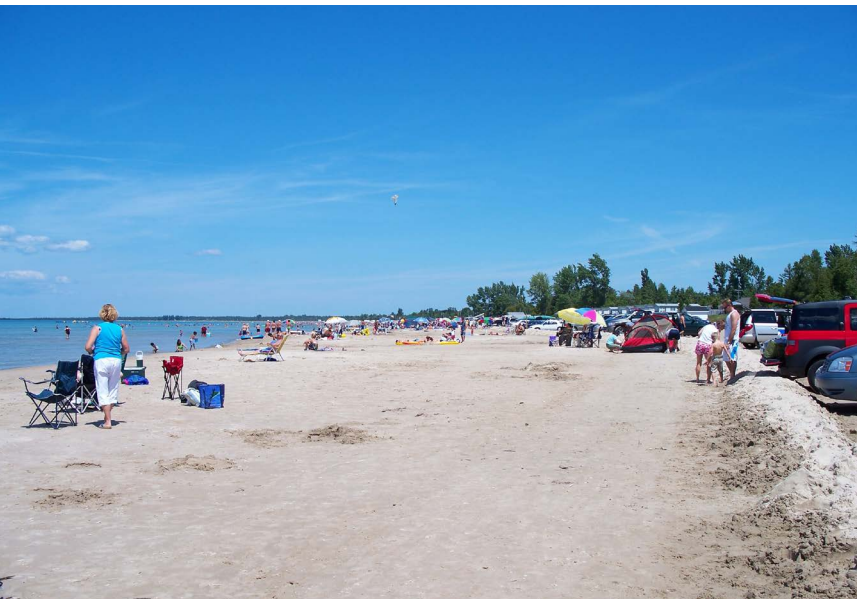




Sauble Park Beach Operational Strategy 2019

Saugeen First Nation

Sauble Park – A Point of Pride for Saugeen First Nation



Ahnii, Boo-zhoo, Welcome

Sauble Park South is one of our community's greatest treasures. As part of our traditional territory, this area has been used by the Saugeen Anishnaabek for time immemorial and is a crucial aspect of our culture. Not only is it one of the most beautiful beaches in Ontario, it also holds immense value for our community with respect to social and environmental well-being.

In more recent history, our Beach has been discovered by the masses, resulting in operational challenges which we are currently facing. It is no secret that our Beach is under immense pressure, creating a situation that at times makes it unenjoyable to visit. Cars on the beach, visitor behaviour, failing infrastructure, overcrowding and environmental damage are the primary areas for concern. Maintaining status quo is not an option, as doing so may have irreversible repercussions.

It has become clear to Saugeen First Nation that concrete action needs to be taken towards improving beach operations at Sauble Park by implementing responsible tourism which, in turn will attract responsible tourists. In order to sustain the beach for future generations and provide benefits for our community, it is necessary to: ensure the continued respect of the beach environment, offer an enjoyable experience to community members and visitors alike and increase the economic return of beach operations.

Three Pillars of Action have been established which will guide Sauble Park's new Beach Operational Strategy:

- ◆ Pillar One: Restrict Vehicular Access
- ◆ Pillar Two: Improve User Experience
- ◆ Pillar Three: Enhance Environmental Stewardship

The first step of the new Strategy is to restrict vehicles from driving on the beach. During the community consultation process, this sentiment was heard loud and clear, as the majority of participants (SFN community members, SFN leadership and cottagers) stated that many of the problems facing beach operations stemmed from allowing vehicles to enter. A public awareness campaign, physically blocking access, signage, alternative parking options and training and enforcement will be key activities.

Improving user experience will see the upgrading of existing facilities, including washrooms and changerooms to ensure that these services meet the demand and are accessible to beach-goers. Once the most basic services have been stabilized, using Sauble Park as a hub for economic development will help community businesses and entrepreneurs benefit from beach tourism.

Enhancing environmental stewardship will be key to Sauble Park's new Strategy and will play a principle role in creating a brand identity that is centred upon respecting the land. Dune restoration, planting and shoreline preservation and environmental interpretation will help to facilitate this.

