



**MUSHKEGOWUK
COUNCIL** ᐃᓴᓴᓴ ᐃᓴᓴᓴᓴ

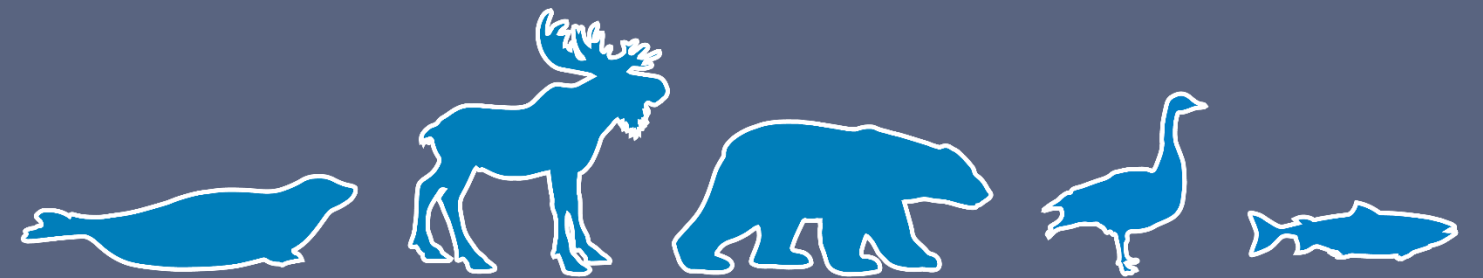
Tasiujaquiaqumit Sheewetaganapoi Roundtable

REGIONAL UPDATE

Montreal, QC

25 February 2025

Vicki Sahanatien, PhD, Knowledge and Research Manager
Hope Hill, Carbon & Biodiversity Coordinator
Lands and Resources Department



MUSHKEGOWUK MARINE
Conservation
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Outline

- Mushkegowuk Council
- Lands and Resource Department
- Research and Monitoring
- National Marine Conservation Area Proposal





MUSHKEGOWUK COUNCIL

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1970
James Bay
Tribal
Council



