

TRAIL TOURISM DRIVES NORTHERN ONTARIO



The Township of South Algonquin is home to Ontario's second largest trail network

South Algonquin is home to one of Ontario's largest Crown-owned, volunteer-maintained trail networks. Second only to Uxbridge, our trails span more than 200 km and connect breathtaking landscapes with year-round adventure and sport. Composed primarily of Crown land, they support hiking, cycling, snowmobiling, ATVing, and a growing interest in accessible recreation and para sport.

Despite this untapped potential, South Algonquin receives no direct funding from any level of government. With a full-time population of only 1,000 residents, many of whom are seniors, our

local volunteer organizations have raised nearly \$550,000 in five years. But that's only enough to react, not rebuild. Without a plan for sustainable investment, our trails remain underutilized, deteriorating, and inaccessible to large parts of the population.

With proper infrastructure investment and policy support, our trails could become a world-class all-season, all-sport, all-ability destination, driving economic, recreational, and social benefits for the region and the entire province.

South Algonquin Fast Facts:

Nipissing District
868km² land area
Pop density 1.2p/km²
population: 1,055
trail length: 200km+
municipal budget: ~\$4M
5 year trail investment: \$500K
Tourism yield: too small to measure

Opportunity Knocks...

Trail tourism and accessible infrastructure are missed opportunities in South Algonquin. Despite having one of Ontario's longest locally managed trail systems, we lack the funding, infrastructure, and coordination to unlock its economic potential.

Compared to Uxbridge, which has invested over \$3.5 million in the past five years through a mix of grants, parking fees, and municipal funds, South Algonquin receives less than 15% of that — despite maintaining a comparable trail length and volunteers who work extraordinarily hard.

Our current system of project-based, volunteer-led fundraising is inefficient, incomplete, and unsustainable. We are stuck in a cycle of delayed repairs and inaccessible routes that prevent full use by tourists, families, recreational, and para sport communities. Extreme weather also challenges our resources.



Supporting an inclusive, world-class trail system in South Algonquin would result in regional economic renewal.



Costs of not addressing trail infrastructure

Local community: Economic and population decline; continued loss of core services, higher unemployment.

Provincial tourism economy: Lost opportunity - SA could be a new anchor destination in Northern Ontario

Volunteers & NGOs: Burnout, resource waste, and frustration navigating permitting and red tape makes the work overwhelming and unsustainable.

Province: Inaccessible tourism products and missed AODA 2025 compliance commitments.

Recreation sector: Lack of infrastructure for analog, manual, motorized, and para sport and sport events, as well as inclusive recreation.

Tourism is on the decline

Tourism currently accounts for about 23% of our jobs. Yet **FOUR** accommodators are **reporting 6-figure year over year losses** across three years.

4/5 of our restaurants (still operating) are **doing so at PT hours**.

FTE jobs in tourism have dropped to 20-40 (there are more individual jobs, but the jobs are seasonal, so <FTE)



What Kind of Help?

Trail Strategy & Master Plan: Co-develop a comprehensive trail strategy with community, volunteer, and provincial partners to guide infrastructure investment and usage.

Dedicated Provincial Funding: Establish a multi-year, multi-ministry funding stream to support trail upgrades, rehabilitation, and ongoing maintenance.

Red Tape Reduction: Streamline MNR and MTO permitting processes for trail work on Crown and roadside lands.

Volunteer Coordination & Capacity Support: Help establish a local trail council or coordination body to align the efforts of volunteer clubs and improve resource sharing.

Support for Accessibility Investments: Provide capital investment for accessible trail surfacing, signage, facilities, and equipment to align with AODA and attract inclusive tourism.



A word about accessibility

Ontario Tourism Market = >\$35B

Ontario Trail Tourism = >\$17B

Canadian Accessible Tourism = >\$19B

Accessibility tourists are willing to spend more for high quality services, and they are loyal, repeat customers.

South Algonquin deserves a bold investment based on a proven model. Let's work together to unlock the full potential of Ontario's North — one kilometre at a time.



Investment in Trails is Transformative

The Township of Uxbridge is recognized as Ontario's "Trail Capital", with its 220km+ of trails taking a landmark and destination role in tourism. The community is a stable, steadily growing township. Its population and housing market reflect measured growth driven by its appeal as a family-friendly, trail-rich rural-suburban community, with some development potential.

The trail network in Uxbridge is not just a recreational asset— it's a powerful local economic engine.

It generates substantial revenue for **trail maintenance**. It **attracts significant tourism** and directs spending into the township. It **leverages government investments** for infrastructure improvements. It **boosts local commerce**, particularly cycling-friendly businesses. It **nurtures public-private partnerships** for community good.

Uxbridge at a Glance

population: 21,500

trail length: 220km+

Municipal Budget: \$44M

5 year investment: \$4M

Tourism yield: 300,000

visits/year which equals

\$25m/year tourism revenue

10 FTE trail jobs

280 FTE tourism jobs

**4 out of 5 Canadians
will experience a
permanent,
temporary or
situational disability
in their lifetime.**

South Algonquin could become Ontario's Accessible Trail Capital...



South Algonquin hosts over 200 km of trails — the second-longest volunteer trail network in any Ontario township — primarily on Crown land. Our clubs and volunteers, including EOTA, OFATV, OFSC and the South Algonquin Business Alliance have scraped together about \$550k in funding from piecemeal grants and volunteer fundraising, but the trail system is deteriorating and increasingly closed for safety reasons. We cannot afford to restore all of the trail system. We can't even afford to maintain them without help. We need assistance from outside the community.

An accessible trail/community is a future-proof trail/community!

Transforming South Algonquin into a world-class destination for accessible, recreational and para sport tourism makes good policy sense.



This Proposal Aligns with Ministry and Stakeholder Objectives

With support, South Algonquin could become the flagship accessible trail destination in the North — a world-class venue for all-season, all-sport, and para sport tourism that aligns with AODA 2025, regional revitalization, and numerous provincial ministry mandates, active recreation strategies and stakeholder investment priorities. A team of supportive and committed stakeholders can make this project a success!

Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance (EOTA) - Regional trail management & coordination

Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport - Strategic funding & destination development

Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility - Alignment with AODA and inclusion mandates

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry - Land use & permitting for Crown land

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks - Tourism & sustainability

Ministry of Transportation - Trail crossings, signage, permits, & trail interface support

NOHFC: Funding community infrastructure in the north.

OFSC & Opeongo Snowbirds - Trail maintenance, grooming & volunteerism (winter)

OFATV - Motorized trail use & volunteerism (summer)

Regional Tourism Organization 12 - Tourism marketing & funding partnerships

South Algonquin Business Alliance - Community building, economic development

Township of South Algonquin - Planning, coordination, permits, & core services

Motorized sports and e-bikes are accessible sports!



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