When implementing the new changes to Sauble Park's operations, the priority user groups will be Saugeen First Nation community members and Sauble Park cottagers. Overtime as the Strategy is implemented, Sauble Park will begin to attract a new visitor demographic, which is more respectful of beach rules, our community and the environment.

With the implementation of our new Beach Strategy, there is no doubt that we will begin to see positive changes in our community. By following our traditional Ojibway values of being stewards of the land, as well as creating economic opportunities for our people, we can balance the needs of our community to build prosperity for all. Sauble Park will once again become a point of pride for Saugeen First Nation where our members can gather to enjoy for future generations.

Miigwetch

Chief Lester Anoquot

Having All Voices Heard

Guided by Community Values

The philosophy behind taking action for the betterment of Sauble Park is to put the community members first and create a destination that is true to Saugeen First Nation's values and satisfies a current need.

To ensure a community-driven approach, a community and stakeholder consultation was conducted. The purpose of the consultation was to seek input from individuals who are affected and have a direct interest in the beach operations at Sauble Park. Although faced with challenges, the efforts of Sauble Park staff to maintain adequate beach operations were well received, as about 70% of community members were 'somewhat satisfied' with beach operations (maintenance, security and management). Key findings from Saugeen First Nation community members are detailed below.

- ◆ 66% of community members say that 'cars on the beach/traffic' is the biggest safety concern that needs to be addressed
- ◆ 28% of community members say that 'overcrowding' is the biggest safety concern that needs to be addressed

The **key concerns** of Saugeen First Nation community members relating to Sauble Park's beach operations are:

1. Parking, vehicles on the beach and gates/access points
2. Security enforcement, safety, beach rules and hours
3. Environmental concerns and garbage
4. Overcrowding; too many people on the beach
5. Failing/insufficient beach infrastructure such as washrooms

Saugeen First Nation community members' **priorities for beach enhancement** are as follows:

1. Respecting the natural environment including waste management
2. Improving visitor parking and traffic flow
3. Public safety and provision of basic services
4. Beach maintenance and infrastructure improvements

Listening to Sauble Park Cottagers

The cottagers who lease properties adjacent to South Sauble Beach are also of high priority when considering changes to the Beach's operations. During the consultation process, Sauble Park cottagers were asked to provide their opinions relating to current operations and their recommendations moving forward. Again, although Sauble Park staff were faced with difficult circumstances, 68% of cottagers were 'somewhat satisfied' with beach operations (maintenance, security, management).

The project team received well over 300 responses on behalf of cottagers. Key findings from Sauble Park cottagers are detailed below.

- ◆ 67% of cottagers feel that cars on the beach, parking issues, etc. are the cause of most problems
- ◆ Other concerns include: safety and enforcement, garbage/disrespect for the environment and inappropriate behaviour

Key issues for consideration from the Saugeen Cottagers' Organization Inc. (SCOI) are:

1. Vehicles on the beach
2. Off-beach parking and traffic
3. Visitor behaviour
4. Environmental impact
5. Security and policy enforcement

Guiding recommendations for the Beach Operational Strategy provided by the **South Sauble Cottagers Association (SSCA)** are:

- ◆ No vehicle traffic on the beach
- ◆ Visitor parking areas
- ◆ Limit on park visitors
- ◆ Orderly enforcement of park rules
- ◆ Environmental sustainability



Concept Defined – Creating a Sustainable Beach Destination

Addressing the Challenges

As a result of the community and stakeholder consultation that was conducted and by way of general conversation and observation, a clear idea of the challenges facing Sauble Park were identified. Currently the most prominent challenges facing Sauble Park, which are having a negative impact on its operations are as follows:

- ◆ Cars on the beach and parking
- ◆ Visitor behaviour, safety and enforcement
- ◆ Insufficient infrastructure
- ◆ Overcrowding
- ◆ Environmental degradation

Overall the most disheartening result of the current situation at Sauble Park is some visitors' lack of respect for this stunning beach environment. The beach experience is being degraded by inappropriate behaviour, environmental damage, as well as by the sheer number of visitors.

It has now become essential that action is taken towards altering current beach operations to discourage poor behaviour, overcrowding and environmental destruction.