1985
Mushkegowuk
Council



Missanabie Cree First Nation



Taykwa Tagamou Nation



Departments & Services

Health & Wellness

Youth

Lands & Resources

Nation Rebuilding Initiative

CreeGEO Information Services

Social

Education

Development Corporation

Technical Services

Employment & Training

Emergency Management



Lands & Resources Department

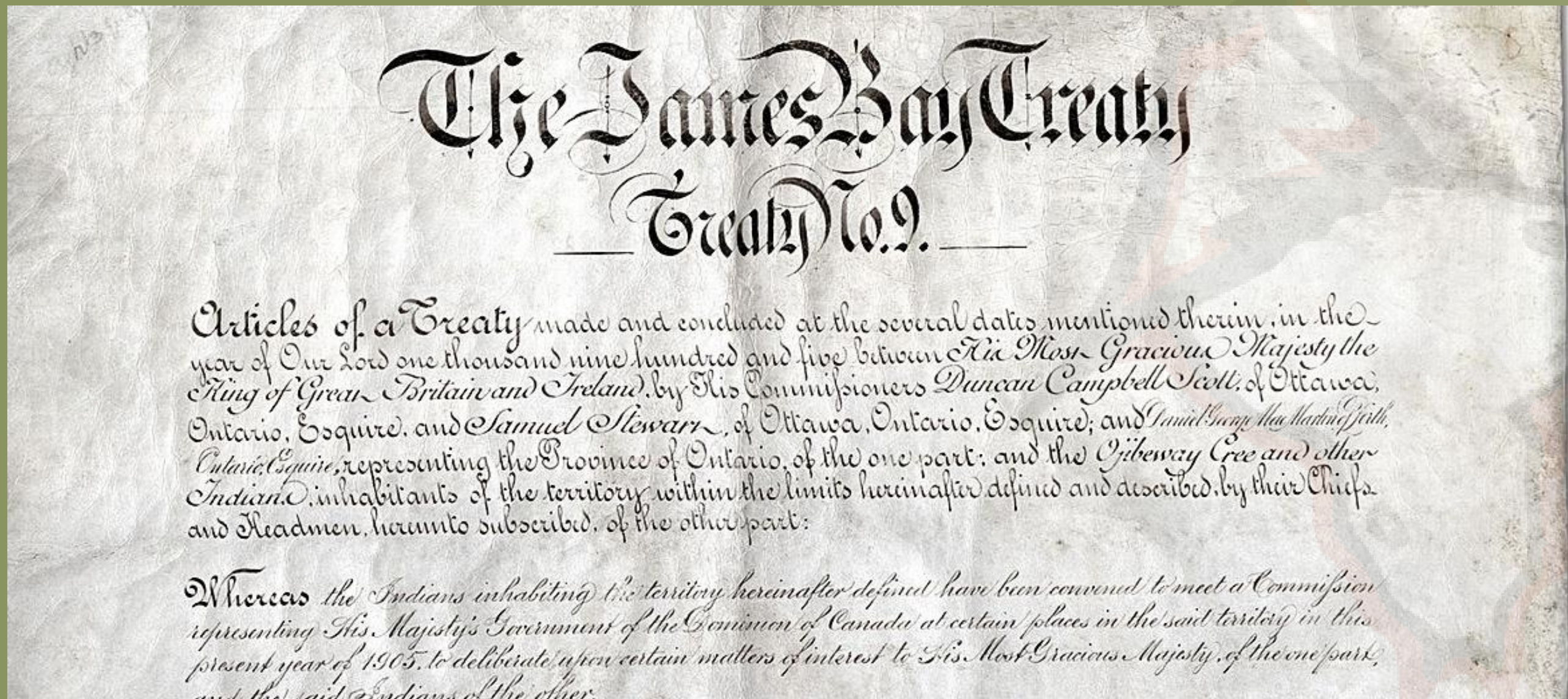
❖ Team: 14

- Terrestrial, Fresh Water, & Marine
- Research and Monitoring
- Impact Assessment
- Mining
- GIS
- Community Engagement
- Communications
- Administration



Mushkegowuk Council's Vision

To be a proud, self-determining and united Omushkego Nation with healthy and prosperous people, a vibrant Cree language and culture, and sustainably developed and protected lands and waters.





Wahkohtowin:

Principle describing the concept of kinship, or the interconnectedness of relationships, communities, nature, and the interdependence of all living things

Strengthening relationships with the land, the waters, and each other



Inherent rights

O mushkego possess inherent rights to the waters, lands, air and resources



Connection

Implementing the long-term vision of Omushkego Elders



Caring for the land & water

Enabling our people to monitor and protect the lands and waters in perpetuity

Ontario & Treaty 9

- Treaty 9: Right to pursue hunting, fishing, and trapping
- Little recognition of Nations' traditional use areas and territories by Ontario government
- Treaty 9: Taken up clause, "... excepting such tracts as may be required or taken up from time to time for settlement, mining, lumbering, trading, or other purposes"
- Clause allows access and title to lands "unused" by Nations
- Far North Act
- Research and monitoring occur without engagement and consent of Nations



Creating Change through Partnerships & Collaborations



- Data sharing agreements
- CreeGeo Hub
- Encourage engagement with Nations – go beyond information provision
- Co-develop projects
- Involve Nations - hire field assistants
- Federal government
 - Parks Canada, Environment Climate Change Canada, Fisheries & Oceans
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources & Forests – research scientists
- Wahkohtowin Development Inc
- ENGOS – many



The rivers, lakes and all the bays are important for all animals, fish and waterfowl. Without healthy habitats, breeding grounds and clean water, it will be poor and barren. This is conservation and protection. We must work together to protect our harvesting rights, and for adapting to unseasonable weather. We need to work more with the science world.

- Elder William R. Sutherland, Kashechewan

Coastal Research & Monitoring



- Contaminants (mercury, heavy metals) in estuarine food fish species
- Polar bear distribution & abundance
- High resolution air borne coastline & estuary mapping
- Biodiversity surveys

“We have been the stewards of these lands and waters for millennia, and now we want to protect the coastal and marine ecosystems that underpin the Omushkego way of life for future generations.”

