grants, partnerships, sponsorships, coop marketing, etc.).
 - Research funding model options for operating the tourism program over the long term. (e.g., yearly approved budget, partnerships, bid sponsorships).
- Program Planning & Management ("A" Priority)

- i. Review strategic goals annually and engage tourism stakeholders in prioritizing projects for subsequent years.
 - ii. Create and manage a comprehensive asset inventory of the accommodations, attractions, and interest-based activities (culture, food, history, outdoor recreation) to support the communication of the region's offerings and assist in the visitor's path to purchase pillars of awareness, consideration and planning, and purchase/conversion.
- c. Monitoring, Evaluation & Research ("A" Priority)
 - i. Establish a tracking, evaluation and research program that retains statistics, data and information that is related to the goals of the Tourism Strategy and that provides critical information, metrics and benchmarks for future regional tourism planning
 - ii. Work with other regions and the province to establish consistent economic impact measures, methods and practices.
- d. Stakeholder Relations ("B" Priority)
 - i. Continue to build a network of tourism stakeholders/ leaders and work with them to implement the tourism strategy and develop the regional tourism sector.
 - ii. Manage stakeholder relations to engage and inform the tourism industry, stakeholders, and residents of the value of tourism and opportunities to grow the sector.
- e. Visitor Services ("B" Priority)
 - i. Support the established visitor centres through product knowledge training and promotional opportunities (e.g., regional guide, tourism collateral, online exposure) to ensure visitors know regional product offerings.
 - ii. Explore the viability of a regional visitor center to determine the costs, logistics and ROI for such investment.

Branding and Marketing

Goal 2: Identity & Branding: Undertake a research-based identity and branding process that defines the image and positioning of Southwest New Brunswick as a top maritime destination.

- a. Brand Development ("A" Priority)
 - i. Develop a tourism brand that is aligned with the provincial and national brand standards.
- b. Website Development ("A" Priority)
 - i. Establish a tourism-specific website that increases awareness and promotes the tourism and recreation opportunities and experiences available in the Region (e.g., packaging, promotions, things to do, attractions, trip planning, events, etc.)
- c. Marketing & Communications Program ("A" Priority)
 - i. Create an integrated marketing plan, with a promotional mix of Paid, Owned and Earned marketing and communications activities that reflect SW New Brunswick's tourism brand to increase awareness, visitation and spending in the region.
 - ii. Create and establish a path to purchase that results in conversion and purchase decisions for the southwest region, with the goal of establishing a positive visitor experience which can later be shared on social media platforms through earned media such as user-generated content experiences and reviews, travel writers, editorial and external blogs.

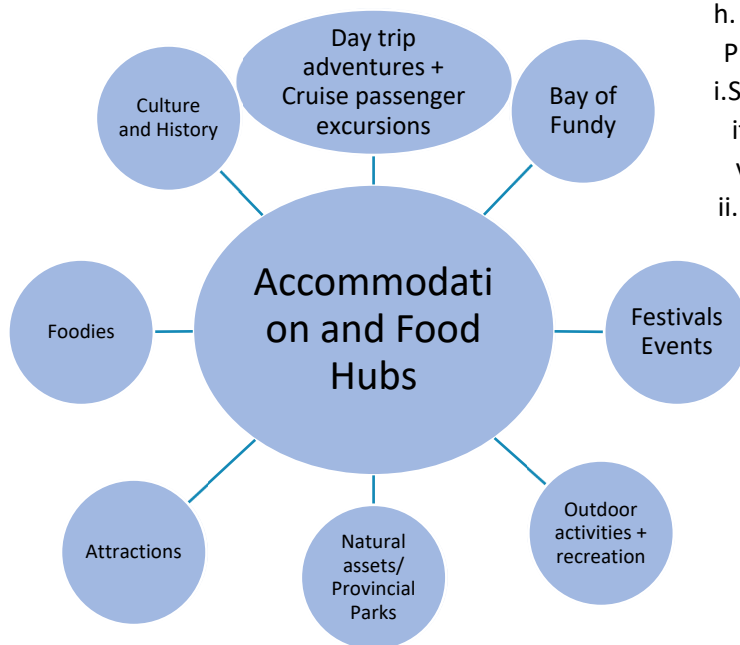
- iii. Develop a media relations plan with the Corporate Communications Division (e.g., story ideas, press releases, information sessions etc.) to increase marketing reach.
- iv. Develop and create owned media assets and sales material that is reflective of SW New Brunswick's tourism brand and identity to leverage in sales collateral, website and Social media.
- v. Research which paid media marketing tactics will appeal and convert best to our target markets, and develop a marketing ad campaign that balances the organization's spending and ROI.
- vi. Develop a social media presence that reflects the region's tourism identity and brand and will increase awareness and visitation to the region.
- vii. Build an online presence through search engine optimization (SEO), and search engine marketing (SEM).
- viii. Leverage existing relationships and develop new partnerships to increase marketing reach (e.g., Explore NB, Discover Saint John, Fredericton Tourism, Atlantic Cruise, Maine Tourism Board etc.).
- ix. Work with Tourism NB to ensure SNBSC maximizes opportunities to be featured at trade shows (e.g., Atlantic Canada showcase, Rendezvous Canada, FAM tours, National Tour Association, etc.) and determine opportunities to introduce and invite tour operators to the region.

