

Hearst Economic Development Corporation

Sports Tourism in Hearst: Strategies for Successful Development

February 28, 2014





Contents

1	INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY.....	3
2	DEMAND ASSESSMENT	5
2.1	LOCAL PERSPECTIVE ON DEMAND	5
2.2	KEY FACTORS DRIVING LOCATION OF SPORTING COMPETITIONS	6
3	SUPPLY ASSESSMENT.....	9
3.1	LOCAL PERSPECTIVE ON SPORTS FACILITIES AND COMMUNITY AMENITIES	9
3.2	HEARST'S SPORT FACILITIES	11
3.3	HEARST'S COMMUNITY AMENITIES	15
3.4	COMPETITIVE BENCHMARKING	16
3.5	CASE STUDIES	25
3.5.1	LELUC, ALBERTA	25
3.5.2	WELLAND, ONTARIO	27
3.5.3	CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	28
4	FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT	30
4.1	SWOT ANALYSIS	30
4.2	HEARST'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES	32
4.3	OPPORTUNITIES ASSESSMENT	33
5	A VISION FOR HEARST'S SPORT TOURISM EFFORTS.....	40
5.1	FINAL ASSESSMENT	40
5.2	EMPHASIS	40
5.3	ROLES OF HEARST EDC AND ITS PARTNERS	41
5.4	RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	42
5.4.1	YEAR ONE BUDGET	50
	APPENDIX A – QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SPORTS TOURISM POTENTIAL IN HEARST	51



1 Introduction & Methodology

Sports Tourism is defined as any activity in which people are attracted to a particular location as a sport event participant, an event spectator or to attend sport attractions or sport business meetings. It has grown into a \$3.6 billion a year industry in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2010).

The rise in Sports Tourism spending is not only occurring in larger metropolitan areas but increasingly in smaller communities. As such, there is increasing support for sport tourism as a legitimate way to boost the number of visitors and visitor spending. This trend is global and, in fact, the Government of Australia cites it as the fastest growing sector of the global travel industry, equating to \$600 billion a year.

Those results are seconded by the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance. The impacts are being seen across Canada – on the international stage where national sporting associations and governments contend for international events such as the 2010 Winter Olympics and 2015 FIFA Women’s World Cup; on a national level where cities, governments and universities bid for hundreds of national championships such as Canada Games, Memorial Cups and CIS National Championships; and on a provincial and regional level where even the smallest communities are competing to host OFSAA competitions, regional tournaments for mainstream summer and winter sports, as well as niche activities such as adventure races.

Recognizing this opportunity and the fact that Hearst has hosted some provincial and many regional competitions, Hearst Tourism and Hearst Economic Development Corporation can expand the number of events that are hosted in the community.

Benefits

The economic benefit of sport tourism comes from many sources of expenditure. This includes direct spending by visiting athletes, their friends and families, and by the spectators who watch them. Essentially, all retail and service-based businesses can benefit from these visitors but hospitality (restaurants and accommodations), host venues, and retailers benefit the most. There is also an economic impact from external grants, sponsorships and funding attracted to the community, as well as in-kind contributions.

Sport tourism indirectly attracts visitors for other travel purposes and promotes the town’s profile and reputation as a destination and an ideal community in which to live. These economic impacts are complemented by various community benefits, including a better quality of life, a stronger sport community and the legacy of sport tourism events -- from new or

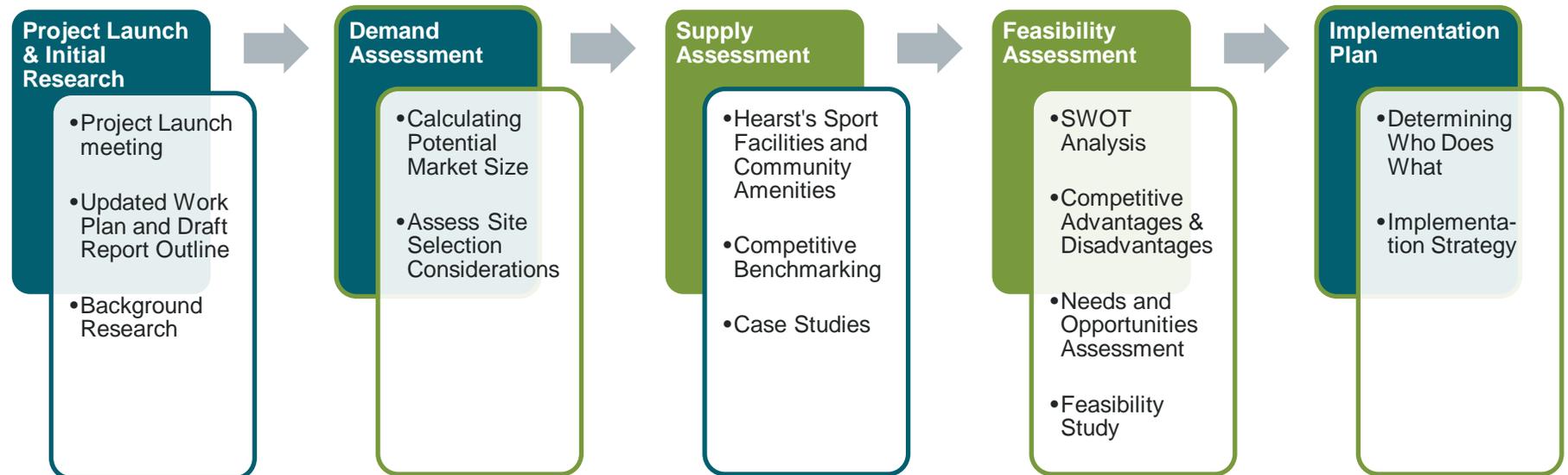


upgraded equipment and facilities to the “soft” legacies of improved volunteer capacity, expertise and motivation, improved marketing profile/reputation, expanded contacts and enhanced sustainability.

Project Methodology

The figure below outlines the study approach. After the first four steps, a meeting was held with 14 representatives of local sports clubs/associations and Hearst’s Tourism Subcommittee to determine whether the prospects of success were high enough. When presented with the research to date, the attendees identified that “yes” there is a considerable opportunity for growth in sport tourism. As such, the consulting team proceeded with completing an implementation plan.

FIGURE 1: SPORTS TOURISM IN HEARST FEASIBILITY STUDY APPROACH



The feasibility study examines the sporting infrastructure that needs to be in place to host specific types of sports tourism events and concludes with recommendations that outline support structures that would make the events well organized, enjoyable for visitors and volunteers.



2 Demand Assessment

Section Objectives

Identify the characteristics of competitions in Northern Ontario

Understand the types of sports facilities that organizers of regional competitions prefer to have or require

Examine other community amenities that organizers of regional competition prefer to have or require

2.1 Local Perspective on Demand

In the survey of local sports organizations, representatives were asked to identify the main drivers of local sports tourism and the clear number one choice was hockey. Hearst has a strong tradition in minor hockey and hosting hockey tournaments. Games are well attended, particularly the Midget games. In addition to minor hockey, the annual 2 Ring Hockey Tournament with more than 40 men's and women's teams takes place in Hearst. Players are mostly people who once lived in Hearst and return for this tournament. This tournament was spoken of very highly and shows that the town does have the capacity to host a wide range of hockey tournaments.

The second most mentioned sport was hunting and fishing. There is a summer fishing derby presented by the Hearst Anglers Group and the Hearst Anglers and Hunters Club hold three fishing derbies during the calendar year.

1. Ice Derby on Johnson Lake (3rd weekend of February) –This derby is for youth aged 18 and younger
2. Ice Derby on Pivabiska Lake (3rd weekend of March – Attendance is open to anyone from the community and surrounding area
3. Spring Derby on the Hearst Chain of Lakes - Pivabiska, Wolverine, Hanlan and St-Thérèse (3rd weekend of June)

It was noted that hunting and fishing attract many Americans to Hearst. There was mention by some interviewees that perhaps this isn't as big a boon to the local economy as other sporting events because hunters and fishermen tend not to



stay in hotels and eat at local restaurants. However, there is no doubt that the productive lakes and lands that surround Hearst are a big year round draw for outdoor sporting enthusiasts. It was difficult for respondents to conceive of events that centre on hunting and fishing, beyond the derbies.

The third main driver as identified by the interviewees was snowmobiling. This is another sport that attracts American visitors. The Club Voyageur Snowmobile Club recently won an award for the quality of the trails in and around Hearst. At one time, there was a snowmobile race held in Hearst but was discontinued. This is something that perhaps should be resurrected given the reputation of excellent riding trails.

Interestingly, there are two karate clubs in Hearst each holding a tournament annually at Place des Arts. One tournament is held in March and the other in November. There are about 140 participants at each event. Factoring in accompanying parents and siblings, the two tournaments are excellent examples of the kind of events that can be held in Hearst. Organized karate in Hearst goes back nearly four decades.

An honourable mention and perhaps the sport identified as having the most potential to grow and host more events is curling. Hearst has a new curling rink and the ice surfaces at the hockey arena could be used for championships or larger bonspiels. There is a nine member board of the curling club and lots of volunteers to support hosting a larger regional bonspiel.

2.2 Key Factors Driving Location of Sporting Competitions

Sporting Facilities

A host must, first and foremost, be able to provide the number of competition venues and field of play areas as required by the organizer or as is detailed in the bid guidelines. The venues must meet minimum technical standards for the event's competition, practice and warm-up requirements. Other high priorities include:

- Showers, change rooms, snack bar/kitchen and meeting room at the main venue
- Sound system, internet access, computer access at the main venue
- Convenience and accessibility between venues and community amenities
- Wheelchair accessible



Motivation to Host

Most organizers are looking for a community that can offer clear and compelling reasons why it is bidding for the event. For example, is there a legacy plan that will benefit local organizations and/or residents. Additionally, the legacy for the sport, as a whole must be considered. How will local plans build and grow the event and rights holder's brand? Remember, that in most cases, the winning community and Host Organizing Committee are only borrowing the event from the rights holder for a certain period of time and should plan to return it in better shape than received.