— Former Grand Chief Jonathan Solomon,
Mushkegowuk Council

National Marine Conservation Area Proposal

- 2020: Resolution by the Mushkegowuk Council of Chiefs
- Create a marine protected area
 - National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) in western James Bay and southwestern Hudson Bay
- Federal legislation *Canada National Marine Conservation Area Act* and Policy to protect the marine and coastal environments

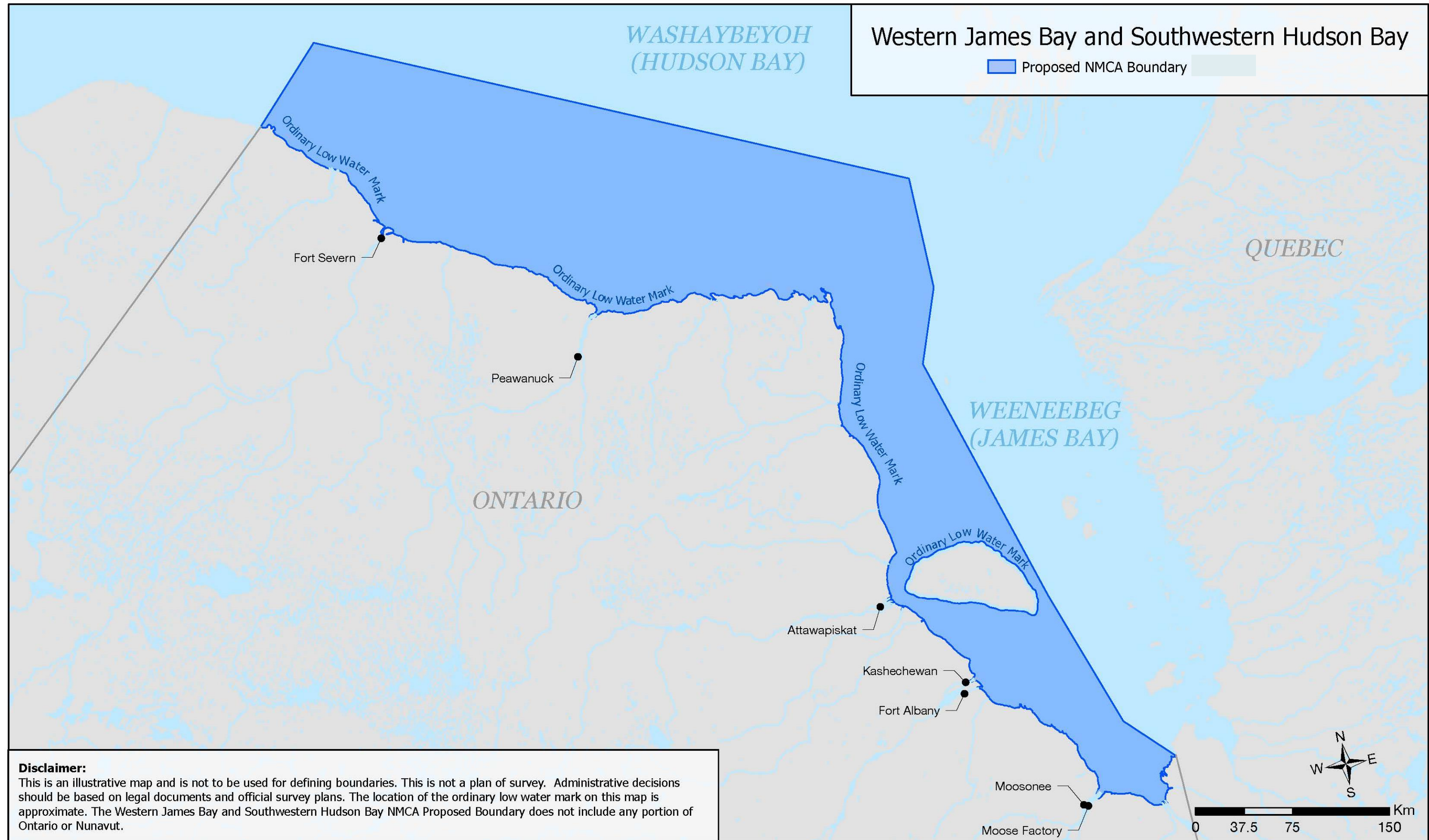
A man wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt, a grey baseball cap, and a name tag is seated and playing a large, round, wooden drum with a drumstick. He is looking down at the drum. In the foreground, another person's arm and hand holding a drumstick are visible, also playing the drum. The background is blurred, showing a crowd of people seated at tables, suggesting an indoor event or ceremony.

Feasibility Study Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement between Parks Canada & Mushkegowuk Chiefs

MOU SIGNING CEREMONY

Moose Factory, August 9th, 2021

NMCA Study Area



Steps to create a NMCA



Feasibility



Negotiation



Formal
protection

NMCA FEASIBILITY STUDY - PRINCIPLES



NATION-TO-NATION RELATIONSHIP



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Extensive consultation with all nine communities occurred to gather knowledge about the study area, understand uses and activities, and identify Omushkego conservation priorities.



