

**Agritourism and Ecotourism in Cavan Monaghan Township: An Analysis**

Includes:

Final Report

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theatre, and 3: Recommend future action, including outreach strategies and suggestions of improvement in community collaboration. A study area (Fig. 1) was set which loosely follows township boundaries and mended in sections to include certain important attractions or leave out negligible areas.

## Agritourism

Agritourism is an emerging form of tourism which focuses on small scale agricultural production. Since the early 2000's agritourism has gained significant traction in recent years as travelers seek more sustainable and immersive experiences which support local economies and better connect them to their destinations (Ammirato et al., 2020); (Shasha et al., 2020). On top of supporting local economies, agritourism also promotes environmental stewardship and cultural exchange (Ammirato et al., 2020); (Sasha et al., 2020). In the five-year span between 2004 – 2009, agritourism operations in Ontario nearly doubled (Ainley & Smale, 2016). By definition, agritourism is a type of business that combines tourism and agricultural production to draw tourists to a farm, ranch, or other agricultural enterprise with the intention of entertaining or educating guests while generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2025). For the purpose of this report, agritourism will also include local agri-businesses which draw visitors from other regions specifically for their product. Roadside fruit or vegetable stands and maple syrup tapperies are two examples of such business. More involved secondary ventures such as farm experiences, tours, guesthouses, and wellness resorts are also considered agritourism.

Agritourism is a growing sector which offers numerous benefits to businesses, communities, and tourists. Benefits range from heightened community identity, local economy revitalization, and environmental conservation. Using agritourism, farmers can diversify their revenue sources and lessen their dependency on traditional farming methods. Farms have the opportunity to become more financially sustainable through this diversification, which enables them to continue operating and withstand constantly shifting economic conditions (Low et al., 2019). Agritourism promotes educational experiences that close the divide between rural and urban populations by allowing the public to visit farms. By learning about farming methods, food production, and the difficulties farmers confront, visitors develop a greater respect for and support for regional agriculture (Low et al., 2019). Agritourism promotes environmental stewardship. Farm experiences frequently emphasize environmentally beneficial farming methods, inspiring visitors to embrace eco-friendly lifestyle choices. This increased consciousness of the environment supports larger conservation initiatives, as people are often influenced to buy local food which greatly reduces food miles and packaging waste. Finally, because it

preserves traditional farming methods and ways of life, agritourism can be an important aspect to the preservation of rural history and small-town cultural heritage. It promotes a closer bond and understanding between tourists and host communities by giving visitors the opportunity to engage in local customs whether they are simply purchasing fresh local products or participating in an interactive farm experience.

In Ontario, agritourism has gained recent significant financial support from the province. In December 2024, Agritourism Ontario was awarded nearly \$345,000 over three years by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. This funding aims to develop a mobile app connecting families to farms, conduct an economic growth study of the agritourism sector, implement marketing strategies, and provide professional development for agritourism operators (Davidson, 2024). Additionally, the same ministry awarded more than \$150,000 to the Culinary Tourism Alliance in October 2024 to improve its Feast On® initiative. This program certifies eateries and experiences that use foods that are sourced locally, thereby promoting Ontario's agri-food products (Mackenzie, 2024). The financing enhances marketing initiatives to boost customer interaction with local food establishments and facilitates networking events between chefs and farmers (Mackenzie, 2024). With growing monetary support combined with increased interest, the agritourism sector in Ontario has been given room and promise to grow rapidly.

## Ecotourism

Although more widely established than its agricultural counterpart, ecotourism has also seen significant growth over the past 20 years. Ecotourism, aligning with a global shift towards more sustainable and responsible travel, attracts those looking for immersive experiences that allow them to connect with nature in a non-harmful manner. Although exact definitions vary greatly, it is generally understood that ecotourism involves ethical travel to natural regions that preserves the environment, upholds the welfare of the local population, and incorporates education and interpretation (The International Ecotourism Society, 2019). In this report, ecotourism will be expanded to include select cultural heritage activities and events. Within Canada, Ontario attracts a greater number of nature-based tourists than any other province (Ontario Nature, n.d.).