A Place for Our Community Members

The immediate priority for Sauble Park is to regain a strong hold on beach operations and ensure that visitors are respecting our community, its members and the environment. Once operations at Sauble Park have been stabilized, we will look to enhance the beach's destination development model to increase the benefits that are generated.

The vision for this project is to firstly create a space for community members to enjoy; and secondly to create a sustainable economic hub in the community that not only creates viable business opportunities, but also provides a beautiful public space that instils community pride, empowerment, entrepreneurship, and ownership. The concept of respecting the land and continuing to be environmental stewards will be strong in the branding and overall vision for this project.

Due to its prime waterfront location and stunning natural surroundings, Sauble Park has become a highly sought-after tourist destination. Even more important however, is the opportunity to reconnect this part of the waterfront to the community, therefore offering important economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits.

Three Pillars of Action

The goal is to promote respectful use of the beach by all visitors, by providing the services that enable visitors to be good citizens and leading by example by being good stewards of the environment.

Three Pillars of Action have been identified to ensure that Sauble Park is managed in a way that respects Indigenous values, satisfies priority user groups, provides benefits to Saugeen First Nation and becomes a point of pride for the community.

The Three Pillars of Action are:

- ◆ Restrict Vehicular Access
- ◆ Improve User Experience
- ◆ Enhance Environmental Stewardship



These three pillars will guide Saugeen First Nation's Beach Operational Strategy, beginning at the start of the 2019 season with restricting vehicles, and will continue into the coming years by using a gradual phased approach. The first priority is to get a handle on beach operations and encourage respectful use of Sauble Park; this begins with impeding cars, buses and vans from entering onto the beach.

Pillar One:

Restricting Vehicular Access

Eliminating the presence of vehicles on the Beach is the first step and pillar in addressing the current operational challenges of Sauble Park South. Vehicle traffic on the Beach will be limited to emergency vehicles, maintenance vehicles and those with beach access-only cottages.

Disallowing vehicles from driving on the beach restricts visitors' ability to bring a lot of equipment (including barbecues, speakers, large portable shelters, etc.) while decreasing the negative environmental impact on the beach.

In restricting vehicle access, several steps and considerations will need to be implemented or taken into account:

- ◆ Public awareness information campaign
- ◆ Physical intervention – gates and blockades
- ◆ Parking options and pathways
- ◆ OPP coordination
- ◆ Train engage and equip staff
- ◆ Administration and maintenance
- ◆ Day and night monitoring

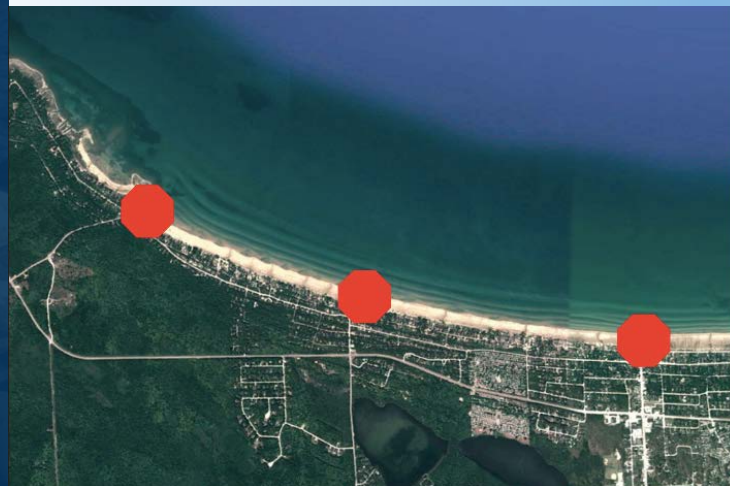
Public Awareness

A public awareness campaign will be key in mitigating potential angry visitors who expect to be able to drive on the Beach as they have in past years. It is recommended that this be tackled in phases, starting from the inside and working outwards. This means informing the immediate community of Saugeen First Nation, cottagers and then moving to regional communities, then eventually to the greater metropolitan areas such as Kitchener, Barrie, Waterloo and the GTA.

