

# DISCOVERY REPORT

NORTHEAST LAKELANDS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ZONE

NOVEMBER 2023

Cold Lake

A photograph of two young children performing a traditional Ukrainian folk dance on a stage. The boy, on the left, is wearing a white shirt, a yellow sash, and blue trousers. The girl, on the right, is wearing a white blouse with red embroidery, a red skirt with colorful patterns, red tights, and red shoes. They are holding hands and smiling. The background shows a crowd of people and a blue tent under a cloudy sky.

# AGENDA

1. Where We Started
2. Engagement
3. What We Heard
4. Where We're Heading

# 1

## WHERE WE STARTED



WE ARE A  
**DESTINATION  
MANAGEMENT  
ORGANIZATION**



**MARKETING**  
GROWING DEMAND



**ACCESS**  
GROWING AIR SERVICE



**PLACE**  
ENHANCING THE  
TRAVELLER EXPERIENCE

# TOURISM INVESTMENT PROGRAM



## COOPERATIVE INVESTMENT

- Rural Development and Promotion Fund
- Events and Festivals Fund



## PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

- Growth Fund
- Innovation Fund
- Incubator Fund



## COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

- NorthStar Funding
- Constellation Funding



## INDIGENOUS TOURISM ALBERTA

- \$6 million over the next 3 years



# WHAT GOT US HERE

# WON'T GET US THERE

**Regional compression:**  
Over 75% of expenditures  
are in five legacy  
destinations

**Seasonal compression:**  
Majority of revenues  
realized from June to  
August

# CENTRAL TO OUR SUCCESS



Capitalize on the untapped  
potential of rural Alberta

# TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ZONES

- 1 Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo
- 2 Northern Rockies
- 3 Northeast Lakelands
- 4 David Thompson
- 5 Olds to Lacombe
- 6 Cochrane/Sundre/  
Rocky Mountain House
- 7 Canadian Badlands
- 8 Foothills
- 9 Lethbridge to Medicine Hat
- 10 Southern Rockies



# NORTHEAST LAKELANDS

## TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ZONE

### 2022-2035 PROJECTIONS\*



PROJECTED  
VISITOR SPEND  
GROWTH / YEAR

**3.7%**



ESTIMATED  
TOURISM SPEND

**\$92M**



POTENTIAL JOB  
CREATION

**667**

\*incremental



# 2

## ENGAGEMENT



# WHO WE ENGAGED



**STAKEHOLDERS**

**118**



**BUSINESSES**

**20**



**COMMUNITIES**

**15**

# INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

A person in traditional Indigenous regalia, including a large feathered headdress and a patterned tunic, is captured in a dynamic pose, possibly dancing, in a grassy field. The background features a bright sunset or sunrise over rolling hills, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow across the sky and landscape.

**Mutual understanding,  
trust, respect**

**Communities engaged  
across Métis Districts  
and Treaty 6 and 8**

**First Nations, Councils,  
Settlements, Coops,  
Confederacies, elected  
community leaders**

# 3

## WHAT WE HEARD



# KEY FEEDBACK THEMES

1

**New and Expanded Product  
and Experience Offerings**

2

**Enhanced Collaboration**

3

**Wayfinding - navigating  
municipal, and provincial  
policies**

# RESIDENT SENTIMENT

65%

**I would welcome more  
visitors to my community**

59%

**Tourism is important to my  
community**

65%

**A strong tourism industry  
improves my quality of life**

# ALBERTAN MARKET DEMAND

51%

have a positive impression of  
the zone

23%

are likely to visit the zone

21%

are familiar with the zone

Activities Albertans are most likely to enjoy in the Northeast Lakelands TDZ

31%

Cabins

28%

Camping

27%

Northern Lights Viewing

# STRENGTHS

- Unique cultural experiences
- Abundance of lakes and waterfronts
- Iron Horse Trail
- Inter-regional collaboration



# CHALLENGES

- Accommodations
- Overall product offering
- Lack of anchor attractions other than Métis Crossing
- lack of a common tourism narrative



# OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop a more robust accommodations sector (hotels, RV, camping, B&B)
- Further develop agritourism experiences (ranches, butchers and meat processors, distilleries)
- Develop staging areas of Iron Horse Trail
- Work with key communities through and the clusters with a thematic-based approach to identify high-value investment opportunities



# 4

## NEXT STEPS



# DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN



# BUILDING OUR ACTION PLAN



## Shared Vision & Stakeholder Alignment

- Thematic-based working groups (clusters)
- Actionable steps
- Collective Commitment – including partnerships



## Destination Positioning

- Outdoor adventurers & cultural enthusiasts
- Unique, authentic experiences & activities
- Iron Horse Trail



## Community Engagement & Resident Sentiment

- Benefits of the visitor economy
- Local awareness



# **WHAT WE NEED TO MOVE FORWARD**

**THEMATIC WORKING GROUPS**

**MARKET READY PRODUCTS**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
AND COMMUNITY PLANNING**

**COLLABORATION ACROSS THE  
ZONE**

**HOW DO WE BEST  
MOVE FORWARD?**