Like agritourism, ecotourism brings forth numerous diverse benefits. One of the most obvious of these benefits is that encourages eco-friendly travel methods that reduce their negative effects on the environment (Stronza et al., 2019). Numerous ecotourism projects provide direct financial support, volunteer opportunities, and educational opportunities to aid conservation efforts (Stronza et al., 2019). Ecotourism allows tourists to experience the outdoors on their own watch, which promotes wellness and environmental stewardship. Further, by prioritizing low-impact activities such as hiking,

birdwatching, and canoeing, ecotourism reduces the strain on ecosystems while encouraging visitors to develop a deeper appreciation for nature (Shasha et al., 2020). When tourists witness the importance of conservation efforts, they are more likely to support environmental causes in their own communities, or at the very least take more care in their future tourism endeavors.

Many economic benefits are also realized with respect to ecotourism. Particularly in rural or isolated locations, ecotourism can offer local communities steady revenue streams. It lessens dependency on extractive industries such as mining or forestry, and helps to revitalize communities by diversifying rural economies and generating jobs (World Bank Group, 2024). It should also be mentioned that ecotourism fosters cultural exchange and heightens community involvement, especially in rural areas (Scheyvens, 1999).

## Cavan-Monaghan Township

Cavan-Monaghan (formerly Cavan-Millbrook-North Monaghan) is a township located in the southwest corner of Peterborough County, Ontario. The city of Peterborough

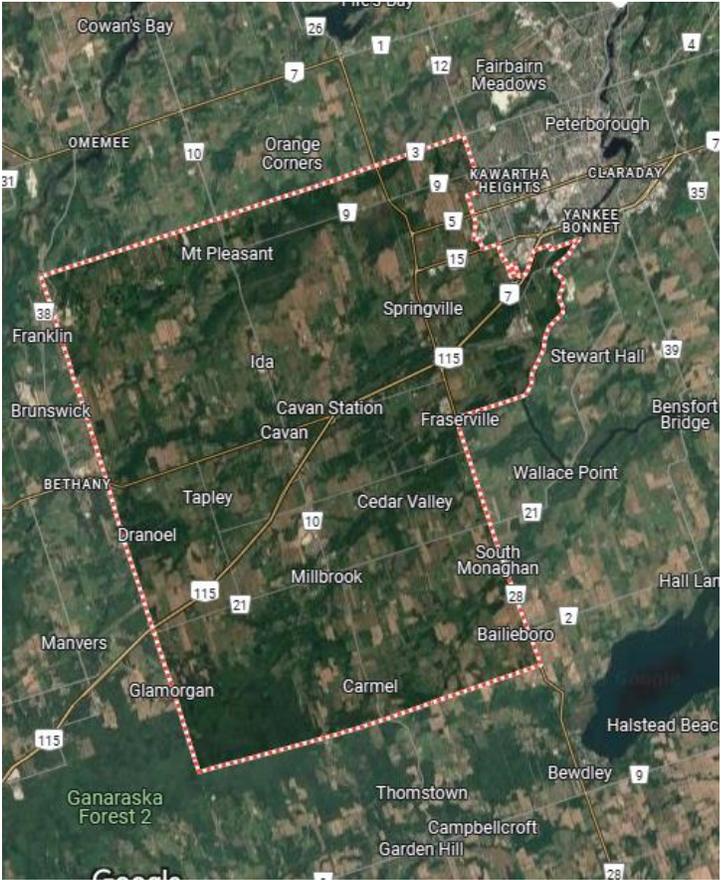


Figure 2: Cavan-Monaghan Township Boundary (Google Maps, 2025)

lies 20 kilometres to the east. Millbrook, the population centre of Cavan-Monaghan, is the largest town located in the township. Commercial businesses, banks, and the municipal office of the Cavan-Monaghan township are located in Millbrook. At the time of the most recent census, the population of Cavan-Monaghan was 10,016, and the median age was 44.8 (Statistics Canada, 2021). Compared to cities of Toronto and Peterborough, Cavan-Monaghan has a high average personal income, at 40,800 after taxes (Statistics Canada, 2021). Other hamlets and villages in Cavan-Monaghan include Ida, Cavan, Cedar Valley, Tapley, Baillieboro, and Mount Pleasant. Cavan-Monaghan is lined with farms, which add to its picturesque

landscape of rolling hills and pockets of forest and quaint streams. Cavan-Monaghan is abundant in rich history, much of which can be seen in Millbrooks historic downtown, known for its well- preserved heritage homes and properties (Millbrook & Cavan Historical Society, 2024).