It is recommended that Saugeen First Nation consider hiring a public relations (PR) firm to plan and implement the larger awareness campaign.

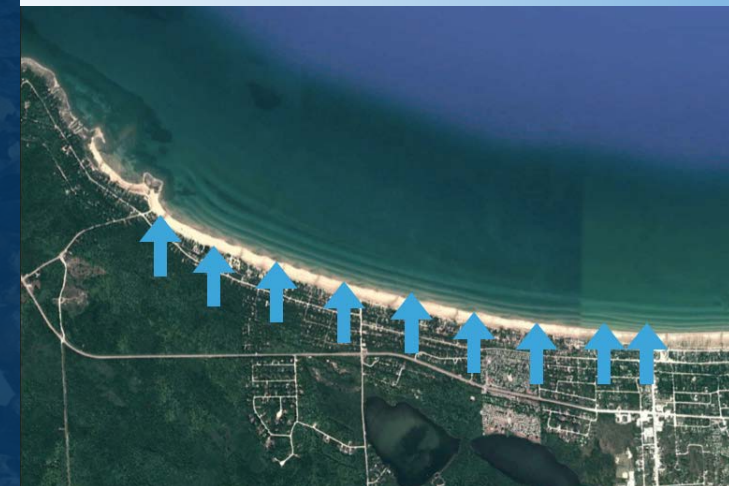
Gates & Blockades

The physical barriers should be located at all points where vehicles can currently access the beach. These can be as simple as lock-blocks, and are easily removed when a more permanent solution is ready to be constructed.



Priority Drop-Off Points

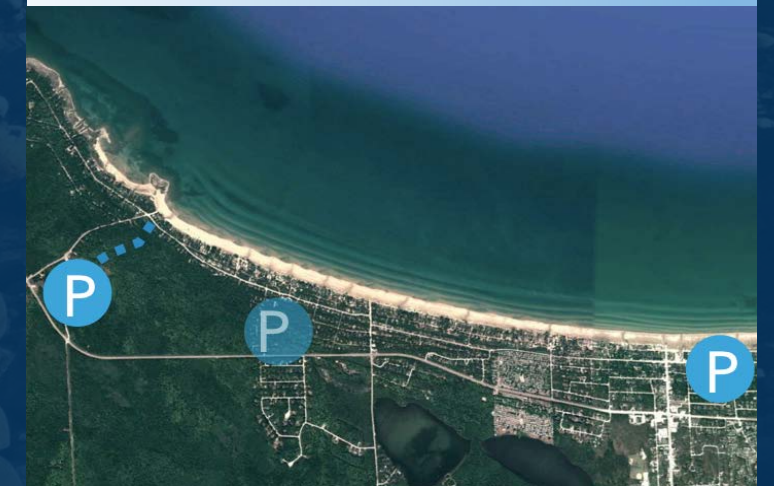
Currently there are many points where pedestrians can access the beach from the road. It is recommended that some of these points become drop off points for people with disabilities. Parking will not be available at these points; they would be used for drop-off and pick-up only. In addition, these drop-off spots will be idle free zones.



Parking

There are 3 potential areas for day visitors to park when accessing the beach:

- ◆ North, in the town of Sauble Beach, there are parking lots and street parking available.
- ◆ South, a location was identified near the intersection of Charles Street and French Bay Road that will require minimal improvements to be converted into a pay-parking lot.
- ◆ An additional central lot may be considered in the future if capacity becomes an issue.



At the south end of the beach, a location was identified near the intersection of Charles Street and French Bay Road that will require minimal improvements to be converted into a pay-parking lot that could accommodate approximately 200 cars. It may be possible to provide a walking trail through the forest between this location and the beach, which could feature interpretive signage to educate visitors on the environmental stewardship initiatives that are being carried out. It would also allow visitors to walk on a safe trail instead of walking along the road. This proposed south parking lot could accommodate approximately 200 cars.