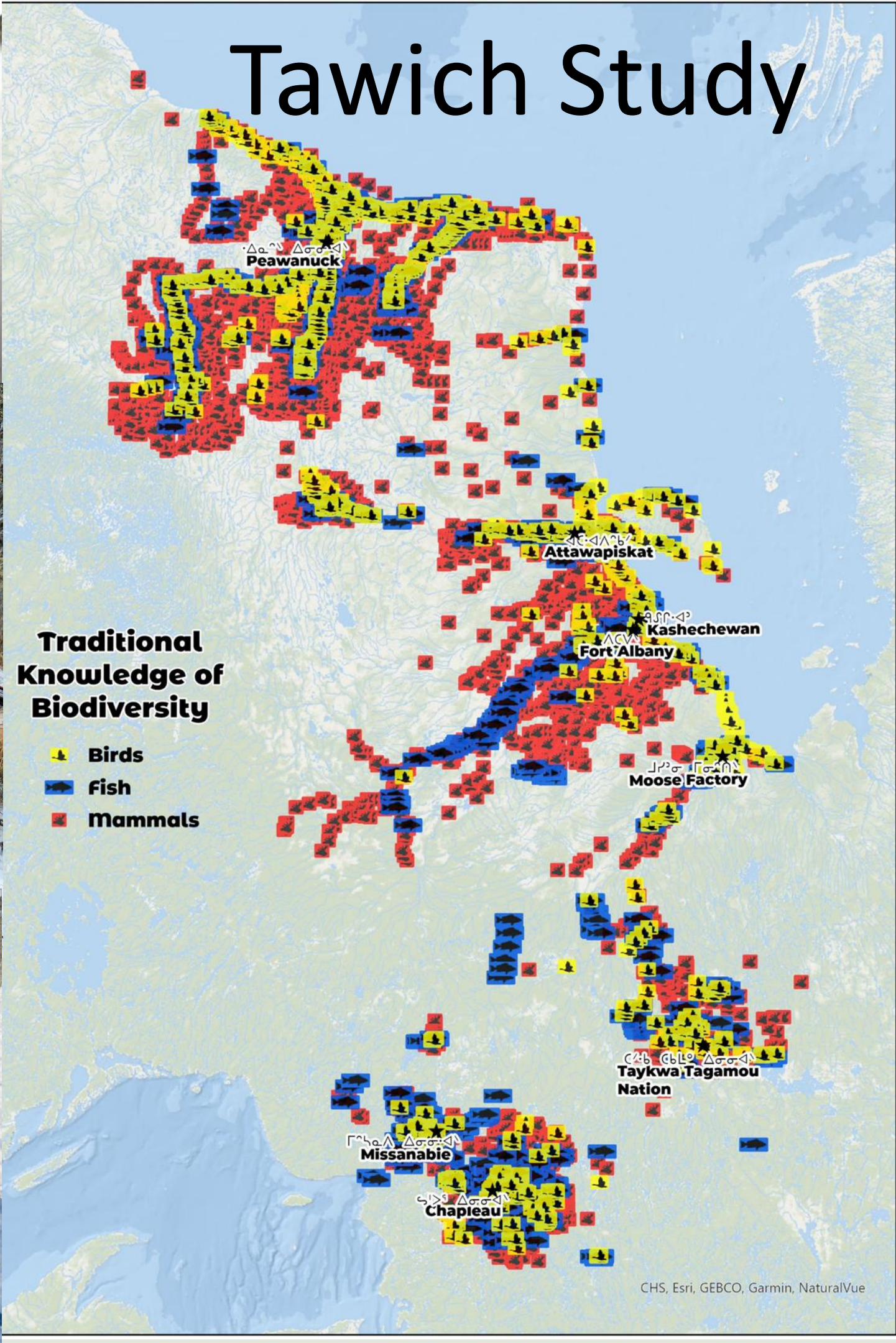
MUSHKEGOWUK MARINE TASK FORCE

Elders, youth and community members appointed by the respective Chiefs and Councils guides the planning process for establishing the NMCA.

