



2023 Tourism Summit  
**Tourism Reimagined**  
September 8, 2023





# **Hon. Neil Lumsden**

## **Ontario Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport**



Neil Lumsden was elected as the Member of Provincial Parliament for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek in 2022 and appointed as the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Before entering politics, Neil enjoyed a successful career as an athlete, administrator, entrepreneur and community volunteer.

As a star player with the University of Ottawa Gee Gees, Neil helped the team to an undefeated season and the Vanier Cup in 1975. Over 10 years as a fullback and running back in the Canadian Football League, he won three Grey Cups with Edmonton, and a fourth in 1999 as General Manager and Chief Operating Officer of the Hamilton TigerCats.

Neil's commitment to youth development has been demonstrated through his decades of volunteer activities related to youth sport and other community projects. He has coached youth hockey and football and is currently part of the coaching staff of the Steel City Patriots playing in the Northern Football Conference out of Stoney Creek. He has served as a member of the Board of Directors of Hamilton's Ronald McDonald House and has volunteered his time and fund-raising expertise to the city's Association for Community Living.



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# Paul Pepe

## Manager - Tourism Thunder Bay



A lifelong resident of Northwest Ontario, Paul has a passion for the natural environment he's fortunate to call his big back yard and loves sharing the experiences of the Northwest with friends and visitors alike. A graduate of Lakehead University, Paul has an academic background in Political Science and Indigenous Studies. Prior to his current role, Paul held positions with the Ministry of Northern Development and and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport at Fort William Historical Park.

In his current role as Manager of Tourism Thunder Bay, Paul is responsible for development and execution of the community's tourism development and promotion strategies. He provides operational guidance to the CEDC's Tourism Development Fund, a \$1.5 million annual community tourism investment tool powered by the municipal accommodation tax. Paul has been significantly involved in the development of the Great Lakes Cruise shipping sector and is co-creator of the Ride Lake Superior motorcycle touring strategy.

Paul is the Chair of Destination Ontario's Northern Ontario Marketing Committee, Acting Chair of Attractions Ontario, a member of the TIAO Policy Advisory Committee and Science North's Northwest Expansion Committee. Paul is actively involved with several bi national cruise shipping partnerships and on the planning committee for the 2023 Highway H2O Seaway conference.



# Louis Béland

**Executive Director - Eastern Ontario Agri-Food Network**



Louis Béland is an entrepreneur focused on helping others follow their dreams. Raised in an entrepreneurial family and immersed in the community from a young age, Louis's passion naturally rests in igniting the same enthusiasm for business in others and creating opportunities for budding entrepreneurs. Louis has ventured into many different business sectors, including media production, an integrations startup in New Zealand, and an artisanal roastery and coffee shop for which he earned himself Young Entrepreneur awards two years in a row.

From start-ups to succession planning, from public speaking to mentoring and coaching, Louis loves sharing his experience and passion with anyone who will listen. One of his recent successes came as a regional director for the Société économique de l'Ontario where he led youth initiatives and entrepreneurial support initiatives for the francophone communities of Ontario, as well as building the largest GrowthWheel certified business advisors team in Canada, a team specialized in helping business owners make the best possible decisions.

You will now find him spearheading workforce development projects and agrifood initiatives with the Eastern Ontario Training Board and the Eastern Ontario Agrifood Network, combining his expertise and passion to help communities throughout Eastern Ontario.



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# Eleanor McGrath

Co-Owner - Springfield Farm



Eleanor McGrath is a fourth generation Canadian and draws creatively from her Celtic heritage as a published author, documentary filmmaker and writer/photographer. She and her husband Finbarr McCarthy have raised their four children in Toronto, while being challenged by their organic farming life in Apple Hill, Ontario.

For the past eight years, they have worked hard to establish Springfield Farm in the growing Agri-tourism economy including restoration of their century-plus Drive Shed, and the creation of the first in the region, 18 hole Disc Golf Course (fastest growing sport worldwide). By seeking out the mentorship of traditional farmers, community and funding resources, Springfield Farm has begun to establish itself in the region as an "Environmental Farm Oasis" and in 2021 received and maintains its FeastOn Purveyors certification from the Culinary Tourism Alliance. In August 2022 Springfield Farm was granted its Organic Certification by EcoCert Canada.

Eleanor McGrath is a board member on Culinary Tourism Alliance, Ireland Canada University Fund, and the Glengarry Soil & Crop Association. As well, Springfield Farm is a member of the Canadian Organic Growers Association, Ontario Soil and Crop Association, the Ecological Farmers of Ontario and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.



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# Sarah Wynn

## Co-Owner - Wynn Farms



In 2012 Sarah and her husband took over the care of the family's Apple Orchard.

Since entering the agri-tourism industry they have completed expansions at the orchard to include the addition of a corn maze and pumpkin patch. In 2022 Sarah and her husband purchased a second farm and have added a pick-your-own flower farm to their agritourism business.