Amenities

Often overlooked by eager event hosts is the quality of the non-tournament experience for participants and their families and friends. In particular, the quality of the event's accommodations and restaurants will significantly affect athletes', coaches', managers' and other participants' overall impression of the event and the host community. More importantly, those amenities can make an important contribution to an athlete's performance, just as the absence of quality can detract from athletic performance.

Organizers are looking for:

- Sufficient bedrooms in hotel/motels that have clean, comfortable rooms within reasonable proximity to the sports venues
- Sufficient numbers of camping spots, especially for events of an outdoor variety
- Variety of restaurants and food choices
- The Host Organizing Committee is responsible to meet all of the food and beverage requirements as detailed by the rights holder in the bid guidelines. These requirements may include providing full-service food and beverage services on-site in accommodations of acceptable standards and ensuring that the proposed accommodations be within a reasonable proximity and travel time of the competition venue(s) and/or on-site at each of the competition venues as required.
- Shopping and other entertainment for participants and families during down time

Volunteers

- An experienced group of dedicated volunteers to organize and run the tournament/event

Experience

- Have hosted tournaments/events in the past with a successful track record



Business Plan

- For larger events, a comprehensive Business Plan that will serve as the primary guide for the Host Organizing Committee and the financial operation of the event (the level of detail required will vary depending on the expectations of the rights holder)
- The rights holder has an expectation that bid submissions will ensure financial projections are realistic and achievable, with a focus on revenue validity
- Outline the legacy plan the Host Community hopes to implement if the bid is successful

Some other considerations:

There is an increasing trend for lead organization to provide funding to offset the costs of hosting events.

- Lead organizations are generally asked to offset the cost of events by 15% through fundraising.
- Municipalities are being increasingly asked to decrease fees or provide financial support to events. Municipalities who do this have been more successful in winning events because it not only decreases costs for participants but allows volunteers to focus on running a quality event.

Youth events have very high standards for hotels and restaurants and low cost is not the driving force.

- Youth event organizers want to ensure that communities provide safe and comfortable accommodations for their participants. Having swimming pools and other recreational facilities in the hotel is important.
- Communities need to be able to offer a wide range of restaurants with child-friendly menus.

The following are good examples of hosting bid documents:

- The Northern Ontario Curling Association Region/Qualifier/Challenge Round
curlno.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Hosting-Region-Guidelines-2013-2014.pdf
- Northern Ontario Hockey Association tournament hosting
www.no-hockey.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Tournament-Application-Form.pdf
- Skate Canada – Northern Ontario competition sanction
www.scno.net/documents/clubinfo/CompetitionSanction.pdf



3 Supply Assessment

Section Objectives

Description of Hearst's sports facilities and other community amenities in Hearst that will help to attract sports competitions

Benchmarking Hearst's sports facilities and community amenities against other communities

3.1 Local Perspective on Sports Facilities and Community Amenities

The survey (Appendix A) was specifically designed to gain insight into the opinions and perspectives of Hearst residents who are involved in various sports organizations. It covers off four main sections including background information on the involvement of the interviewee and their relationship to the sport they represent, sports in Hearst, facility information and amenities.

Overall, the impression of those surveyed was one of pride in terms of the sports infrastructure in Hearst, particularly for a town of its size. Positive comments were made about the new curling facility, hockey arenas and pool. The theatre space, which is only three years old and can seat 500, also received good reviews and has become an excellent home for the two annual karate tournaments.

The soccer pitch was mentioned to be in good shape, however, the fact that there is only one was noted as a problem, particularly for hosting tournaments. Having four well-maintained softball fields was noted as very good.

Remarks were also made, that for a town of its size, Hearst has a good nine-hole golf course that plays host to a large charity tournament for kids sports. The face of the tournament is locally-raised NHL player Claude Giroux.



Last year a 5 km and 10 km run was held for the first time in Hearst and was very successful on all fronts including participation, corporate sponsorship and volunteer participation. With the popularity of these types of races never higher it would be worth building on this.

The overall impression of the services in Hearst was rather low. Public transportation is non-existent with the exception of a paratransit/seniors bus. Feelings about the quality of accommodations (mainly focused on the hotels) were split between poor and good. The main concern is that they are dated in décor and looked old and run down from the outside. Similar to the accommodations, the restaurants in Hearst received similar ratings that were split between poor and good. Comments were made about lack of real choice or variety in cuisine and also that none of the establishments are open 24/7.

When it came to the cleanliness and tidiness of Hearst, most people felt that the town and its people did a good job of keeping it clean. Rankings were between good and very good. The pride of the town came through when discussing the answer to this question. People may not be able to do something about the look of the hotels or quality and variety of food but they felt most people do their part in keeping the town clean.

Very recently the Town has begun to update and add new signage around Hearst. This was noted by all survey respondents as being very positive and helpful to those coming from out of town. Friendliness of locals towards visitors scored very high. There is certainly an impression that locals are more than willing to help tourists find their way or offer assistance if needed.

Some felt that the information centre is too hard to find and that the Town website isn't always up to date.

Communication and exchange of information scored low. This was a result of a perception that there is a lack of communication between sports groups and that some events overlap and occur on the same weekend. It was felt that better coordination is needed so that events/tournaments don't compete with each other.



3.2 Hearst's Sport Facilities

The following facilities in Hearst are considered to have some merit for hosting sporting competitions.

Claude Larose Recreation Centre



East Ice

West Ice



- Double pad arena with seating for 630 spectators with standing room for another 600 in the main (west) arena
- East ice (58m X 24m), West ice (61m X 26m)
- Three halls
- Lobby with snack bar
- Minor hockey office on the second floor
- Operates year round with ice surfaces maintained from late August to April
- Hockey, figure skating and public skating operate during the winter months
- During the summer the arena hosts events like motocross racing, trade shows, concerts and circuses
- La Limite youth facility can be rented at \$190-\$288/day (the higher amount is with a liquor licence)



Hearst Community Curling Club

- Five leagues at the curling club including: Men's, Ladies, Mixed, Little Rocks and Day Curling
- Four sheets of ice
- Viewing area that seats approximately 40 standing room
- 140 person licensed bar with kitchen facilities (stove and fridge)
- Member of the Northern Ontario Curling Association
- Women's and men's bonspiels in February
- Mixed bonspiel in March



Stéphane Lecours Swimming Pool

- Built in 1979 as an annex to the arena complex
- Six lane 25 metre heated pool with a one metre diving board
- Change rooms
- Open viewing gallery that seats 60
- With the exception of the first two weeks of September the pool operates year round
- Home to the Phoenix Swim Club and a water polo team
- Offers a wide range of swim courses for various levels of ability and ages
- Numerous public swim times are available



Soccer Pitch

- One soccer pitch
- Home to minor soccer for kids ages 7-16
- Season is May and June



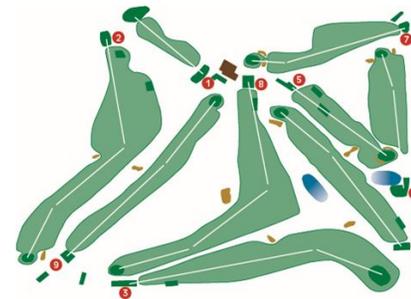
Hearst Cross Country Ski Club

- 5 km of trails including grooming for traditional and skate skiing
- Established in 1973
- Active Board of Directors
- Two ski shelters, the "Refuge" and the "Relais", are situated along the trails
- In the early 1990s, a new partnership was created with the golf club and both organisations invested together to renovate the golf chalet so that it could be in operation year round
- The ski club built a new club house closer to the refuge
- New grooming equipment and the trails are lit with solar lighting
- No biathlon facility
- Snowshoeing is also available on the trails
- Ski and snowshoe rentals are available
- Jackrabbit program for youth, four to 14 years old, every Sunday from mid-December to the end of March
- Ski club receives significant corporate sponsorship
- Loppet – Every March it attracts skiers of all ages and abilities from Hearst and neighboring communities; there are 1 km, 5 km, 10 km, 15 km and 25 km events
- Skiathon – Annual skiathon is a fundraising activity with contributions going to various club needs



Club de Golf de Hearst Golf Club

- Nine-hole course
- Restaurant and licensed bar with a varied menu
- Pro shop
- Total yardage: 2,386 yards (red tees) to 3,062 yards (blue tees)
- Wednesday Men's night and Thursday Ladies' night (May to September)
- Junior's night on Tuesday's in July and August
- Club championship is held at the end of August
- Annual Claude Giroux charity tournament for children's sports (July)
- Fees for non-members are \$21.50 for nine holes or \$26.50 for 18





Club Action Hearst

- Non-profit club offering social, cultural and recreational activities for future retirees, pensioners and elderly living in Hearst
- Open Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Membership is \$20 per year



Place des Arts de Hearst

- Accommodates up to 450 spectators
- Without seating maximum occupancy is 750 people (587 with a liquor permit)
- Home to two karate tournaments per year
- Hosts music, dance and live theatre

**Le Conseil
des Arts
de Hearst**



Bowling Billiards Bar and Grill

- Recently refurbished
- Six bowling lanes
- Four dart boards
- Five billiard tables
- Reception hall
- Licensed restaurant
- Leagues in all three sports throughout the week





3.3 Hearst's Community Amenities

FIGURE 2: HOTELS/MOTELS IN HEARST

Name	Rooms	Dining Room	Recreation	Internet	Meeting Room
Companion Hotel/Motel	50	Yes	Sauna, steam bath, hot tubs	Yes	Yes
Queens Motel	70	No	Indoor pool	Yes	Yes (35 people)
Villa Inn & Suites	23	No (some rooms with kitchenettes)	Fisherman's Package	Yes	No
Howard Johnson Inn	50	No	Steam bath	Yes	Business Centre

FIGURE 3: CAMPING IN AND AROUND HEARST

Name	Lots with Service	Showers/Washrooms	Internet	Pool/Beach	Laundromat
Villa RV Parking	Fully (30 amps)	No	Yes	No	Yes
Cecile's Trailer Park	Yes (30 amps)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Ranch du Lac	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Veilleux Camping & Marina	Yes	Yes	Limited	Yes	Yes
Missinaibi	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Fushimi Provincial Park	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Nagamisis Provincial Park	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes



Cottages

Fushimi Cottages on Lac Carey, 41 km west of Hearst

Restaurants

Hearst has several restaurants. There is one classified as “fine dining”, Rendez-vous Le Companion, seven family restaurants, one Asian restaurant and five fast food restaurants for a total of 14 options.

