

Experience North 2023 Blog Post – Drew Nesbitt – Sault Ste. Marie

I spent most of my life in Southern Ontario and New Brunswick, but I have always had connections to Northern Ontario. Whether it was playing hockey in the NOJHL, visiting my grandpa's camp (apparently not a cottage), or visiting family in the Sudbury and Timmins area as well as along the North Shore of Lake Huron. Despite these connections I was never able to experience Northern Ontario to its fullest extent until working for Northern Policy Institute (NPI) in the summer of 2023. In this time, I explored the surrounding area of Sault Ste. Marie and into Michigan visiting people's camps, many of the local golf courses, Italian restaurants (if you've tried the Italian food in the Soo then you know this is a must try), and antique stores.

This summer if exploring the region wasn't already good enough, I also got to do work that I found meaningful and very enjoyable. I primarily worked on a three-part series on workforce reconciliation; looking at how to advance economic reconciliation through increasing Indigenous participation in the labour force. The work was diverse, and I learned a lot in areas ranging from data analysis to conducting research interviews, to report writing. This project also melded together several pre-existing interests that I had prior to starting with NPI including anything related to Indigenous and labour issues. I genuinely could not have asked for a better first introduction to working in the field of public policy!

I couldn't be happier with my experience at NPI. I learned a lot of valuable skills and got to meet a lot of wonderful people! I also realized how small of a world Northern Ontario can be as the other placement in Sault Ste. Marie and I will be attending the same master's program at Carleton this fall where we will both get to show off our new skills and knowledge acquired at NPI moving forward.