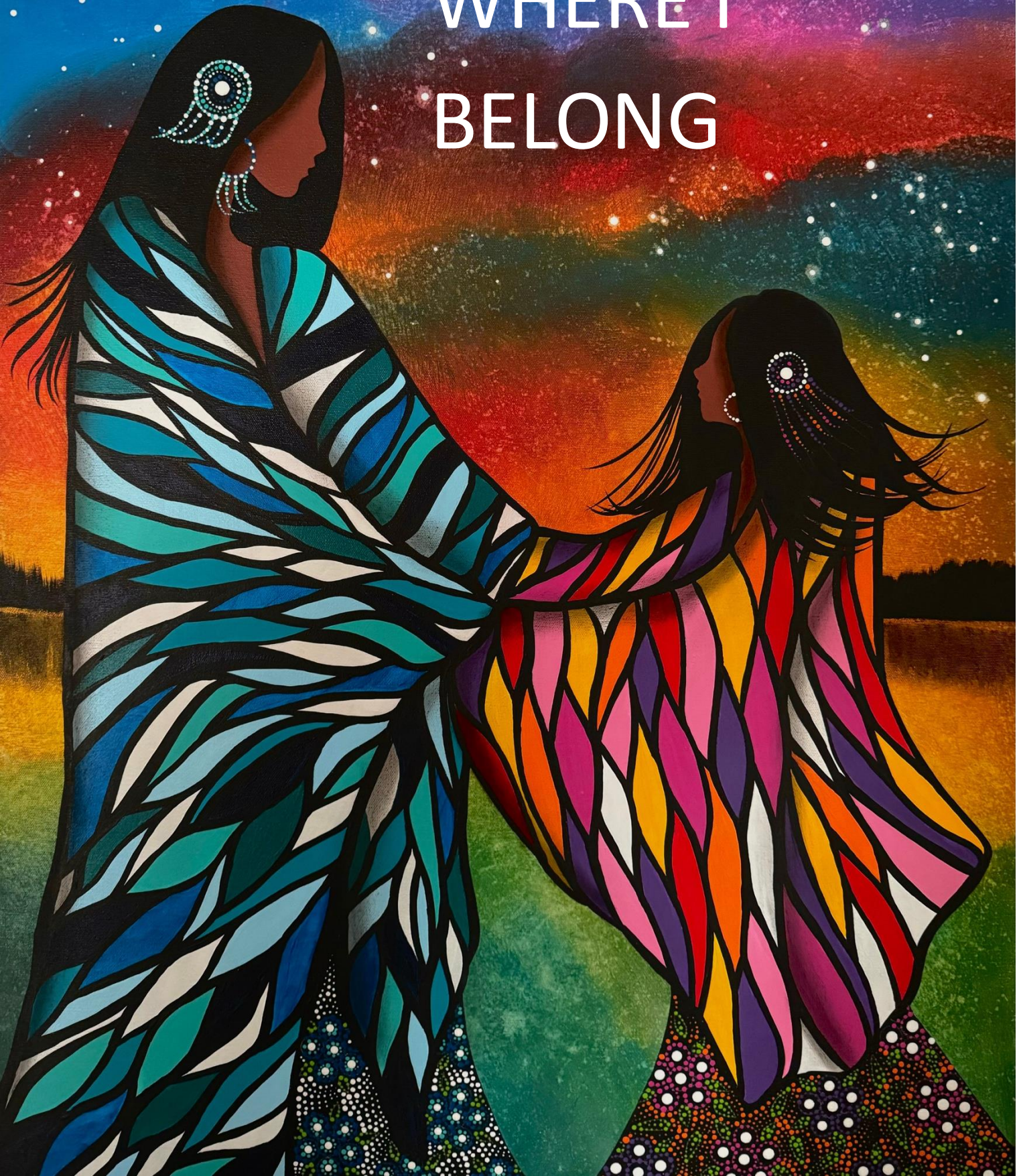


COMMUNITY MARINE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Facilitate community engagement activities and documented Cree Knowledge about the marine and coastal environments.



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DOWNLOAD



Feasibility Assessment Report for
the
proposed Mushkegowuk
National Marine Conservation Area

GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

NMCA is established using Omushkego laws

- Indigenous led effort resulting in shared protected area governance between Omushkego and Parks Canada.
- Community input on shared governance and management approach

Exercise self-government, self-reliance and inherent rights to ancestral territory as protectors and stewards

Protect entire coastal & marine ecosystems that underpin the Omushkego way of life

Ensure transmission of Cree Knowledge & language



Meegwetch! Thank you!