Outfitters

There are a number of outfitters in Hearst to support the hunting and fishing sector of sport tourism. They add credibility to Hearst’s position as a destination for outdoor tourism and create opportunities for joint marketing.

3.4 Competitive Benchmarking

When event organizers are comparing locations in hopes of determining the perfect host community for their event, their primary concerns are the sufficiency of the sporting facilities and accommodations available, the cost of these facilities, and the availability and cost of transportation to and from the site. In this section, the state of these variables is explored in five communities that have been determined to be most likely competitors for the majority of events that Hearst would consider.

Sporting Facilities

In terms of facility size, type, and availability, Hearst is quite competitive in comparison with the sample of similarly located communities in northern Ontario.



FIGURE 4: COMPARISON OF SPORTING FACILITIES IN RURAL NORTHERN ONTARIO

Criteria	Cochrane	Kapuskasing	Dryden	Geraldton	Marathon	Hearst
Arena	Tim Horton Events Centre 1 rink	Sports Palace (Kapuskasing Regional Conference Complex) 2 rinks	Dryden Memorial Arena 2 rinks	Geraldton Community Centre (Arena) 1 rink	Marathon Arena 1 rink	Claude Larose Recreation Centre 2 rinks
Attendance Capacity	Seats 500	1,080 including standing room	900 people including standing room Second ice pad 300 standing	Seats 500	Seats 640	Rink 1 - Seats 630, standing room 600 Rink 2 – 150 standing
Ice area	26 x 61 m	24 x 54 m each surface	26 x 61 m; 26 x 56 m	26 x 56m	26 x 61 m	58 x 24m; 61 x 26 m
Rental Fees	Tournament Adult \$122/hour Minors \$65/hour	Tournament Adult \$94/hour Minor \$71/hour	Tournament Adults \$140/hour Minors \$98/hour	Tournament Adult \$76/hour Minors \$44/hour	Tournament Adult \$121/hour Minors \$77/hour	Tournament Adults \$118.50/hour Minors \$53/hour
Curling Rink	Cochrane Curling Club 4 sheets	Kapuskasing Curling Club 5 sheets	No facility available	Geraldton Curling Club 4 sheets	Marathon Curling Club 4 sheets	Hearst Community Curling Club 4 sheets
Rental Fees	\$55/hour Lounge & ice full day \$525; 4 p.m. to close is \$350	\$100	N/A	\$40/hour	\$50/hour Minor - free Special rates for events	\$50/hour



Criteria	Cochrane	Kapuskasing	Dryden	Geraldton	Marathon	Hearst
Golf Course	Lee Golf Club Clubhouse 9 holes	Kapuskasing Golf Club Clubhouse 9 holes	Eagle's Landing Golf & Convention Centre Evergreen Golf Course Anderson's Homestead Golf Course Clubhouses 9 holes each	Kenogamisis Golf Club Stanley Thompson designed course Clubhouse 18 holes	Peninsula Golf Course Stanley Thompson designed course Clubhouse 9 holes	Club de Golf de Hearst Golf Club Clubhouse 9 holes
Indoor Pool	Tim Horton Events Centre 25 m 4 lanes	Donat Brousseau Pool 22m	Dryden Pool and Fitness Centre 25 m 5 lanes	Geraldton Public Pool Open May-Oct 15m 4 lanes	Port Hole Pool 25m 4 lanes	Stephane Lecours Swimming Pool 25m 6 lanes
Cost ¹	\$104 - \$181.45/hour	\$88.50 - \$132.74/hour	\$55 - \$124/hour	\$58.00/hour	\$100 - \$158.60/hour	\$55 - \$189/hour
Softball Diamonds	2 diamonds	4 diamonds, 3 in one location	Sandy Beach Ball Diamonds 4 diamonds in one location	1 diamond	Dyers Field 1 diamond	4 diamonds, 2 in each location
Cost	No charge for tournament	Tournament fee \$147.79/day/field	Minor \$6.75/hour/field Adults \$16/hour/field	No rate	\$16.75/game	\$94.69/day
Soccer Pitches	3 pitches; one location has two pitches	1 municipal pitch	Sandy Beach and Dryden Rotary Soccer pitches 3 pitches	No municipal pitches	No municipal pitches	1 non-municipal pitch
Cost	No charge for tournament	Tournament fee \$147.79/day/field	Minor \$7/hour/field Adults \$11/hour/field	n/a	n/a	n/a

¹ All costs do not include taxes



Criteria	Cochrane	Kapuskasing	Dryden	Geraldton	Marathon	Hearst
Tennis Courts	Cochrane Tennis Club 3 courts	Riverside Park Courts	No facility	2 courts	2 courts	4 courts

Arenas

Each comparator community has an arena space of sufficient size to host a typical hockey, skating or curling event. Like Hearst, Dryden and Kapuskasing have two sheets of ice to offer simultaneous play in tournaments. Hearst does hold a competitive edge on Marathon, Dryden and Cochrane which have only one ice surface.

Pricing for ice time is difficult to compare because each community calculates its ice time differently, often with different rates for daytime and evening use. For adult events, the cost of ice time varies from \$76 to \$122/hour before taxes. For minor sports there is usually a discounted rate, from \$47 to \$71/hour. Hearst has a moderately competitive rate for adults and the lowest pricing for minors. It is assumed that a sports tourism event would consume prime ice time to some extent. There may be an opportunity to offer special tournament rates, which appears to be an accepted practice.

Curling

All of the comparator communities with the exception of Dryden has a curling facility. For large curling events, arena ice can be modified to accommodate curling, which means there are additional sheets available for curling aside from the curling clubs. Kapuskasing has five sheets and the remainder of the communities have four sheets, which is sufficient for hosting bonspiels and other regional events.

Golfing

Hearst holds no competitive advantage. Courses are available in each comparator community and most communities have a minimum of one well-designed nine hole course with a clubhouse. Geraldton has an 18 hole course and Dryden has three 9 hole courses. Clubhouses can generally be rented for hosting events.

Indoor Pool

Indoor pools in the comparator communities vary greatly in size; Geraldton's pool is only 15 metres in length while the Cochrane facility is 50 metres in length. Rental fees vary in relation to the size of the pool and the number of people involved in the event, due to the potential need for additional lifeguards.



Hearst is moderately positioned for pool related sports with a 25 metre long pool with six swimming lanes. This is the largest number of lanes available among the comparator communities and allows for more athletes to compete at once.

Softball

The number of softball diamonds in the community varies from two softball fields in Cochrane to four fields in Hearst, Kapuskasing and Dryden. Dryden has the advantage of four softball diamonds in one location, while Kapuskasing has three and Hearst has two groupings of two fields. Marathon has one softball diamond as is not well positioned to attract softball events.

Soccer

There are not many municipally managed soccer pitches among the comparator communities. Several communities report that their recreation program uses local school facilities. Dryden and Cochrane both have three fields located together and could possibly host a soccer event. Hearst is not well positioned.

Tennis

Hearst has four tennis courts, which is the highest number of courts among the comparative regions.

Municipal Services and Amenities

Hearst has a moderate number of accommodations to offer a sports tourism event, and a reasonable number of restaurants. However, Cochrane and Kapuskasing, Hearst's closest competitors for sports tourism events, have significantly more amenities. Municipal initiatives to support the attraction of sports tourism events are either non-existent or in the early stages. There are no models to follow among the comparator communities, potentially presenting an opportunity for Hearst to take the "first mover advantage".



FIGURE 5: COMPARISON OF MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND AMENITIES IN RURAL NORTHERN ONTARIO

Criteria	Cochrane	Kapuskasing	Dryden	Geraldton	Marathon	Hearst
Hotel Rooms	8 motels Rooms N/A	7 motels, including 3 chain motels Rooms N/A	12 hotel/motels, including 3 chain hotels 360 rooms	3 motels 60 rooms ²	3 motels Rooms N/A	4 motels 193 Rooms
Hall and/or Conference Space³	Tim Horton Event Centre 485 seated people Cochrane Curling Club 134 people	Sports Palace 130 people Civic Centre: Auditorium 300 people Kapuskasing Curling Club	Best Western Plus Hotel & Conference Centre 250 people The Centre 500 people Eagle's Landing Golf & Convention Centre 250 people	Geraldton Curling Club 150 People Other conference spaces include the Legion, Parish Hall and French Club	Lakeview Community Hall 200 people Arena Multipurpose 100 people Marathon Curling Club Lounge 230 people	Place des Arts de Hearst 750 people (587 with liquor permit)
Cost	Hall \$473.80 per day	Sports Palace – Conference Room \$61.95/day	Dryden Pool and Fitness Centre 80 people Non-profit rate \$18/hour Others \$35/hour Eagle's Landing \$400/day or \$650/day for each space	Not available	Multi-purpose room \$18/hour Community Hall \$18/hour Marathon Curling Club Lounge \$175 half/ \$300 full day	\$973/day with a liquor permit and \$708 without
Restaurants	13 restaurants including fast food	24 restaurants, including fast food	16 restaurants	5 restaurants	12 restaurants	14 restaurants

² This figure also includes Bed and Breakfasts and short term rental units

³ The number of people illustrates the maximum capacity of the largest room in the facility.