The name “Millbrook” came from a sawmill (now called Needler’s Mill) built in the 1800s by John Deyell, an Irish settler (Township of Cavan-Monaghan, 2023). In the early and mid-1800s, the area was vibrant and busy, as those working at the mill and farms in the area filled the town. The opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the late 1800s catalyzed the westward movement of nearly half of the town’s then 1700 residents, leaving behind many historically significant buildings (Township of Cavan-Monaghan, 2023). Today, nearly 50 buildings in Millbrook have historic designation, some being over 200 years old (Township of Cavan-Monaghan, 2023). King Street is the centre of historic charm in Millbrook. The avenue runs roughly east-west and is host to many of the most prominent shops, restaurants, and historic buildings such as the former town hall.

## Current Agritourism Landscape

The thriving agricultural landscape of Cavan-Monaghan creates opportunities for agritourism (Township of Cavan Monaghan, 2022), though few places of agricultural production in the region of study actively market themselves as agritourism destinations. The Township of Cavan Monaghan does not promote any farms, vineyards, apiaries, or maple syrup tapperies, though Peterborough County does list some agritourism attractions located within or in close proximity to Cavan-Monaghan township on their website (Peterborough County, 2024). As part of this community-based research project, a [map](#) was created to locate all known agritourism and ecotourism attractions. Using google maps satellite view (2022-2025), and from firsthand observation, a total of 22 confirmed agritourism attractions were located in Cavan-Monaghan. Due to minimal outreach and self-identification as agritourism, attractions were considered agritourism if they either (a) exist as a small-scale farming operation, selling their product at farms gate or at regional markets, (b) offer farm experiences or services which may constitute as traditional agritourism activities, or (c) both.

A vast diversity in agritourism attractions was found. Many businesses were found not to offer any interactive farm experiences or services other than the sale of their main agricultural product or products. Meanwhile, some businesses advertise an interactive experience as the main attraction or reason to visit their place of agricultural production. Table one provides the name (1) and type (2) of each attraction, as well as the agricultural products or services they specialize in (3) and if they offer any interactive experiences (4)

such as tours, educational sessions, farm stays, spas, U-Pick, mazes, etc., on a yes/no rating. In many cases, the interactive experience (4) happens to be the main product or service (3), as seen in examples such as Clementine James Acres or Harmony farm, among others.

1	2	3	4
Name	Type	Main Products or Services	Offers Interactive Experience
Rhyzosphere	Farm	Produce - Vegetables	N
Kawartha Downs Events & Slots*	Racetrack (harness horse racing)	Racing events	Y
Red Mill Maple Syrup	Maple Syrup Tappery	Maple Products	N
Staples Maple Syrup	Maple Syrup Tappery	Maple Products	N
Circle Organic	Farm	Produce – All Meat Maple Syrup Eggs	N
Millbrook Valley Farm	Farm	Eggs	N
Garden Hill Farmers Market	Farm / Farmers Market	Produce – Strawberries, pumpkins	Y
Rolling Grape Vinyard	Vinyard	Wine	Y
Laveanne Lavender Fields	Lavender Field	Beauty/personal care products	Y

Harmony Farm	Horse Ranch	Retreats, yoga aromatherapy hot stone massages, spa pool, tours, and women's workshops.	Y
Twin Pines Alpacas Farm & Fiber Mill	Alpaca Farm	Textiles	Y
Maple Crescent Farm	Horse Ranch	Horse boarding	Y
The Berry Patch	Farm	Berries	Y
Johnston's Farm Market	Farm & Market	Produce/flowers  Maple syrup	Y
Trickle Creek Farms	Horse Ranch	Horse boarding, riding lessons, sales, trail rides	Y
Hunnabees Honey & Co.	Apiary	Honey, bee products	Y
McCamus Maple Syrup	Maple Syrup Tappery	Maple Products	N
Woodleigh Farms	Farm	Produce  Field Crops (corn, soy, wheat, oats)  Meat (sheep, lamb)	N
Clementine James Acres	Farm	Eggs  Day Camp  Chick Rentals  Baby Goat Yoga	Y
Pinehaven Farm	Farm	Produce	N