Pillar Two: Improving User Experience

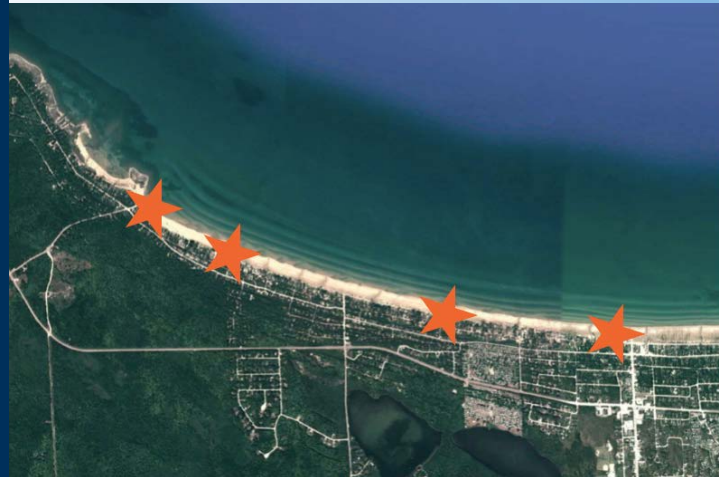
The second pillar of action is to provide services to visitors that encourage them to be better citizens, like improved washroom facilities and commercial vendors. This should help alleviate issues and also create a way to generate income from day visitors. The goal is to provide enough services at appropriate locations so that they are convenient for visitors to use.

The new Sauble Park Beach Operational Strategy will strive to not only improve the experience for its priority users (Saugeen First Nation community members and cottagers), but also for day visitors as well. As external tourists are informed of Sauble Park's new vehicle restrictions and are exposed to the new brand highlighting environmental sustainability, the Beach will begin to attract a more respectful and attractive clientele. For these new users, it is recommended that Saugeen First Nation management strive to provide a comfortable environment, streamline ease of use and enhance the proximity of appropriate services.

Washroom Facilities

Providing the most basic services to the users of the Beach is an absolute must and the current washrooms at Sauble Park will require some upgrades. It is recommended that the required upgrades are made to the current washrooms or a whole new building is constructed.

Proposed locations for new buildings or renovation of existing:



To ensure that Sauble Park begins its transformation towards a true eco-friendly destination, it is recommended that innovative sewage and wastewater treatments that reuse water and are cost efficient are considered for Sauble Park. During the consultation process, environmental sustainability was rated as a top priority by all groups.

Best Practices in Beach Amenities

New washroom buildings at Sauble Park should strive to incorporate the look and feel of the local landscape, using an aesthetically pleasing design. Below is a photo of a best-practice washroom/change room facility.



Creating a Hub for Economic Development

Once beach operations at Sauble Park have attained stability, whereby parking, access, beach capacity, visitor behaviour and environmental respect have been restructured, Saugeen First Nation can look to enhance operations and expand economic opportunities for the community.

It has been expressed that there is a desire to harness the tourists who come to the beach and consider business/commercial opportunities and events that will not only provide economic benefits for the community but also enhance programming and activities offered to community members and seasonal residents.

Sauble Park has the potential to act as a hub for community entrepreneurs to offer activities and sell products and experiences to visitors. This will lead to potentially attracting new niche markets and visitors to the community.

Some potential business opportunities that are well-suited to Sauble Park include:

- ◆ Food services
- ◆ Equipment rentals
- ◆ Retail opportunities
- ◆ Organized activities
- ◆ Special events

Pillar Three: Implementing Environmental Stewardship

Defining the Issue

SFN community members have stated that the current manner in which the beach is being used does not follow the Indigenous values of respecting and protecting the land. The current operation of South Sauble Beach is a huge environmental concern due to several contributors.

Firstly, allowing cars to drive on the beach has caused Sauble Park to lose its Blue Flag status. There are major concerns about oil and gas leaking onto the beach and sand compaction due to grading, which could have negative impacts on the natural beach ecosystem.

Destruction of the dunes and impacts on native grasses caused by pathways being cut are also concerning from an environmental standpoint. Invasive species such as zebra mussels, bushes and tree saplings could have unknown implications for the future of the beach.