Criteria	Cochrane	Kapuskasing	Dryden	Geraldton	Marathon	Hearst
Sports Tourism Marketing Efforts	No formal program, but a brief mention of recently hosting the RCMP Musical Ride	None	Engaged in preliminary work in developing a facility inventory and list of sport tourism opportunities, considering a formal strategy Website with the most information directly relevant to sports tourism	Greenstone has hired a tourism coordinator and will be doing strategic planning for tourism next year	Member of CSTA Interested in hockey, swimming and golf tournaments Don't often formally bid on events but pursue opportunities informally	Hearst Sport Tourism Strategy ⁴

Hotel Rooms

Hearst is well positioned in terms of number of rooms, but the facilities have fewer amenities than is desired. Geraldton and Marathon have fewer establishments than Hearst, but Kapuskasing and Cochrane have significantly more establishments and hotel rooms.

Restaurants

In terms of restaurants, Hearst is reasonably competitive. There are a number of options for food in the community, but there is not a lot of diversity in menus. It should be noted that the comparator community that is located closest to Hearst, Kapuskasing, has many more restaurants, which is still a competitive concern for Hearst.

Conference and Hall Space

Dryden has the most significant offering of true conference space among the comparator communities. In lieu of formal conference space, many communities use school facilities, auditoriums and the spaces offered by non-profit organizations, such as curling clubs churches, and community organizations such as the Legions. Hearst's Place des Arts is a significant competitive advantage – offering top quality space.

Sports Tourism Efforts

⁴ Refers to the current document - Sport Tourism in Hearst: Strategies for Successful Development



Although several communities mention sporting events and conferences on their websites, none of the comparator communities has a concerted program to attract sports tourism events to their community. This may change in the future, as both Dryden and Greenstone (includes Geraldton) are engaged in preliminary strategic planning efforts which involve sport tourism.

Most of the community websites are not comprehensive or easy to navigate for an event organizer, which is a disincentive for sports tourism events. To effectively plan an event a phone call would be required and the communities are not likely to have a well-organized “response team” to field questions. The lack of formal efforts in this area could represent an opportunity for Hearst to develop a competitive advantage in sports tourism.

Travel Distances

Travel distances in northern Ontario are a challenge for many communities and Hearst is one of the more remote communities still located on the highway corridor. Although Dryden, Geraldton and Marathon are further from a major airport than Hearst, Hearst is further from the Timmins airport than Cochrane and Kapuskasing, its closest competitors. Likewise, Hearst is more than a six hour drive away from major population centres such as Sudbury and Thunder Bay, which may be prohibitive for some types of sports events due to transportation costs and the time that it will take athletes to arrive. The following figure summarizes the distances between the comparator communities and locations of interest in Ontario and Manitoba.

On a positive note, for events that involve competitors from across northern Ontario, Hearst is the third best location to split the driving distance between North Bay and Kenora, after Marathon and Geraldton. It takes 11 hours to drive from Kenora to Hearst and 6 hours to drive from North Bay to Hearst. In sports where many athletes need to travel by car from a number of locations to reach a tournament, Hearst will be able to compete to host the event.

In terms of flight costs, there is not a substantial difference between airfare from Toronto to Thunder Bay and Toronto to Timmins. If a shuttle service or bussing arrangement could be made for competitors to reach Hearst easily from the Timmins airport, this could be an opportunity to host Ontario-wide events. However, this limits mobility of participants when they are in Hearst, and without a public transit system the Host Organizing Committee would have to provide continuous local transportation which will drive up costs.



FIGURE 6: COMPARISON OF TRAVEL DISTANCES IN RURAL NORTHERN ONTARIO

Criteria	Cochrane	Kapuskasing	Dryden	Geraldton	Marathon	Hearst
Driving distance to closest airport	Timmins 106 km 1.25 hours	Timmins 165km 2 hours	Winnipeg 351 km 3.75 hours	Thunder Bay 263 km 3.75 hours	Thunder Bay 306 km 3.3 hours	Timmins 262 km 3 hours
Driving distance to a major population centre (>100,000)	Sudbury 398 km 5 hours	Sudbury 458 km 5.5 hours	Thunder Bay 353 km 4 hours	Thunder Bay 263 km 3.75 hours	Thunder Bay 306 km 3.5 hours	Thunder Bay 520 km 6 hours
Driving distance to Kenora	1,199 km 13.5 hours	1,081 km 12.25 hours	138 km 1.75 hours	728 km 8.75 hours	770 km 8.5 hours	985 km 11 hours
Driving distance to North Bay	375 km 4 hours	492 km 5.5 hours	1,436 km 16 hours	892 km 10.75 hours	842 km 9.5 hours	588 km 6.5 hours
Flight cost from Sudbury to closest airport⁵	Timmins \$446	Timmins \$446	Thunder Bay \$480	Thunder Bay \$480	Thunder Bay \$480	Timmins \$446
Flight cost from Thunder Bay to closest airport	Timmins \$451	Timmins \$451	Thunder Bay is closest	Thunder Bay is closest	Thunder Bay is closest	Timmins \$451
Flight cost from Toronto to closest airport	Timmins \$287	Timmins \$287	Thunder Bay \$255	Thunder Bay \$255	Thunder Bay \$255	Timmins \$287

⁵ Costs are determined by an average of the quarterly costs of a flight and are for comparison purposes only



3.5 Case Studies

The following three case studies are from municipalities that have decided to focus on sports tourism as a sector that will generate economic growth in their community and are seeing success. Although each community has unique characteristics and are larger and have more sporting facilities than Hearst, there are common factors that can be identified in contributing to their success.

1. There is a designated individual or organization focused on developing sports tourism.
2. The focus has been endorsed and is supported by City Council and funding is available.
3. The community has a foundation of sports facilities and history of active participation.
4. There is supporting infrastructure in particular transportation, accommodation and restaurants.
5. Each community uses the Canadian Sports Tourism Alliance's STEAM tool to generate an economic impact assessment in support of attracting events.

3.5.1 Leduc, Alberta

Background

Leduc has a population of over 25,000 people in the province's Capital Region and is one of the fastest-growing communities in Canada. It is located next to Highway 2 and the Edmonton International Airport. The City has accommodation of more than 2,000 hotel rooms and 40 plus restaurants.

Sports Facilities

The new Leduc Recreation Centre (LRC) has three NHL-size rinks, two field houses, aquatic complex, state-of-the-art fitness facility, eight-rink curling complex, four-lane running/walking track and a full complement of recreational programming. The LRC is one of Alberta's largest and newest (2009) recreation centres and increasingly hosts provincial and national sports tournaments.

Attracting Sports Tourism Events and the Economic Impact

Following City Council's decision to build the new recreation centre, a Sports and Agriculture Tourism Coordinator was appointed. He is responsible for awarding grants to organizations planning to host events and for putting together bids on behalf of the organizing committee. He has an annual budget of \$100,000 which has 60% allocated to grants and 40% allocated to expenses in connection with making a bid for an event e.g. travel costs.



The City of Leduc uses the Canadian Sports Tourism Alliance's (CSTA) STEAM tool to assess the economic impact of a sporting event. They have evaluated 16 events over the last three years and feel this is critical to get support for what they are doing.

Total Province of Alberta Impact of 16 events	\$15,207,691
Total City of Leduc Impact of 16 events	\$10,351,248
TELUS Cup (hockey) - 2012	\$6,122,352
Black Gold Rodeo - 2011	\$1,494,979
AAC National Dog Agility Championships - 2013	\$1,381,643
Boston Pizza Cup – Men's Provincial Curling - 2013	\$ 989,370
U21 Girls Fastball Nationals - 2013	\$ 964,001
Leduc Riggers Jr. B Provincials (hockey) - 2011	\$ 738,021
Alberta Cup of Hockey - 2010	\$ 719,698
Alberta Dairy Congress - 2011 (25 th Anniversary)	\$ 500,143
SPN National Slo-Pitch Tournament - 2010	\$ 432,275
Wild Rose Figure Skating Event - 2011	\$ 363,394
Alberta Dairy Congress - 2010	\$ 347,655
Black Gold Health Federation Dragon Boat Festival - 2010	\$ 291,489
Regional Scott Firefit Championships - 2011	\$ 283,084
Adam Myers Minor Hockey Tournament - 2010	\$ 276,428
Provincial Scotties Tournament of Hearts (curling) – 2011	\$ 202,147
Gord Bamford's Picks and Sticks - 2011	\$ 101,012

The role of the Sports and Agriculture Tourism Coordinator is to bring sports groups together. All non-profit groups are offered assistance if they are considering putting on a sporting event. The group has to demonstrate that they can put an organizing committee in place as they will be responsible for the event once the bid has been successful. A process has been developed for the grant application. The Sports and Agriculture Tourism Coordinator will put the bid together on behalf of the local organizing committee and will also make the presentation. Bids are developed and pitched on a sport by sport basis as the opportunity arises. However, the City has recognized the need for a formal Sports Tourism Strategy as a next step.



3.5.2 Welland, Ontario

Background

With a population of just over 50,000, the City of Welland is situated between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, close to the U.S. border. It has good transportation infrastructure links to the rest of Ontario and New York State. It is in Niagara Region, with Niagara Falls close by, and offers ample hotel accommodation and restaurants to support sports events.