Horse Discovery	Horse Therapy Centre	Animal-led therapy	Y
Dawson Christmas Tree Farm	Christmas Tree Farm	Christmas Trees	Y

*\*Kawartha Downs Events and Slots may constitute as both agritourism and ecotourism, though does not produce any agricultural product.*

One trend of note regarding places of agricultural production is participation in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). Although it was difficult to determine exactly how many establishments participate in CSA, it is popular enough within the community to be mentioned on the websites of at least 10 farms. Community supported agriculture may run differently amongst different communities, though in Cavan-Monaghan it is described as customers essentially paying farmers directly to grow their desired crops, harvest them, and deliver them to their doorstep, or make them available for pickup (The Millbrook Times, 2019). Crop types and amounts are not guaranteed to customers, as these are dependent on season, weather, pest activity, and soil conditions. For these reasons, crop mix for customers may rotate weekly or monthly (The Millbrook Times, 2019).

## Current Ecotourism Landscape

A total of seven ecotourism attractions were confirmed in Cavan-Monaghan. The previously mentioned map of agritourism and ecotourism attractions locates all ecotourism attractions, and provides short descriptions, except for the Millbrook Valley Trails. As part of this community-based project, a separate, interactive ArcGIS [StoryMap](#) was created to aid tourists in choosing which trails they would like to explore. The StoryMap is essentially a walkthrough of trail access points, including descriptions of each designated trail, and mentions of unofficial trails. Within the StoryMap, users are also provided with two additional official external maps which display the trails' shape and length visually.

## Millbrook Valley Trails

Scattered around the town of Millbrook are eight maintained mixed walking and cycling trails (fig. 2), ranging in length between 2.8 km and 300 metres (Township of Cavan-Monaghan, 2023). The trails are 13 km long when combined. The Trail system traces the path of Baxter Creek, a cold-water stream that rises on the Oak Ridges Moraine and empties into the Otonabee River (Township of Cavan-Monaghan, 2023). The paths offer beautiful views and a link to the Ganaraska Forest as they meander through valleys, forests, wetlands, and meadows. Select trails offer access to stocked brook (speckled) trout ponds, and Baxter Creek is home to brown trout and wild brook trout, both prized gamefish in Ontario (Destination Ontario, 2024). All trails have direct trail-to-trail connections except for the station trail, though a short trail connection taking users



Figure 3: The Millbrook Valley Trails. Source: Author

north/south on Main St. is available. Although walking is permitted on all trails, cycling is not permitted on the Medd's Mountain Trail and one section of the Baxter Creek Trail (Township of Cavan-Monaghan, 2022). The Township of Cavan Monaghan, through the Millbrook Valley Trails Advisory Committee, oversees managing the Millbrook Valley Trails. The

Committee is essential to the creation and functioning of the trail system as it offers guidance, technical assistance, volunteer labour, marketing of special events, trail monitoring, and planning (Township of Cavan-Monaghan, 2022).

Mountain biking trails managed by Millbrook MTB, the mountain biking club based in Millbrook (Millbrook MTB, 2024), are intertwined with the Millbrook Valley Trails. The two trail systems intersect at multiple points and all trails are used by cyclists and hikers. Millbrook MTB recently opened a separate, smaller network of trails on a plot of land once occupied by the Millbrook Correctional Centre, now known as Jail Hill. (Millbrook MTB, 2024). These trails are officially mixed use, though they are primarily designed for mountain biking. Although the forested area on Jail Hill is considered by the Township of Cavan-Monaghan to be 'significant woodlands', Millbrook MTB has been granted a 5-year lease, enabling the legal creation of mountain bike trails in this area (Township of Cavan-

Monaghan, 2015). Because there is no winter maintenance on any trail system managed by Millbrook MTB or the Township of Cavan-Monaghan, winter sport activities such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are not available on these trails (Township of Cavan-Monaghan, 2022).