Sarah has a strong passion for the agritourism industry, using the farm as a way to personally connect with guests. Sarah believes that fresh air, sunshine and human connection is vital to the wellbeing of all. Providing an outdoor space for guests visiting the farms to connect with friends and loved ones, brings Sarah an immense amount of joy and a sense of accomplishment. Beyond connecting with those who visit Wynn Farms, positively impacting the community is also important to Sarah and Jim. As such, the flower farm regularly donates freshly picked bouquets to long-term care homes and organizations that positively impact the mental health and wellbeing of their clients. Wynn Farms Apple Orchard works with non-profit organizations that aid individuals who struggle with food security, by donating produce from the apple orchard to food banks.



# Heather Ford

**Co-Owner - Green Acres Inn**

**Co-Owner - Kingston Food Tours**



The Ford Family celebrated their 65th season at Green Acres this past summer. Heather earned a degree in Economics from Queen's University and then joined the family business and in 1998 she purchased the inn from her parents.

In 2016 she founded Kingston Food Tours with her son Daniel – combining her passion for food and travel, with her interest in Kingston's culinary scene and the people who make it outstanding.



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# David MacLachlan

## Executive Director - Destination Northern Ontario



David is the current Executive Director for Destination Northern Ontario, the provincially funded regional tourism organization operating in Region 13 with a mandate to increase tourism receipts through product development, marketing, workforce development and investment attraction.

David grew up in the tourism industry and is third generation to work in the family tourism business started over sixty years ago by his grandfather. David is also a past chair of the Algoma Kinniwabi Travel Association, OTMPC Northern Tourism Marketing Committee and sat on the Board of Directors for OTMPC.

David also serves as the Chair of the Great Lakes Cruise Association, Treasurer of the Ontario Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, and Secretary of the Art Gallery of Algoma. Destination Northern Ontario has received numerous awards over the years and most recently five industry leadership awards at the Ontario Tourism Summit in 2021 and again in 2022.



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# **Tracey Snow**

## **Rural Economic Development - City of Kingston**



Tracey Snow is an energizing entrepreneurial leader, communicator and connector. She has extensive knowledge as a Business Owner/Operator, successful Economic Development roles, as well as Manager of Marketing and Operations Departments for growth oriented organizations across Canada.

Tracey is the Manager of Rural & Community Economic Development for the City of Kingston and supports initiatives in business, workforce and rural economic development in all sectors, as well as the agricultural sector.



# Maria Fortunato

## Executive Director - RTO 3



Maria has over 20 years working in a variety of Destination Management Organization capacities and is the founding Executive Director of Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Association.

Maria has diverse non-profit sector experiences gained in her work with several non-profit organizations and municipality settings. She has gained extensive experiences in destination development, tourism product and marketing development, event management, volunteer management, community relations, program development, donor recognition programs, partnership and fund development.



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# Greg Elmhirst

## General Manager - Elmhirst's Resort



Greg is a life-long resort brat who lives and works on his family owned and operated resort on Rice Lake near Peterborough, Ontario. He is the fourth generation to steer Elmhirst's Resort, a highly regarded and progressive small business. He continues a long-standing family tradition in tourism advocacy.

Building on the foundation of previous generations in the tourism industry he has added a new focus at Elmhirst's on experience development and delivery, sustainability, and the building of a resort team for future success.

In his spare time, he has been known to turn a pedal on the road and in cyclocross as an avid cycling enthusiast. His always entertaining wife Martina runs the Spa Elmhirst's Resort and they have raised 3 generally terrific children together.



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# Carol Greenwood

**Vice President - Tourism Industry Association of Ontario**



With 25 years of leadership and management experience in the hospitality sectors, Carol epitomizes the power of rapport and relationship building. Carol has represented Accor, Vintage Inns & Mississauga Tourism, in addition to her consulting firm, G.A.P Solutions. Carol has assembled teams, opened hotels, provided training for sales professionals, and management training for leaders in the hotel network. Carol has conducted business audits and rebuilt teams through hiring, coaching & success focused development.

In her recent work within the tourism industry, Carol has built critical key relationships to allow for a stronger collaboration to support TIAO's advocacy message.



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# Gabrielle Mueller

## Digital Media Specialist - Culinary Tourism Alliance



With an Honors BA majoring in history from Trent University and a Master's in Public History from Western University, Falling accidentally into the tourism world when hired to do some freelance work on the Oxford County Cheese Trail for Tourism Oxford, Gabby quickly realized that she doesn't just love working with people, she loves telling their stories.

Six years later, Gabby's work with Tourism Oxford grew to full-on content creation. Leading the charge on social media, blogging, vlogging and website content, she quickly fell in love with tourism's ability to help food producers rediscover their passion and to help their local community.

During her time with Tourism Oxford, Gabby also became a certified Experiential Tourism coach through Southwestern Ontario Tourism Corporation's Unlocked and Inspired Coaching Program and has become completely enamoured with helping businesses create meaningful experiences to change how people see travel. She has played a role in getting several experiences to market including the award-winning Tree to Table experience which has won Ontario's Best Culinary Experience at the provincial and regional levels.



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