Lastly, garbage containment and management has also been a significant problem. As visitors come from outside the community, many feel no responsibility to keep the beach pristine and free of garbage. It is common to find broken glass, used toilet paper, bottle caps, cigarette butts and other debris in the sand dunes, even after clean-up crews have passed through.

There are not enough animal-proof garbage bins and seagulls and other animals often find their way into the bins.

It is recommended that Sauble Park strive to be as environmentally responsible as possible, which not only follows Indigenous values but will also attract a more desirable clientele. The Bruce Peninsula is already a world-renowned eco-destination and it would be beneficial for Sauble Park to align its messaging with the attributes of the region.

There will certainly be a positive environmental impact from restricting vehicle traffic on the beach. The beach should no longer need to be scraped or graded and harmful chemicals will no longer be leaking onto the sand. Native grasses should be allowed to flourish and work to mitigate invasive species can begin.

The third pillar of action is to lead by example by remediating environmental damage. Upon contemplation, it is expected that this will consist of three main actions.

Taking Action

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Dune Restoration

It is recommended that steps towards dune reparation and mitigation of negative future impacts be initiated within the first two years of Sauble Park's new operational strategy. This would include engaging the services of environmental professionals to work in building up the dunes again, identifying and providing appropriate crossings, and planting dune grasses.

Beach & Boardwalk Interpretation

There are at least four major subject areas that lend themselves well to a combination of interpretive/informational panels along a trail or future boardwalk, including: flora and geography, fauna – fins, feathers and fur, history of the development of Sauble Park, history of the First Peoples of Canada in the region. Most of these could also form the basis of either a single (repeated) or series of interactive programs offered to the public.

Planting & Shoreline Preservation

Measures as simple as planting native vegetation, and erecting sand fencing can make significant positive steps towards preserving the dunes and helping with overall beach health. Planting a decorative garden (with native plant species) also adds more vegetation to the area, which, just like the dune grasses will help to slow wind and accumulate sand and soil.

Building a Strong Foundation Beach Management & Operations

Core Staff Positions

Sauble Park will continue to operate under the Saugeen First Nation Economic Development Department. By considering the historical usage rate of Sauble Park by beach goers, as well as the proposed new regulations, the following core staff positions are being proposed:

- ◆ 1 Sauble Park Beach Coordinator
- ◆ 2 Sauble Park Beach Supervisors
- ◆ 2 Sauble Park Assistant Beach Supervisors
- ◆ 20 Maintenance Workers
- ◆ 4 Gate Workers

Business Vendors, Seasonal Employment & Volunteer Opportunities

The spirit of entrepreneurship, creating local employment opportunities and supporting local businesses will play a vital role in enhancing the economic benefits that Sauble Park could offer. In addition to the core staff, there will be opportunities for part-time, and contracted work on a seasonal and 'as needed' basis.

Employment opportunities may be available for part-time, shift work, seasonal work, and/or contracted to community owned businesses, new micro-entrepreneurs and/or outside investors. The spirit of volunteerism will also be supported and encouraged to instil community pride and ownership.

Safety, Regulations & Enforcement

It is anticipated that much of the inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour on behalf of day-visitors will decrease with the elimination of cars on the beach. However, restricting vehicular access will require additional enforcement for illegal parking and those who do attempt to enter the beach. It is recommended that access points are monitored consistently with stricter bylaw enforcement and 24/7 patrolling during the summer season.

Some examples of bylaw infractions that will need to be more strictly enforced include:

- ◆ Loud music from speaker systems that are set up
- ◆ Barbeques on the beach
- ◆ Fireworks after 11pm
- ◆ Trespassing on cottage properties
- ◆ Alcohol consumption
- ◆ Dogs on the beach
- ◆ Speeding on sideroads
- ◆ Large temporary shelters
- ◆ Overnight camping
- ◆ Littering

Vigorous enforcement of no parking laws, speed limits and beach rules will be critical to successfully making the transition to an improved and safer beach environment. Illegal parking on private cottage lots, in driveways and on beach access right-of-ways will also need to be closely monitored with tow-away enforced.¹

It is recommended that SFN continue to utilize CanCom Security and/or work with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and implement its own Band police force, which is anticipated for the 2019 beach season.