## Other Ecotourism Attractions

Wutai Shan Buddhist Garden is a large Buddhist worship site open to visitors. Currently under construction, the site currently covers 535 acres of land and will be the largest Chinese Buddhist installation in Canada upon completion (Wutai Shan Buddhist Garden, 2024) ;(Millbrook Times, 2024). Completed in 2019, The main Buddha Hall stands almost 170 feet tall, and measures 15, 263 square feet (Millbrook Times, 2024). Due to the size and natural features of the site, the area is often used by visitors engaging in low-intensity types of ecotourism such as leisurely walks and sightseeing the many grand monuments scattered across the complex (Google Maps, 2022). The complex is located in Cavan-Monaghan Township, about 7 km north of the village of Bethany. While the complex does have a small lake and other natural features such as woodland and gardens, it is unclear how long the public will be able to access these spaces, or if public access will remain after the completion of the entire complex.

A significant portion of the Ganaraska forest, an 11,000-acre woodland popular with naturalists and hikers, falls within Cavan-Monaghan borders. Most of the forest does fall outside of Cavan-Monaghan, though it is still an important ecotourism feature in the region. The Ganaraska Trails offer a gateway to the forest and connect to the Millbrook Valley Trail System via the Ganny Transit Trail. The forest area and trails are managed by the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) and play a vital role in maintaining the region's biodiversity. Various recreational activities are allowed in the forest, including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and ATV or snowmobile riding in the East Forest or West Forest only (Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority, 2024). Consisting of 3,400 acres of bogs and wetlands, the Cavan Swamp offers pristine birding opportunity and rich natural landscape. Currently,



Figure 4: Cavan Swamp Wildlife Area (Garcia, 2021)

access is limited as there are no official trails. Located at an access point to the Millbrook Valley Trails, the Millbrook Conservation Area features a labyrinth garden and open green space with views of the millpond. The conservation area is directly adjacent to downtown and offers residents and visitors a quaint area to relax, or a humble beginning to a long hike in the trail system.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Line theatre is a professional outdoor theatre located on Zion (4<sup>th</sup>) Line just south of Millbrook. The theatre is considered a significant facet of Millbrook and Cavan-Monaghan culture. Since its foundation in 1992, it has been a staple for residents in the surrounding communities. The theatre's mandate is to create and perform historically staged, locally based, ecologically conscious dramas in order to conserve and promote Canadian cultural heritage (4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre, 2024). The 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre is a cultural, nonprofit, and charitable institution that mostly depends on government support, ticket sales, advertising, sponsorship, and cash donations. A wide range of local stories and nationally known plays are performed at the theatre, though there is a distinctly Canadian focus, as all plays performed at the 4<sup>th</sup> Line are written by and for Canadians. One of the 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre's goals is to create and showcase exceptional original Canadian artwork that explores regional themes while incorporating national echoes, history, and legacy (4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre, 2024). Because the 4<sup>th</sup> line theatre is outdoors, it may connect visitors to the environment and draw them to Cavan-Monaghan's more traditional ecotourism attractions (Finlan, 2025). Thus, the 4<sup>th</sup> line theatre may be categorized as an ecotourism attraction itself.

## Events – Ecotourism and Agritourism

In order to create a list of [community events](#) in Cavan-Monaghan, the more traditional method of listing events by month was bypassed in favour for a more inventive, five term per year system. The five terms, or “seasons” are as follows:

Late February - Mid April: Maple Season

End of April - Late June: Blossom Season

Mid June - Early September: Berry Season

Mid September - Late October: Pumpkin Season

November - February: Hearth Season

This method was adopted to reflect the agricultural spirit of Cavan Monaghan, and to ensure that bigger events which draw more tourists are more prominent in the calendar



Figure 5: The Millbrook Classic Car Show (Millbrook BIA, 2015)

and are therefore viewed first. Each season is named after a crop or product popular during each corresponding time of year, except for hearth season, which was named so because the winter months provide no crops, and “hearth” emphasizes warmth, comfort, and enjoying the growths of the previous seasons. The aim in creating a master list of events was to give locals and tourists an easy way to find out what may be happening in the area at any given time, how much it will cost them,

and other useful information such as exact location, organizing group(s), and affiliated groups or sponsors.

