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## **CYCLISTS AND PADDLERS CELEBRATE LAUNCH OF LAKE SUPERIOR WATER TRAIL AND EXPANSION OF GREAT LAKES WATERFRONT TRAIL**

*Honourable Eleanor McMahon, Sault Ste. Marie Mayor Provenzano and Garden River Chief Paul Syrette lead Community Bike Parade as part of Ontario150 celebration*

Sault Ste. Marie – Two of Ontario’s signature routes, the **Lake Superior Water Trail** and **Great Lakes Waterfront Trail** finally meet, bringing communities together from coast to coast and along Canada’s Great Lakes. Both routes—one aquatic and the other land-based are part of the Canada’s Great Trail by Trans Canada Trail.

A new, 1,000km water trail with 16 access points now connects Gros Cap Harbour in Prince Township to Fisherman’s Park in Thunder Bay along Lake Superior, adding to the existing **Great Trail** – a 24,000km trail connecting Canadians coast to coast as the world’s longest recreational trail. The launch of this **Lake Superior Water Trail** coincides with the addition of 380km along the North Channel of Lake Huron to the **Great Lakes Waterfront Trail**.

With these new trails, Gros Cap Marina Park now serves as a connection point between the Lake Superior Water Trail and the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail. To mark the occasion, Eleanor McMahon, Ontario Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport celebrated with a group of 50 partners and local cyclists to welcome paddlers to Gros Cap Marina Park. Earlier in the day, the paddlers were led on a tour of the Gros Cap Cliffs on the Lake Superior Water Trail by Gary McGuffin and Sault Ste. Marie Canoe Brigade with Prince Township Mayor Ken Lamming and Mike Mantha, MPP Algoma and Manitoulin.

“The Great Trail – like all national dreams in a country as vast as Canada – is a story of collaboration and dogged determination by thousands of Canadians,” said Deborah Apps, TCT President and CEO. “It’s the eclectic nature of The Great Trail that resonates with people. You can experience it on foot, on a bicycle or in a canoe– as a multi-use trail, there’s something for everyone to enjoy.”

“Connecting the Trans Canada Trail in Ontario by land and water has been a major challenge but the reward is seeing communities and organizations working together to make it happen. The Lake Superior Water Trail and the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail is an example as to how connection happens”, said Al MacPherson, Chair Board of Directors Trans Canada Trail Ontario.

“Here at the heart of The Great Trail, the 1000 km Lake Superior Water Trail connects coastal communities to the largest freshwater lake on earth”, said Joanie McGuffin of the Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy. “For the Conservancy overseeing this project, the Water Trail is about respect for freshwater - and respect for this ancient place where First Nations travellers and traders, hunters and fishers, have paddled for thousands of years. The project has also been about universal access to recreation by site design and providing amenities such as the special universal access docks”, she explained.

“Ontario’s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary is an opportunity for people to experience the incredible resources of our province and create long-term legacies,” says Eleanor McMahon, Ontario Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. “Ontario 150 Celebrate by Bike will enable people to connect with their communities by bike, discover new trails and routes and will help to promote cycling as a wonderful part of everyday living.”

Minister McMahon joined Sault Ste. Marie Mayor Christian Provenzano, Garden River First Nation Chief Paul Syrette, and the Sault Cycling Club to lead a Community Bike Parade along the new section of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, beginning at City Hall and ending at the Machine Shop. Tourism Sault Ste. Marie hosted a reception featuring Northern specialties such as North Superior Brewery craft labels, exhibits, and an Indigenous drum performance by the Grammy Nominated group Bear Creek.

“Twenty-five years ago, we would have never imagined how the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail would be embraced and grow to over 2100 km connecting 114 communities and First Nations”, said Marlaine Koehler Executive Director of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust. “The Trail represents a shared commitment by these many partners to protect, connect and celebrate the world’s largest group of freshwater lakes”. This extension offers a great way to explore the communities and heritage of Northern Ontario”.

“Creating key transportation linkages from North to South is a cornerstone of developing a thriving tourism economy in our region,” says Marty Kalagian, President of Tourism Northern Ontario. “There is further benefit when the transportation linkage is a tourism product in itself. Through partnership, the opportunity to mold this route as a travel-motivator for cyclists was identified and we are thrilled to see it come to fruition.”

“During this 150 anniversary year, Sault Ste. Marie is delighted to celebrate the trail’s connection of land and water showcasing some of our Country’s most iconic landscapes,” says Mayor Christian Provenzano, City of Sault Ste. Marie. “This Trail is an important part of our community connecting historical, cultural and natural points including access to the largest of the Great Lakes. I’d like to thank and commend all the organizations for working together to make this legacy project happen.”

"The tourism industry in Sault Ste. Marie is pleased to be part of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail", said Ian McMillan, Executive Director for Tourism Sault Ste. Marie. "We have been working for the past few years in helping to develop the Lake Huron North Channel expansion of the Trail in partnership with the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Tourism Northern Ontario and Trans Canada Trail. We look forward to promoting Sault Ste. Marie as a true cycling destination".

This event is part of an Ontario-wide series of community cycling events celebrating Ontario 150. The Waterfront Regeneration Trust, in partnership with Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, Ontario by Bike, and Share the Road Cycling Coalition included the Great Trail Paddle Tour and Bike Parade as the second event of 15 community celebrations showcasing Ontario's iconic cycling routes—the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail and Greenbelt Route.

The Lake Huron North Channel section of the Trail uses a combination of paths, such as the John Rowswell Hub Trail in Sault Ste. Marie, secondary roads, and six sections of HWY 17 on paved shoulders where no alternative was available. Installation of signage by the communities is underway and will be complete by the end of summer. MTO is working to complete the shoulder improvements on portions of HWY 17 by the end of the year. The completed trail will roll out over the summer months. Check the maps on [www.waterfronttrail.org](http://www.waterfronttrail.org) for detailed route information and to check progress. The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail was created to protect, connect and celebrate the world's largest group of freshwater lakes both a national and international treasure.

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**About Ontario 150 Celebrate By Bike  
OntariobyBike.ca/150**

*Ontario 150 Celebrate By Bike* is connecting 15 communities across Ontario through cycling. Events in Bike Friendly Communities and Ontario By Bike ride destinations take advantage of the iconic Greenbelt Route and Great Lakes Waterfront Trail to strengthen communities and create cycling itineraries. The program is a legacy of Ontario150 and part of a line-up of celebrations and events marking the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the province. This initiative is a collaborative partnership between the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, Ontario By Bike, and Share the Road Cycling Coalition, building on two decades of investment in cycling infrastructure in Ontario.

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The Waterfront Regeneration Trust thanks the following partners for their help with today's launch as well as the 26 Communities and First Nations that are part of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail.