¹ SCOI Input to SFN Beach Operational Strategy Consultation

Changing Perceptions Attracting a New Target Market

Creating more awareness about South Sauble Beach and attracting more visitors (in general terms) is not the challenge facing Saugeen First Nation. The beach is already very well-known, and actually suffers from being too popular – but with a primary visiting demographic that is inadvertently degrading the beach and the dunes, and slowly destroying the very nature of the place they choose to visit.

The marketing and branding strategy must appeal to a new type of beach-goer; one that acknowledges the balance between nature and responsible recreation and is supportive of stricter regulations to maintain the beauty of the beach for generations to come.

The objective must be to educate the public, and encourage them to feel empowered to make change, while simultaneously introducing new restrictions and adapting current infrastructure. Visitors to the beach should feel that they are part of a solution, and not contributing to the beach’s ongoing degradation.

Defining the New Users & Critical Marketing Messages

Marketing and promotion efforts will be aimed at specific target markets as they relate to the refined vision for South Sauble Beach. For each target market there are critical messages that should be included in the marketing and branding media, which are presented below:

Locals

- ◆ Treasure
- ◆ ‘Yours’
- ◆ Preserve

Seasonal Cottagers

- ◆ Safe
- ◆ Secure
- ◆ Well-managed

Families

- ◆ Family friendly
- ◆ Safe
- ◆ Clean

Vacationers

- ◆ Clean
- ◆ Preserved
- ◆ Unique

Day-Trippers

- ◆ Peaceful
- ◆ Nature
- ◆ Relaxing

Environmentalists

- ◆ Preserve
- ◆ Unique
- ◆ Natural

Investing in Our Future Ensuring Financial Sustainability

Projected Capital Costs

Capital Budget	2019	2019/2020
Closure	\$321,368	
Enhancement		\$3,868,31
Protection		\$2,519,363
Total Expenses	\$321,368	\$6,387,675

Projected Operational Costs

Operational Budget	2019
Labour	\$314,147
Operating	\$8,300
Program Supplies	\$159,000
Minor Capital, Maintenance & Repairs	\$161,000
Marketing	\$32,500
Total	\$674,947

Implementation Using a Phased Approach

To ensure a holistic approach to beach management is used, a phased approach is recommended for firstly asserting positive control over the beach and secondly enhancing the beach experience for all visitors, while conserving the natural environment for years to come.

Coinciding with the Three Pillars of Action, three phases for implementation will help Sauble Park obtain operational sustainability in the coming years.



Phase 1 Closure

- ◆ Public awareness
- ◆ Lock-blocks
- ◆ Signage
- ◆ Gates at North and South ends of the beach
- ◆ Management, training and enforcement
- ◆ Gator for beach patrol
- ◆ Parking lot (temporary development)
 - 200 vehicle capacity



Phase 2 Protection

- ◆ Dune restoration
- ◆ Dune planting
- ◆ Dune crossings
- ◆ Specialists
- ◆ Boardwalks
- ◆ Interpretive signage
- ◆ Beach restoration



Phase 3 Enhancement

- ◆ Washrooms/changerooms renovation or construction
- ◆ Management centre
- ◆ Restaurant / convenience store
- ◆ Buoyed floats
- ◆ Parking lot

Our Vision Realized

Lasting Benefits for Our Community

With the implementation of our new Beach Strategy, Sauble Park will begin its transformation back to what it was intended for and what it has potential to become:

- ◆ A place for Saugeen First Nation community members to gather and enjoy
- ◆ A place for cottagers to enjoy their seasonal homes
- ◆ A place to appreciate and preserve the natural environment
- ◆ A place for local economic development
- ◆ A place that instils cultural and community pride



With Special Thanks To:

Economic Development Officer Brad Ritchie and Chief & Council for their guidance and support; Sauble Park cottagers and most importantly to our community's members for contributing their vision for the Sauble Park Beach Operational Strategy.

For more information on this project such as partnership opportunities and/or involvement please contact Brad Ritchie at 1-519-797-2781 x 1500.

This is Part 1 of 2 – Executive Summary Full report available upon request.

Readers Confidentiality

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