## Cost Benefit Analysis: 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre

Due to its well-established nature in the community and massive tourism draw, the 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre was selected to be the focus attraction for an ecotourism establishment cost-benefit analysis. The 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre is on the grounds of a farm owned by the Winslow family in Millbrook. Each summer, the grounds are rented out by the theatre, which runs 2 major plays per season. Typically, the season starts in late June and ends in late August, in which July is the busiest month. Depending on weather, plays run five or six nights a week, from 8-10pm. In the 2024 season, 11,385 visitors were recorded by 4<sup>th</sup> Line. The most significant portion of the visitors were from Ontario, though a notable 195 were from elsewhere in Canada. The 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre also gained a handful of international visitors, 22 from the United States, and 11 from other countries (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2024). An estimated \$1.2 million is the average annual operating cost for the theatre, as quoted by Lindy Finlan, general manager of the theatre (Finlan, 2025). Over 50 corporate sponsors support the 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre, including Nexicom, which is a cellular and internet provider headquartered in Millbrook and one of the biggest donators (4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre, 2024).

## Economic Benefits

As the 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre is one of the largest tourism draws in Cavan-Monaghan, it undoubtedly brings economic benefits to the community. According to the TRIEM model used by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (2024), in the 2024 season, the 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre brought in a total of nearly 2.5 million dollars (\$2,477,916) to the tourism region it is a part of (Kawarthas Northumberland RTO 8). Further, the model estimated that visitors to the theatre spent \$1,793,580 in the community. The 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre strengthens the economy in Cavan-Monaghan and the Kawarthas Northumberland tourism region, as the TRIEM model suggests that the theatre impacted total GDP in the region to the tune of \$1,237,116 in the 2024 season. The 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre is the largest employer in the arts sector in Cavan-Monaghan, and in the Kawarthas Northumberland RTO 8 tourism district (Finlan, 2025). Each summer, over 75 seasonal positions are offered, largely due to the abnormally large casts which the 4<sup>th</sup> Line is known for, at around 25-30 people per production (Finlan, 2025). This mass employment helps bring more money to the community, as employees will shop, dine, and often stay in the area. Further, high employment numbers bring greater engagement with the theatre and the community, as employees may indirectly advertise the theatre and the region itself to friends and family members, incurring more visitors and more money spent on local businesses.

## Educational Benefits

Education is an important aspect of any community, and in Cavan-Monaghan, the 4<sup>th</sup> Line holds an impactful role in many aspects (4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre, 2024) ;(Finlan, 2025). Emerging Voices, an informal apprenticeship program for those under 30 years old, is run by the theatre. Through the program, youth in the community are presented with a quality opportunity to receive specialty training and one-on one sessions and training specially catered to their interests. Emerging voices focuses on training youth volunteers in aspects of theatre production, including acting, movement, and technical production. Those who complete the program have opportunity to further their career in theatre, as further volunteer work, apprenticeships, and paid positions are often offered by the 4<sup>th</sup> Line (4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre, 2024). In the name, “Voices” is an acronym for volunteer, outreach, innovation, community, education, and skills. This program allows participants to develop their artistic abilities and is completely free of charge. Further, the program is committed to accessibility, as the facilities are fully accessible, and transportation options are provided (4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre, 2024).

## Cultural Benefits

The 4th Line Theatre brings a wealth of cultural benefits to the Cavan-Monaghan community, serving as a cornerstone of local identity and unity. The theatre contributes to the preservation and celebration of the rich cultural fabric of small-town life by presenting tales that are steeped in the region's past (4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre, 2024) ;(Finlan, 2025). By reminding visitors of the value of their heritage and the common experiences that form their community, the theater's shows help to strengthen their sense of cultural identity. The plays frequently display stories that speak to rural Ontario and Canadian History and provide guests a richer knowledge of their culture (4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre, 2024) ;(Finlan, 2025). When looking for inspiration to create a new play, the 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre reaches out to the community to ask them of their tales from the past. This collective discussion of history and culture within the community creates a stronger feeling of togetherness and fosters unity, and community identity. Residents and visitors to the region are encouraged to share their experiences, family history, and any other information with the theatre to build a story upon (Finlan, 2025). As the largest employer in the arts in the entire Kawarthas Northumberland tourism district, the theatre provides a gathering place where individuals from diverse backgrounds can come together, engage with one another, and celebrate local artistry.