Sports Facilities

Sports have always been an important part in the community life in Welland. The strong foundation of sports facilities includes: baseball academy, motorcycle club, local hockey teams, new facilities at the Niagara College campus, recently completed sports complex and the Welland International Flat Water Centre. It was built in 2007 and has just received a \$10 million refurbishment in preparation for the Pan Am Games in 2015.

Attracting Sports Tourism Events and the Economic Impact

The Welland Sports Tourism Alliance (WSTA) was formed in 2007 as a result of strategic planning sessions held with Ontario Ministry of Tourism. In 2005, City Council endorsed the decision to focus on Sports Tourism as a sector to create economic growth.

The mandate of the WSTA is to bring together various sports groups, city officials and local businesses in the community to encourage organizers to host more sporting events to increase tourism and thereby grow Welland's economy. Lack of communication between these groups had been recognized as an issue that needed to be addressed. The ongoing priority for the WSTA is to increase communications online, through media, networking and contact with sports organizations.

City Council has put in place the Sport Tourism Fee Rebate program to offset some of the cost of hosting events and encourage organizers to choose Welland as a location. The program also monitors the number of visitors and their spending.

The link between sports tourism and the local economy in Welland has been best illustrated by calculating the economic impact of the events held in the city. The WSTA put in place a pilot project to monitor the spending habits of athletes, coaches and supporters who visit Welland for sporting events. An economic impact assessment evaluated 19 sporting events was conducted in partnership with the Niagara Sports Commission using Canadian Sports Tourism Alliance's (CSTA) tool, STEAM.

- The 19 sporting events hosted in Welland between 2010 and 2012 had an economic impact of \$11,456,542.



- One event, the FINA World Junior Open-Water Swim Championships, had an economic impact of more than \$2 million on the City of Welland. It attracted 500 participants from 31 countries who stayed in Welland, ate at local restaurants and shopped locally.

Major events hosted in Welland during 2013 included the National Rowing Championships and the International Canoe Federation's Junior and Under-23 Canoe Sprint World Championships in August. It is estimated that this event brought \$13 million into the community. In 2015, Welland will host the Pan Am Games Canoe-Kayak Sprint Competition and the World Dragon Boat Racing Championships.

3.5.3 Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Background

The City of Charlottetown is the capital city of Prince Edward Island, centrally located within 45 minute drive of all major points of access to the island. The city's population is 35,000 with a total population of 60,000 in the surrounding area. It has over 1,500 guest rooms and many restaurants to support visitors attending sporting events.

Sports Facilities

Charlottetown has many sports facilities including two arenas, five competition gymnasiums, 12 multi-purpose sports fields, 10 softball fields, indoor tennis courts, squash courts, ice rinks and soccer pitches.

Attracting Sports Tourism Events and the Economic Impact

Sport Charlottetown (SCORE!) was set up by the City to encourage the growth of the sports tourism industry. The City realizes the value of this sector and has placed a high priority on attracting sports events to stimulate tourism and economic growth. SCORE! is comprised of a team of professionals that assist provincial sporting bodies and event organizers in attracting and hosting regional, national and international sporting events and meetings in Charlottetown. The SCORE! team is there to provide assistance with the bid, promotion and hosting of sports events in a number of ways: bid development, bid presentation, event management support, identifying funding sources and marketing support.

SCORE! works with the CSTA and uses their STEAM tool to assess economic impact. A recently held event in 2013, Under-18 Women's Canadian Fast Pitch Championship, generated \$1 million. Annually, sport tourism events in total are worth \$50 million to the provincial capital.

As an example of the City's success, the list below is a list of major events held during 2013.



Atlantic University Sport Swimming Championships
Atlantic Wrestling Championships
PEI Open Wrestling Championships
Canadian Open Stick Curling Championships
Canadian Wheelchair Basketball Junior East Championship
National Inter-Provincial Bowling Championship
Hockey Canada Annual General Meeting
Hockey Night in Canada's Play On!
U14 Atlantic All-Star Soccer Championship
U18 Women's Canadian Fast Pitch Championship
Gran Fondo PEI (cycling)
Curl Atlantic Championship
Atlantic University Sport Women's Rugby Championship

The Mayor has shown leadership and enthusiasm for the promotion of sports tourism in Charlottetown and in 2013 was presented with the President's Award by the CSTA. It recognizes the outstanding achievements or contributions by individuals, companies or organizations which have helped profile and build sport tourism in Canada, provide exceptional sporting opportunities, generate significant revenue and/or demonstrate the value of volunteers.



4 Feasibility Assessment

Section Objectives

Determining the market can Hearst expect to attract with current facilities and amenities

Identifying how market capture be enhanced with additional investment

Evaluating whether it is an effective use of resources for Hearst to pursue sports tourism

4.1 SWOT Analysis

Successful economic development and tourism initiatives are premised on drawing out the unique characteristics and assets of a particular community – often reflected in its history, natural draw and location, as well as the current and potential future challenges. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis is the first step in identifying priority issues that require attention in the planning process.

FIGURE 7: SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Successful track record of hosting hockey tournaments▪ Engaged group of volunteers and sponsors▪ Good sports infrastructure relative to size of community (especially swimming, curling, hockey)▪ Award winning snowmobile trails▪ Karate – two successful tournaments already established and a good venue to host▪ Well organized cross-country ski club with excellent trails▪ Central location for Northern Ontario events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Location – three hours from closest city and airport (Timmins)▪ Accommodations – largely dated, need updating, limited capacity▪ Restaurants – lack of variety and none open 24/7▪ Lack of venues in certain sports (e.g. soccer)▪ Lack of organizations in many sports



Opportunities

- Curling – new facility and can couple with arena for larger bonspiels
- Swimming – 25 metre pool and swim team with active volunteers
- Snowmobiling – award winning trails and successful race held in Hearst in the past
- Ice sports – better than average facilities for hockey, figure skating, and other ice sports
- Carve out niche for smaller, northern Ontario championships/tournaments
- Trillium Grants – funding for community capacity building and volunteer development workshops
- Sports Camps
- Use of arena during non-ice months
- Build on success and popularity of 5 km, 10 km runs
- Untapped events – pond hockey, snowshoeing, softball, hunting skills competitions (e.g. crossbow, trap/skeet shooting), lumberjack competitions, adventure racing, dog sledding
- “First Mover” in Northeastern Ontario – other communities have not developed strong sports tourism initiatives

Threats

- High interest – a lot of competition for events
- Economy and rising price of fuel – high travel costs to Hearst
- Aging volunteers (consistent with Hearst’s overall demographic trends)
- Small number of volunteers will limit potential



4.2 Hearst's Competitive Advantages/Disadvantages

The results of the above analysis provide a detailed inventory of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Competitive advantages and disadvantages are different than strengths and weaknesses. Strengths and weaknesses may be common to Hearst as well as its competitors, while competitive advantages and disadvantages will differentiate Hearst from competitors. Hearst has a better chance of continued success if it targets its sport tourism activities to serve markets that are better able to capitalize on its competitive advantages while not suffering from its competitive disadvantages.

Ultimately, determining the competitive advantages and disadvantages are critical to this project.

- Competitive advantages form the nucleus for the area's unique value proposition – the “wow” factor that will motivate potential sport tourism organizers to take a closer look.
- Competitive disadvantages are those elements that need be improved if it is critical to the sport tourism effort.

The following factors are considered to be Hearst's Competitive Advantages and Disadvantages.

FIGURE 8: HEARST'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES AND COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGES

Competitive Advantages	Competitive Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Central location for Northern Ontario events■ Good sports facility infrastructure relative to size of community (especially swimming, curling, arena)■ Award winning snowmobile trails■ A natural hunting and fishing destination■ Engaged group of volunteers and sponsors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Geographical location for northeastern Ontario, provincial and national level competitions■ Few accommodations with extra amenities■ Lack of restaurants and shopping■ No commercial service to airport■ No public transit (with the exception of a bus for seniors and individuals with a disability)■ Lack of marketing and human resources for sports tourism



4.3 Opportunities Assessment

The key criteria for sport event hosting were outlined in Section 2.2. The following figures offer an assessment of the opportunities that exist for Hearst.

The first table identifies those sports where there is strong potential and success can occur quickly. In some cases, these events have already been occurring consistently and could occur in the future with minimal support from the Hearst Economic Development Corporation (EDC). Support from Hearst EDC would allow organizing committees to pursue more and larger events or establish invitational events where none previously existed.

FIGURE 9: SPORTS WHICH HOLD STRONG POTENTIAL FOR A POSITIVE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Sport	Sporting Facilities	Local Amenities	Champion/Volunteers	Experience	Target Market(s)
Curling	✓	✓ ✗	✓	✓ ✗	Regional, Invitational
Figure Skating	✓	✓ ✗	✓	✓ ✗	Regional, Invitational
Various High School Level Competitions	✓	✓ ✗	✓ ✗	✓ ✗	Regional, Provincial
Hockey	✓	✓ ✗	✓	✓	Regional, Provincial, Invitational
Francophone Events	✓ ✗	✓ ✗	✓ ✗	✓ ✗	Regional, Provincial, National
Swimming	✓	✓ ✗	✓	✓	Regional, Invitational

The next table identifies those sports where there could be success but some additional planning, outreach and investment are required. In some cases, events in these sports have already been occurring and could occur in the future. However, these events have generally not been occurring consistently and support from Hearst EDC would offer an opportunity to change that situation.