Destination & Industry Development

Goal 3: **Product Development:** Ensure product development will result in increased regional appeal, awareness, interest, visitation, spending and overnight stays, with the end goal of increasing economic impact related to tourism.

- a. Heritage & Culture ("B" Priority)
 - i. Provide support through the Tourism division to potential development and promotional opportunities for arts and culture products in the region.
 - ii. Work with the Recreation Division and stakeholders on creating Arts, Culture and Heritage itineraries related to tourism.
- b. Festivals & Events ("A" Priority)
 - i. Support the growth and expansion of key festivals and events through targeted sales and marketing promotions (e.g., event expansion).
 - ii. Work with the Recreation division and municipalities to identify gaps in the event calendar, or where current events are at capacity, and develop a plan to address these (e.g., event attraction, avoid overlapping).
- c. Outdoor Recreation ("A" Priority)
 - i. Take advantage of the region's outdoor recreation portfolio of products to create awareness of outdoor interest-based activities to increase visitation, spending and overall economic impact.
 - ii. Develop tourism materials that promote outdoor recreation opportunities such as hiking, biking, hunting & fishing, scuba diving, motorized trails, camping, watersports, paddling and bird watching.
- d. Sport Tourism ("B" Priority)
 - i. Identify opportunities to attract new sports events that leverage existing assets and can drive overnight hotel visitation.
 - ii. Provide tourism input during the Recreation strategic planning process related to sports and art & culture tourism.

- e. Tourism Infrastructure Development (“B” Priority)
 - i. Continue to work with the Economic Development division and the province on opportunities to attract hotel and Inn properties to SWNB such as, but not limited to St. Stephen, Eastern Charlotte and McAdam.
 - ii. Encourage the development of cultural event and celebration venues, indoor multi-visit family-oriented attractions and venues to attract arts and culture events and family-friendly experiences in the region regardless of the weather or time of year.
 - iii. Encourage and support infrastructure upgrades and investments to improve accessibility to and in the region such as multi-modal transportation solutions, air and water transportation infrastructure such as Wharf upgrades to support the cruise industry; airports for new private & charter flights in St. Stephen and Grand Manan; and extended Ferry services to from the mainland to Campobello and Grand Manan Islands.
 - iv. Continue to identify other opportunities for tourism infrastructure investment.
- f. Events & Leisure Travel (“B” Priority)
 - i. Work with event planners (e.g., corporate, association, incentive, etc.) and tour operators to drive business leads to SW New Brunswick (e.g., hotels, restaurants, town facilities and entertainment facilities).
- g. Experiential and Adventure Travel (“C” Priority)
 - i. Communicate the opportunity for a new experiential and adventure tourism market in the region to provincial stakeholders, operators, and the public to incubate the development of a new tourism sector.
 - ii. Work with the Economic Development division to support new workforce development and “start-up” business support in the tourism industry.



- h. Tourism Packaging & Itinerary Development (“A” Priority)
 - i. Support tourism stakeholders with creating packages and itineraries for day trips and overnight stays, aiming to increase visitation, length of stay, and yield (dollars spent per person).
 - ii. Communicate the opportunity for Q1 and Q4 winter and shoulder season offerings to operators, the public and provincial stakeholders to incubate new opportunities to “Own our Cold”.

To better illustrate one tactic to deliver the itinerary and package development activities noted in 3. A-G, SNBSC will activate a hub and spoke model concept with curated day trips and excursions to encourage visitation and extend the stay to all parts of the region.