## Areas for Growth

The ecotourism and agritourism sectors in Cavan-Monaghan Township have shown significant potential, offering opportunities to enhance local economic development, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation. While the region has a foundation of farm-based experiences, outdoor recreation, and heritage tourism, key areas for expansion have been identified. Improved marketing strategies, infrastructure development, and stronger collaboration between local businesses are all areas in which the township may focus their resources on to improve the tourism landscape overall. By addressing these areas, Cavan-Monaghan can attract a wider audience, extend visitor stays, and create a more sustainable tourism economy that benefits both residents and visitors.

## Outreach

Cavan-Monaghan Township has a rich agritourism and ecotourism landscape, but its potential remains underutilized due to marketing and outreach limitations. Although the region provides distinctive farm and outdoor experiences such as farm tours, hiking, and U-pick operations, many of these attractions may be tedious or impossible to find out

about as a tourist. Tourists may find it challenging to learn about and arrange vacations to the region due to a lack of centralized promotion, a small digital footprint, and few or not widely coordinated advertising activities. Without more effective outreach, Cavan-Monaghan will find expanding the ecotourism and agritourism sectors quite slow and may risk losing tourism-related income to more popular and visible locations in Ontario. In an age where online information is often the first resource accessed, Cavan-Monaghan should ensure that digital information regarding tourism opportunities in the Township is visible, helpful, and easily accessible. Currently, the Township website provides links to the websites of 9 attractions, the 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre being one of them. Further, there is information about the Millbrook Valley Trails under its *outdoor activities* subsection, which is under *things to do* (Cavan-Monaghan Township, 2024). While this is good information, it would be extremely beneficial to the township if the website included agritourism and ecotourism sections, where all known attractions and events which fall into these categories would be listed and linked. This would not only promote local business and agriculture but also provide tourists with useful information regarding their prospective visits to the region.

The region of Niagara can be viewed as an example of an established and successful ecotourism and agritourism scene in Ontario with relatively strong outreach in place. The official Niagara Falls tourism website is a helpful resource which provides a comprehensive collection of information on agritourism and ecotourism businesses, attractions, and events in the city of Niagara Falls and the surrounding communities (Niagara Falls Tourism, 2024). At the regional level, which is more comparable to what Cavan-Monaghan may evolve to achieve, exists the Regional Municipality of Niagara Tourism website, which provides an expansive coverage of agritourism and ecotourism destinations and experiences across the greater Niagara Region, including areas such as St. Catharines, Welland, Grimsby, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Port Colborne and Fort Erie. (Visit Niagara, 2024).

A stronger digital outreach should begin with strong intra-community collaboration. Thus, a cooperative between local agritourism establishments and township tourism and economic development officers is proposed to fast track information sharing and provide the necessary tools to build an improved outreach. This cooperative should consist of one or more representatives from all establishments who may consider themselves to fall under the agritourism umbrella and wish to expand their customer base. Representatives should have regular contact with tourism officers or have close liaison with a dedicated



Figure 6: The Filming of Anne of Green Gables on King Street in Downtown Millbrook. (Heidenreich, 2024)

outreach officer, who can then present information and perspectives from local agritourism establishments to the County. This direct line of communication is essential for ensuring that the voices and needs of local agritourism providers are heard and reflected in the development of tourism initiatives in the township and further- the county level. Regular meetings or check-ins between representatives and tourism officers would aid in ensuring that businesses

remain updated on new programs, marketing opportunities, or grants available to them while enabling local government to gain a better understanding of the unique offerings of each establishment. In this way, the individual establishments or businesses and the township itself will both benefit from information sharing and output. Further, challenges associated with operating agritourism businesses such as liability insurance (Mcintosh, 2025) and other costs may be lessened if there is an established agritourism cooperative in direct collaboration with the Township. More publicly available information will likely increase visitor numbers, which will promote positive growth in many areas other than just agritourism. A closer relationship with the township can also kickstart movements such as collaborative marketing relationships with other businesses in their local or regional area (George et al., 2011). This can create new ways to attract visitors, similar to a “beer trail” or the existing self-guided tour of heritage buildings offered by the Millbrook and Cavan Historical Society (Millbrook & Cavan Historical Society, 2024).