FIGURE 10: SPORTS WHICH HOLD MODERATE POTENTIAL FOR A POSITIVE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Sport	Sporting Facilities	Local Amenities	Champion/Volunteers	Experience	Target Markets
Adventure Racing	✓	✓ ✗	✗	✗	Corporate-owned events open to public
Arena-Cross (indoor)	✓ ✗	✓ ✗	✓ ✗	✓	Regional, Invitational
Bowling	✓	✓ ✗	✓ ✗	✓ ✗	Regional, Invitational
Cross Country Skiing	✓ ✗	✓ ✗	✓	✓	Open to Public; Regional
Fitness Competitions (e.g. Tough Mudder)	✓	✓ ✗	✓ ✗	✓ ✗	Corporate-owned events open to public
Moto-Cross (outdoor)	✓	✓ ✗	✓	✓ ✗	Regional, Invitational
Hunting/Fishing	✓	✓ ✗	✓	✓	Open to Public; Invitational
Karate	✓	✓ ✗	✓	✓	Regional
Syncro Skating	✓	✓ ✗	✓ ✗	✓ ✗	Regional, Invitational
Softball	✓	✓ ✗	✓	✗	Regional, Invitational
Pond Hockey	✓	✓ ✗	✓	✓ ✗	Invitational



Sport	Sporting Facilities	Local Amenities	Champion/Volunteers	Experience	Target Markets
Short and Mid-Distance Road Running					Open to public
Snowmobiling					Regional, Provincial

The next table identifies sports opportunities which have a low probability of success without significant investment in facilities, an increase in local interest to host events or a change in the overall interest in the sport across the region to ensure a high number of participants.

FIGURE 11: SPORTS WHICH HOLD LOW POTENTIAL FOR A POSITIVE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Sport	Sporting Facilities	Local Amenities	Champion/Volunteers	Experience	Target Markets
Athletics (Track and Field)					
Dance/Performance					Regional, Invitational
Other ice-based sports (e.g. ringette, sledge hockey)					Regional
Soccer					Invitational
Tennis					Invitational



4.3.1 Strong Opportunities for Sport Tourism

Hearst has an enthusiastic sporting community. Love for organized sport has led to some tremendous success in competitions at regional and provincial levels. This section examines options to expand Hearst's role in hosting competitions that may draw more athletes and spectators to the area. It looks at four primary areas where sporting is exceedingly successful – curling, figure skating, hockey, and swimming – as well the high school competitive team circuit and opportunities with Francophone-specific games.

Curling

Hearst Community Curling Club belongs to the Northern Ontario Curling Association (NOCA). The minimum amount of ice sheets (i.e. playing surfaces) to be able to apply for any senior level competition is four, which Hearst meets with its new curling facility. According to Leslie Kerr, Executive Director of NOCA, Hearst's rink meets all the minimum criteria required to host any of the following regional competitions:

- Bantam
- Youth Challenge
- Junior
- Men
- Women
- Mixed
- Mixed Doubles
- Senior
- Master
- Wheelchair

In addition, the rink could be suited to host 'qualifier' rounds for provincial competitions. NOCA posts its calendar every spring for the following year with the dates of each event and the application deadlines. Included in the deadlines are the bidding deadlines to host an event. Any club can bid to host the event as long as it has enough sheets of ice (which Hearst has). It has happened that sometimes only one town has applied to host a competition and has won by default, thus it will be beneficial to be vigilant about watching for tournament announcements.

Figure Skating

Hearst is eligible to host regional-level skating competitions and has done so in the past. Its figure skating club can apply to a) host its own competition, b) host an inter-club competition for the James Bay sub-region, or c) host a sectional competition. Each type of event requires an application to be filled out and sent through the sector office of Skate Canada (i.e. Skate Canada's James Bay section). Skate Canada's website lists when each bidding process is to start and includes all the necessary criteria which are required to meet each selection.

Michelle Ross, Section Administrative Director for Skate Canada Northern Ontario's section office, and has advised that Hearst's ice facility would not have problems meeting selection criteria in terms of infrastructure. Other important selection



considerations to consider however include details about accommodations for participants, volunteers and volunteer steering committees, and the closest airport.

High School Sports

Hearst has two high schools. There are numerous sports which Hearst's high school students are involved in. High school sporting competitions operate on a rotation formula sanctioned by the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA), under which Hearst is registered through the North Eastern Ontario Athletics Association (NEOAA). Any high school sporting association can apply to host a championship through the OFSAA, and each sport has its own rotation, depending on how many participants are involved in the sport and its popularity in a given region. Because the frequency at which Northern Ontario has an opportunity to host a particular tournament in a particular sport varies from sport to sport, to simplify information, each sport and division is provided below, followed by the next year in which a northern Ontario high school is eligible to host an event. In brackets next to each year is a number describing the interval which Northern Ontario is listed to host an event. Some events do not occur at all in Northern Ontario, and these are indicated appropriately.

- Girls' Volleyball Junior – 2015-2016 (3 year)
- Girls' Volleyball Senior – 2015-2016 (3 year)
- Girls' Basketball Junior – 2015-2016 (2 year)
- Girls' Basketball Senior – 2014-2015 (2 year)
- Boys' Basketball Junior – 2015-2016 (2 years)
- Boys' Basketball Senior – (does not occur in North)
- Boys' Soccer A – 2015-2016 (3 years)
- Boys' Soccer AA – (does not occur in North)
- Curling – 2015-2016 (3 years)
- Girls' Soccer A – 2015-2016 (3 year)
- Girls' Soccer AA – (does not occur in North)
- Girls' Hockey – 2014-2015 (3 year)
- Boys' Hockey – (does not occur in North, and rotation schedule not available)

Infrastructure demands make hosting provincial championships for basketball and soccer difficult for the two high schools. Most championships host between 15 and 20 teams from across the province and require between 3 and 4 gymnasiums. As such, Hearst has three options.



1. The community is ideally suited to host OFSAA championships in girls' hockey, where facilities outside of school properties are available at the Claude Larose Recreation Centre.
2. Curling championships can be run through the new curling rink which has four playing surfaces. This applies to Northern Ontario Region and Provincial championships.
3. Hearst could host volleyball at the Junior A and Senior A. There is no AA level competition that goes to Northern Ontario. Since enough courts will not be available at one location, approval to split the tournament between multiple locations must be obtained from the Northern Ontario Athletic Association, which operates at the regional level and interacts with OFSAA.

Hockey

Hearst's community hockey clubs are associated with the Ontario Hockey Federation via its "member partner", the Northern Ontario Hockey Association. It is through the partner that local hockey clubs apply to host Federation-sanctioned events. Regionally, applications can be directed to the Northern Ontario Hockey Association (in North Bay). At this level there are various tournaments to host, each with its own theme. For example, Hearst hosts an annual Asterix and Obelix Tournament, which includes multiple divisions (AA through D) over a weekend every January.

The Ontario Hockey Federation⁶ lists its selection criteria for larger championship events on its website, including: finances (estimated costs/revenues), facility details (availability, minimum of 5 changing rooms etc.), accommodations for a maximum of 5 teams (can be across multiple locations), community interests, timeline logistics, marketing, volunteer availability and coordination, and other events which are occurring in conjunction with the hosting of the event.

The following levels and years indicate when Northern Ontario is set to host various province-wide championships, and these can be used to strategically plan to host future events.

- Pee wee AAA - 2015-2016
- Bantam AAA – 2014-2015
- Midget AAA – 2016-2017
- Atom A – 2014-2015
- Atom AA – 2013-2014
- Atom AAA – (none)
- Pee wee A – 2016-2017

Ontario Hockey Federation, Championship Rotation Charts, 2013-14, <http://www.ohf.on.ca/championships>.



- Peewee AA – 2015-2016
- Bantam A – 2015-2016
- Bantam AA – 2016-2017
- Midget A – 2013-2014
- Midget AA – 2014-2015
- Juvenile – (None)

Swimming

Hearst's Phoenix Swim Club is part of the North Eastern Region of Swim Ontario's territory, and has the distinction of being the northernmost club in the region. Lindsay Talyor of Swim Ontario has explained the minimal requirements to host a "Championship" event are to have a 50 meter length pool with 8 lanes. Because Hearst only has a 25 meter by 6 lane pool, the Phoenix Swim club cannot host any event larger than a regional level.

Regionally, Hearst can apply to either host an invitational competition or a regional competition. Both forms of event require the candidate swim club to fill out a sanctioning application through Swim Canada. In order for the application to be considered, the application has to be signed off on by a Regional Officer for North Eastern Ontario and by Swim Ontario's Coaching, Competition, and Communications Coordinator, Lindsay Taylor. Though the process for applying to host an event is rather simple, it has been explained that the largest obstacle is for a club to host an event that other teams will be willing to compete in rather than competing in another. This is because there are a fairly large number of events being held every weekend throughout the season by different clubs; meaning even hosting a competitive event in-and-of itself is a competitive event. An example provided was that over the weekend of January 25-26, 2014, there over 20 competitions across the province, and it is not uncommon to approximate this number every week. Clubs from outside the region can apply to compete in North Eastern Region, and vice-versa.

Francophone Events

Due to its strong francophone heritage, Hearst is in a good position to pursue provincial, national and inter-provincial tournaments with a francophone audience. It is anticipated that there would be great community enthusiasm about such an opportunity – a once-in-a-generation chance to showcase the community and its culture.

The Franco-Ontario Games/Jeux franco-ontariens are a good example of the type of francophone specific event that Hearst may be able to accommodate. It is more likely, though, that given the breadth of facility infrastructure that is needed, a partnership with Kapuskasing would be necessary.



5 A Vision for Hearst's Sport Tourism Efforts

5.1 Final Assessment

There is a mix of positive and negative factors at play which make sport tourism far less than an automatic winner for Hearst. On the whole, however, the positive factors outweigh the negative. The town has a strong enough combination of decent sporting facilities, local enthusiasm for sports competitions and experience in hosting events which outweigh the weaknesses in local amenities

In the sports that Hearst is shown to have an opportunity, geographic location, more than any other factor, will determine the types of events the town will successfully attract. While the distances are large, that is the reality of Northern Ontario, and Hearst is as centrally located as any other community. The concentration must be on regional and invitational events because the prospects of consistently attracting provincial (and higher) level championships is too remote.