## Jail Hill

An area which has come to be known to the community as Jail Hill lies at the former Millbrook Penitentiary Grounds. Since abandonment and demolition, the area has been left relatively unaltered except for mountain biking trails created by Millbrook MTB (Township of Cavan-Monaghan, 2015). Various groups in Millbrook have taken interest in preserving the area, further developing upon it, or hold a mixed perspective (Baxter Creek



Figure 7: Jail Hill (Hillstey, n.d.)

Watershed Alliance, 2021); (Rethink Group Leisure Services, 2023). Under the lens of ecotourism, the area is beautiful, having a varied terrain of hills and valleys, including large pine plantations, mature forests, valley lands, cold headwater streams, seeps, springs, recharge regions, open grasslands, and meadows (Baxter Creek Watershed Alliance, 2021); (Rethink Group Leisure Services, 2023). There is growing fear within the township that this land will be developed upon, likely for new housing projects. Many activities such as tobogganing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, cycling, dog walking, and birdwatching already occur on the property, and other more structured activities are quite feasible given the nature of the space. Further, Millbrook is on the fringe of having a lack of public use green space in close proximity to downtown as the town experiences the implementation of a long-term housing growth strategy (Baxter Creek Watershed Alliance, 2021). For these reasons, it is recommended that the Jail Hill lands be protected in order to keep green space in the community and potentially increase ecotourism visitors to a naturally beautiful and historically significant site in the heart of Cavan-Monaghan.

## Conclusion

Cavan-Monaghan and the surrounding area has significant potential for expansive growth in the agricultural and ecological tourism sectors. After thorough analysis of existing attractions and events, 22 agritourism attractions and seven ecotourism attractions were identified and categorized. While the region offers rich opportunities for

nature-based experiences and agricultural tourism, its full potential remains largely untapped. With strategic outreach and improved information sharing between establishments, groups, and the township, Cavan-Monaghan can attract more visitors, bolster local businesses, and strengthen its tourism economy. To improve information sharing between the Township and agritourism or ecotourism establishments, a dedicated liaison officer between these groups is recommended. Additionally, this research highlights the 4th Line Theatre as a major cultural attraction, contributing nearly \$2.5 million per season to the local economy. Its success underscores the impact of well-supported tourism ventures and serves as a model for further development in the region. In future research, strategies on how ecotourism can be grown in the region should be explored more, along with improving information sharing between ecotourism and agritourism ventures, the Township, County, residents, and tourists.

## Appendix A

### Link – List of Events

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17K2vS3aPbQodPBwoZNP\\_eckOIzXXMph?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17K2vS3aPbQodPBwoZNP_eckOIzXXMph?usp=sharing)

### Example – List of Events: Blossom Season

Event Name/Link	Date or range	Organizer	Affiliated Groups	Location	Fees	About
<a href="#">Kid's Fishing Derby</a>	April 26th	Millbrook and District Lions Club	Trout Unlimited Millbrook	Millbrook Pond, Needlers Mill	\$5	Spectators welcome – Food truck on site
<a href="#">Blocks and Blooms</a>	2nd Weekend in June	Millbrook and Cavan Historical Society	Nexicom Cavan-Monaghan Township	Multiple locations (tour) in downtown Millbrook	\$15	Self-guided tour of heritage properties & distinctive gardens
<a href="#">Millbrook Farmer's Market</a>	Every Sunday from 10am – 1pm  April 27th- November 30th	Millbrook Farmers Market		47 Tupper St, Millbrook	Free to Browse	Local vendors offering fruits, vegetables, perennials & preserves
<a href="#">Millbrook Fair</a>	June 12-15	Millbrook Agricultural Society		13 Frederick St, Millbrook	Free to Browse	Long-standing agricultural fair offering a wide range of events, competitions, & activities

## Appendix B

Link – StoryMap of Millbrook Valley Trails

<https://arcg.is/044qjG0>

Link – Map of Ecotourism and Agritourism Attractions

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1jIX-777USWFZ3hKXB-W7oiUT84TpxJw&usp=sharing>

Link – Research Poster for Community-Based Research Project

[6227 - Tandon \(Copy\\_3\).pptx](#)

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