Another factor that will initially hamper growth of the sector is the lack of central organization and financial resources behind a community-based effort. While there is no questioning the need for a local champion to lead a Host Organizing Committee, consultations did identify a desire for professional support of the volunteers and also to ensure events are not held on overlapping dates. The "desire" turns into a "need" if the community wants to attract more and larger events.

One important element that the community should consider to be a potentially huge competitive advantage is the opportunity to be "first mover" amongst its key competition. While many communities understand the benefits of sport tourism, none have ever measured the economic impact of their events or developed a formalized initiative such as those communities cited herein as best practices. There is no question that facilities and amenities need to be in place but there is also no question that exceptional customer service in an industry that does not fully expect it can turn an average bid into one that has an exceptional chance at winning.

5.2 Emphasis

Hearst's sport tourism effort will emphasize the development and marketing of sporting events.

Sport Tourism is a competitive industry. To attract events in this marketplace, Hearst EDC must demonstrate leadership and be strategic in its approach. Investment from the Town, local sports associations, and the private sector (e.g. hospitality industry) will be required to be consistently successful. Establishing a Sport Tourism Subcommittee will help to bring these partners together on a regular basis to offer strategic direction.



5.3 Roles of Hearst EDC and Its Partners

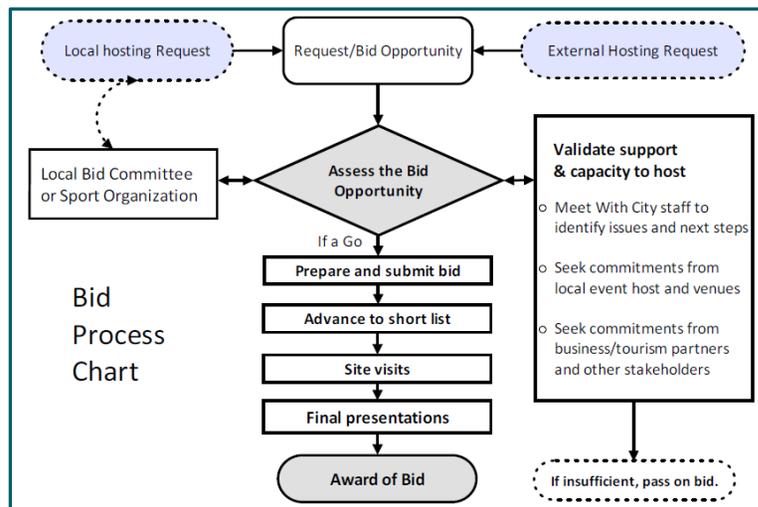
Hearst EDC's role in sport tourism is to serve as a catalyst and resource to sport tourism initiatives of various types and help manage Hearst's overall sport tourism brand. Typical activities include:

- Support for development (planning, bid proposals, sponsorships, information)
- Coordination (maintaining network contacts, providing guidance on logistics/bookings)
- Marketing support (audience development, event promotion, database management)
- Brand leadership (spearheading the brand development agenda, tracking performance)

Hearst EDC should avoid getting into a “control” role or managing the activities of individual sports associations. It is understood that the overall sport tourism effort requires engagement and effort from many partners, each with their own priorities. To realize its full potential, sport tourism initiatives must be “win-win” propositions -- ventures that have economic benefits beyond narrow sport concerns, but are also not strictly commercial in interest.

Bidding is the process of acquiring the right to host an event and Hearst EDC and the following figure outlines a typical process.

FIGURE 12: THE BIDDING PROCESS FOR SPORTS EVENTS



Source: Tourism Kingston Sport Tourism Implementation Plan (2009)



5.4 Recommendations & Implementation Plan

It is recommended that Hearst pursue a sport tourism initiative, with three strategic areas of activity. The three areas of activity are community mobilization, funding, and marketing. These strategies are based on the research and the advice of sports event organizers local to Hearst, regional and provincial event organizers, and industry experts who were consulted during the course of the project. The following recommendations fall into two categories: (a) Community Mobilization and (b) Development and Marketing.

FIGURE 13: FOCUSING ON IMPLEMENTATION





Immediate Next Steps

1. Establish a one year pilot project and work with the Town of Hearst to establish Sport Tourism Development Officer position on a full-time one year contract or a more permanent half-time basis in collaboration with other priorities outlined in the recently completed Economic Development Strategy.
2. Organize tourism and sport stakeholders into a volunteer sport tourism committee.
3. Create a work schedule and budget for Sport Tourism Development Officer with strong committee involvement.
Tasks may include:
 - establishing regular communications and information sharing with sporting organizations
 - leading public communications on the value of sport tourism and progress of initiatives in Hearst
 - implementing a shared community event calendar for sport tourism
 - bidding on events that have been determined to have a high potential for return
 - regularly attending sport tourism events
 - maintaining a volunteer list and engaging volunteers in sport tourism planning and activities
 - exploring regional partnerships
 - developing strong relationships with the business community to support better coordination of sport tourism event accommodations and maximize the use of local amenities
 - marketing Hearst through an improved online presence.
4. Implement membership and networking program with regional, provincial and national sporting organizations of interest, including Francophone organizations with strong committee involvement
5. Develop a business plan for a sport tourism grant/community grant and work with Town of Hearst to implement local incentives



Community Mobilization

- Hearst EDC should play a catalyst/project developer role and should be a resource for coordination, expertise, contacts, information and planning support.
- There is a need for an advisory forum – the Sport Tourism Committee – where sport tourism leaders and infrastructure partners (Town, university, college, high schools, hospitality operators, etc.) can gather to share ideas, coordinate individual action and provide feedback to Hearst EDC.
- Event organizing committees would be expected to take the initiative with respect to leadership and action in developing and managing individual sport tourism events, with support from the other stakeholders noted above.

Hearst EDC's Role

- Support for development (planning, bid proposals, sponsorship contacts, information)
- Coordination (maintaining network contacts, helping with logistics and bookings)
- Marketing support (audience development, event promotion, database management)
- Brand leadership (spearheading the brand development agenda, tracking performance)

Hearst EDC's Sport Tourism Committee Role

- Function as an advisory board of sport tourism leaders and infrastructure partners.
- Act as ambassadors to build support for Hearst's strategies and action plans.
- Play an advisory role to help Hearst EDC guide sport tourism and assist with budget and marketing plan development.
- Share information and coordinate individual actions in support of initiatives.
- Provide expertise as mentors to different event organizing committees (perhaps even sitting on those committees) and serving as a sounding board for people with ideas for new or expanded events.

Business and Tourism Partners Role

- Champion the sport tourism agenda with members, and speak to business/tourism opportunities, concerns and interests within sport tourism forums.
- Demonstrate buy-in that shows sport tourism should be taken seriously.



- Participate/Provide liaison to members for specific sport tourism bids and event organizing.
- Help develop member-based initiatives to integrate sport tourism events with other sectors.

Sport Infrastructure Partners (Town, university, college, high schools, etc.)

- Champion the sport tourism agenda within their own organizations/institutions, and speak to their interests as partners within sport tourism forums.
- Demonstrate buy-in that shows sport tourism should be taken seriously.
- Participate in specific sport tourism bids and event organizing.
- Help integrate their own sports and recreation activities with sport tourism initiatives.

Local Sport Groups and Organizations

- Champion the sport tourism agenda with members, and speak to sport/community interests within sport tourism forums.
- Demonstrate buy-in that shows sport tourism should be taken seriously.
- Provide links to/liaison with members for specific sport tourism bids and event organizing.
- Help develop member-based initiatives (e.g. event organizing training/workshops) to integrate sports with other sectors and organizations.

Development and Marketing

1. Establish a dedicated Sport Tourism Development Officer focused on Sport Tourism

In consultation with sporting organizations, the presence of an organized volunteer group was highlighted as an important factor in the decision where to site an event. Regardless of whether the resource is a staff person or a volunteer, a dedicated resource to facilitate strong community support for Sport Tourism will improve the success of event attraction activities.

The role of a Sport Tourism Development Officer (STDO) and/or committee would be to bring sports groups together and support community organizations interested in writing a bid and hosting an event. The role of the STDO would not be to organize events directly, but the person would assist host committees with tournament bid participation and sponsorship.



The most successful sporting events in rural communities depend on the organization and management capabilities of local champions and sports organizations to lead bids and coordinate events.

Any interested community sporting organization would be offered assistance in the form of advice, supplementary research, and the facilitation of funding requests, as needed, if they are considering hosting a sporting event. An organizing committee would need to be in place as the community organization will be responsible for the event if a bid is successful.

A Terms of Reference would need to be developed for the “Sport Tourism Development Officer” and/or committee so that objectives, responsibilities and goals of the position are clearly identified and agreed upon. Other recommended actions outside of community mobilization may also be included in the terms of reference.

2. Complete a Comprehensive Event Calendar

In consultation with local community organizers of sporting events, tournaments were described as at risk of being scheduled on conflicting dates. Hearst’s limited number of accommodations could create a significant issue for event organizers should this occur. Somewhere in Hearst a comprehensive calendar needs to be maintained and its location must be well-known to all local sports organizations. This could continue to be maintained by the Town while being better publicized. It could also become one of the responsibilities of the STDO to share it directly with local organizers to actively encourage greater awareness of possible conflicts.

3. Encourage local sports organizers to network with regional, provincial and national sporting organizations

Building relationships with sports organizations is of critical importance to the success of event bids and supports the enthusiasm of local volunteers to pursue sporting events. Relationships with sporting organizations can be developed in the following ways:

- Due to distance, these relationships are often initiated through phone conversations and requests for information from regional and provincial organizations.
- Sporting associations may offer workshops or other training activities that are relevant to the community and participation in these activities or programs can be investigated to improve local participation and enjoyment of sports as well as develop relationships with provincial organizations.
- Community leaders can also volunteer in regional/provincial associations to learn more about event organization and develop relationships with participants.



- Local organizers can then attend targeted events to build relationships and discuss future bids in detail, including any challenges the organization has faced with past hosts.

4. Investigate collaborative bids with neighbouring communities

The benefits of collaborative bids with neighbouring communities are an increase in the number of sport tourism opportunities that Hearst may be able to secure, as well as the long term benefits of positive regional relationships in all aspects of economic development. Also, Hearst is competitive in many areas, but some of its disadvantages include a lack of local accommodations to host large tournaments (see Recommendation #11). Hearst could explore opportunities to support Constance Lake First Nation in hosting Aboriginal sporting events in the area. Kapuskasing would be a logical partner to secure additional accommodations if required for a specific opportunity.

5. Network to develop relationships with Francophone sporting organizations

Due to its strong francophone heritage, Hearst is in a good position to pursue provincial, national and inter-provincial tournaments with a francophone audience.

The Franco-Ontario Games/Jeux franco-ontariens are a good example of the type of francophone specific event that Hearst may be able to accommodate, perhaps in partnership with Kapuskasing (More research is needed on the facility requirements of this particular event.)

6. Join the Canadian Sports Tourism Alliance and use their STEAM tool to assess potential impact of sporting events that are already planned

Tracking the economic impact of sporting events provides information about the priority that should be placed on particular bids and the acceptable level of expenditure that Hearst should invest in sports tourism event attraction.

The Canadian Sports Tourism Alliance (CSTA) has developed a tool, in partnership with other sports and tourism organizations, called the Sport Tourism Economic Assessment Model (STEAM). The tool is available to members and is web-based. The data needed to generate results include a basic knowledge of participant and spectator demographics, with additional information from the event's business plan. STEAM is the world's first web-based economic impact model specifically designed for sports events. Access to the STEAM model is available once members have participated in a training session offered throughout the year by the CSTA.



7. Create local incentives

Attracting a sporting event to Hearst and hosting the event successfully requires financial support that many local community organizations may not be able to access or may not be able to access in a timely manner. Creating a local sport tourism grant or adapting an existing community grant to support sporting events could resolve this issue. Grant funding can be raised by a joint initiative of the private and public sectors as well as community organizations. A hotel tax or a Business Improvement Association (BIA) could be explored to facilitate a local business contribution. In addition, sports organizations often consider the potential for grants and financial assistance as criteria in determining a host community.

Hearst Town Council and/or Hearst EDC should therefore consider the development of a sport tourism grant/community grant that can be used to support local organizations as they undertake bids and host events. Industry partnerships could be fostered to support the funding of such a grant. Many sporting events are seeking strong local business sponsorship when they are selecting a host community. Participation in a community or sporting grant may send a positive signal to a potential event that the Hearst business community is supportive.

8. Addressing accommodations challenge

For any event, large or small, it is not uncommon to encounter concerns over planning for the adequate amount of accommodations for competitors and adjudicators. Typically, the larger the size of each team, the more difficult it is to coordinate accommodations. It is therefore advised that the following considerations be taken into account during plenary discussions prior to applying to host a sports competition. Hearst has several quality hotels and motels, with ample room to suit nearly any organized competition or championship. The single largest concern is with regard to more than one event occurring during the same time-period. There are several precautions that can be taken to ensure that organizing accommodations runs as smooth as possible. For one thing, submission deadlines for most organized competitions are posted at least six months prior to the scheduled date of the event, giving ample time to begin communicating with the accommodation operators in the area about specific requirements. Also, it is important to consider what other events are occurring during the same period, and to follow up on their likely demands on various amenities. As such, it is a good policy to be attuned to what other sports may be experiencing peak-seasons, to be acquainted with administration associated with other sport clubs or associations in the community, and to find out if and when events are occurring for any of them. The odds are narrow that any two events will lead to a lack of overall space, but to avoid such scenarios, planning well in advance and communicating with other potential stakeholders (including local establishments and sports organizers) is ideal.



9. Sport tourism related information online

Sport organizations that are considering a number of communities have limited time and will give consideration to communities who have relevant information online. To resolve this issue, a sport tourism section of the Hearst EDC website should be created and the following information publicized:

- Facilities available including details such as ice dimensions, maximum capacity (with and without alcohol),
- Amenities including accommodations and number of room, any special services and recreational or cultural attractions that athletes or their families may enjoy
- Complete rates of municipal and non-municipal facilities or, at a minimum, contact information for non-municipal facilities
- Sport tourism incentives such as special rates, transportation support, community mobilization, and existing community groups that may support event planning and execution
- Contact information of staff responsible for sport tourism

10. Communicate success to the community

Sport tourism relies on volunteers, community support and involvement. Ensure that any progress, such as a bid submission or successful bid, is given full attention. The hard work of volunteers to prepare a bid should be acknowledged and commended publicly by community leaders and the media.

Successful sport tourism events are currently held in Hearst; these events should be profiled and promoted in the local media and included in bid packages. News articles or success story profiles are a great opportunity to share the capacity of the community to welcome events and host sporting organizations.

Communication can be achieved with a press release or by arranging an interview with the mayor or a councillor, as well as community volunteers and the local media.

11. Attend the Sports Event Congress in 2014

The Sports Events Congress brings together sport tourism organizations, event management firms and other industry professionals in the largest sports tourism event in Canada. For a community focused on the sports tourism sector it is the event to attend.

In 2014 the event will be held in Edmonton, from April 1st to 3rd at the Shaw Conference Centre. It includes best practice presentations, keynote speakers, networking events but most important of all, an events marketplace. Here sports organizations can meet with representatives of local municipalities interested in hosting events in their communities.



5.4.1 Year One Budget

The recommendations and implementation plan have associated ongoing costs. To illustrate the potential budget implications of the recommendations, the following sample one year budget has been prepared.

FIGURE 14: YEAR ONE SPORTS TOURISM BUDGET

Item Description	Cost
Sport Tourism Development Officer Salary	\$45,000
Non-Salary Benefits (est. 20%)	\$9,000
Business Development: Prospecting	\$10,000
Promotional Material Development	\$10,000
Business Development: Bid Development	\$5,000
CSTA Sports Event Conference & Travel	\$3,000
CSTA Membership	\$150
Administration	\$3,000
TOTAL	\$82,150

While these costs are believed to be reasonable, as more detailed planning is completed some estimates may need to be adjusted. Costs generally increase over time due to inflation and there are regional cost factors such as wage rates to consider that may be unique to Hearst. Therefore the budget will require updating on a regular basis, based on experience and the local context.



Appendix A – Questionnaire for Sports Tourism Potential in Hearst



1. What is your business/group/organization/sport?
2. And how long have you been involved with the above mentioned organization? (years/months)
3. How many members/volunteers do you have?
4. Do you have printed marketing materials? If yes, what type? If yes, in which language?
5. Does your organization have a web page? If yes, in which language? Can you provide us with link to your web page?
6. From your point of view, what is the main reason/purpose of sports tourists' visits in Hearst? (List below maximum 3 answers.):
 - A. Sightseeing – trail walks, nature activities etc.
 - B. Hockey
 - C. Health – spa, rehabilitation, healing, etc.
 - D. Curling
 - E. Golf
 - F. Bowling
 - G. Swimming
 - H. Running/Cycling
 - I. Snowmobiling
 - J. Skiing
 - K. Figure skating
 - L. Other, please specify
7. What are the top 3 most successful tournaments in Hearst?



8. How do you rate sport tourism infrastructure and facilities in Hearst? (Very Poor; Poor; Good; Very Good; Cannot Judge)
- A. Trails, waterways
 - B. Cycling
 - C. Golf courses
 - D. Theatre space (dance)
 - E. Hockey arenas
 - F. Aquatic centre
 - G. Fields (soccer, football)
 - H. Softball diamonds
9. What is your overall evaluation of the following services in Hearst? (Very Poor; Poor; Good; Very Good; Cannot Judge)
- A. Level of accommodation services
 - B. Level of quality restaurants
 - C. Public transportation
 - D. Services for cyclists
 - E. Services for handicap people
 - F. Level of staff in tourism services
 - G. Care about cleanliness and tidiness (garbage, cleaning of streets, toilets etc.)
10. How would you evaluate the development of sport tourism in these areas? (Very Poor; Poor; Good; Very Good; Cannot Judge)
- A. Providing information about the city (information center, web site)
 - B. Local signage (directions/navigation, tourism boards, maps etc.)
 - C. Care of monuments and tourist attractions
 - D. Care of environment
 - E. Care of visitors safety
 - F. Range of leisure programs
 - G. Friendliness of the locals to visitors
 - H. Communication, exchange of information
 - I. Creation of tourist products (offer)
 - J. Presentation (promotional activities)



11. On which activities should Hearst concentrate on in the future? (Select up to 3 answers)
- A. Sightseeing (visiting castles, palaces, historical monuments, museums, galleries, etc.)
 - B. Walking
 - C. Cycling, mountain biking
 - D. Swimming, water sports
 - E. Skiing, winter sports
 - F. Other active sports (e.g. golf, volleyball)
 - G. Care of physical and mental condition (spa, wellness, physiotherapy, etc.)
 - H. Rural tourism (agro tourism, stay on the farms, horse riding, etc.)
12. What do you see as the biggest challenge for sports tourism in Hearst?
13. What do you see as the biggest strength and opportunity for sport tourism in Hearst?
14. What are some cultural and social factors affecting sport tourism in Hearst?
15. What are some marketing factors affecting sport tourism in Hearst?
16. What are some economic factors affecting sport tourism in Hearst?
14. Do you have anything on the topic of sport tourism in Hearst to add?

THANK YOU FOR COOPERATION