

**ENVIRONMENT**

**QUARTERLY  
NEWSLETTER**

SEPT/OCT/NOV 2021



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# MEET THE ENVIRONMENT DIRECTOR



**Welcome to the third edition of  
the Environment Quarterly  
Newsletter!**

## ***Foreword – Environment Director***

Sheko:lih and welcome to the third edition of the Chiefs of Ontario’s Environment Newsletter. Fall has arrived, and with this comes a love of the land in sustaining us by harvesting gardens, hunting and gathering foods for the colder months ahead.

In this quarterly newsletter, the Environment team will provide several key updates on files that continue to move forward. We have also included a section entitled “Good News Stories” because it is essential to highlight First Nation Communities’ determination and resolve.

As the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic moves across the country, the Environment team continues to work on multiple files mandated by resolutions. Although we cannot yet meet in person, information on the Environment files is currently being shared in various ways through zoom meetings, webinars, phone calls, social media, and this Environment Newsletter.

Once again, I want to thank the front-line workers for their continued dedication to ensuring we are all safe and healthy during the pandemic. Thank you to the Chiefs Committee on the Environment for your continued support, guidance, and advocacy efforts during these very challenging times.

Finally, love of the land is why we work hard to ensure that future generations enjoy the lands and waters.

The Environment Newsletter can be viewed online by desktop, tablet, or smartphone. If you have any feedback, please contact Kathleen Padulo at [Kathleen.Padulo@coo.org](mailto:Kathleen.Padulo@coo.org).

Kathleen Padulo  
Chiefs of Ontario, Director of Environment

# Environment Team at Chiefs of Ontario:



## **WELCOME TO**

### **Ryan Bowie, Policy Analyst**

Ryan Bowie joined the Chiefs of Ontario Environment Sector this past June. His work is focused on the Great Lakes region and the policies and agreements that manage Great Lakes water quality and ecosystem health. You can reach Ryan at

[Ryan.Bowie@coo.org](mailto:Ryan.Bowie@coo.org)



### **Stephanie Allen, Environment Program Manager**

Stephanie Allen is an Environment Program Manager for the Chiefs of Ontario. Since starting in May 2021, she has been working on two key unit projects: a revised First Nations Environmental Assessment Toolkit and the Environmental Capacity and Regulatory Gap project. You can reach Stephanie at

[Stephanie.Allen@coo.org](mailto:Stephanie.Allen@coo.org).



### **Lillian Trapper, Ontario Regional Climate Change Coordinator**

Lillian Trapper is the Regional Climate Change Coordinator for the Chiefs of Ontario. Lillian works closely with the Assembly of First Nations on a myriad of Climate and Environment files. You can reach Lillian at

[Lillian.Trapper@coo.org](mailto:Lillian.Trapper@coo.org).



### **Sally Gaikezheyongai, Environment Coordinator**

Sally Gaikezheyongai is the Environment Coordinator for the Chiefs of Ontario's Environment Sector. Since 2010, Sally has worked to assist the team with their meetings.

You can reach Sally at [Sally.Gaikezheyongai@coo.org](mailto:Sally.Gaikezheyongai@coo.org).

# NEW AT COO ENVIRONMENT

The Chiefs of Ontario have secured a funding agreement with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) to facilitate engagement with communities on the proposed Canada Water Agency. Please see a short overview of the Canada Water Agency in the Water Highlights section below. The Discussion Paper produced by Canada on the proposed agency can be located here:

[https://www.placespeak.com/uploads/6321/Canada\\_Water\\_Agency\\_Discussion\\_Paper.pdf](https://www.placespeak.com/uploads/6321/Canada_Water_Agency_Discussion_Paper.pdf).

The Environment Team will be reaching out with more information as it becomes available later this fall. For more information, please contact Ryan Bowie at [Ryan.Bowie@coo.org](mailto:Ryan.Bowie@coo.org).

## GOOD NEWS

### **Announcement of MOU – Parks Canada**

#### **August 9, 2021 – Moose Factory, Ontario**

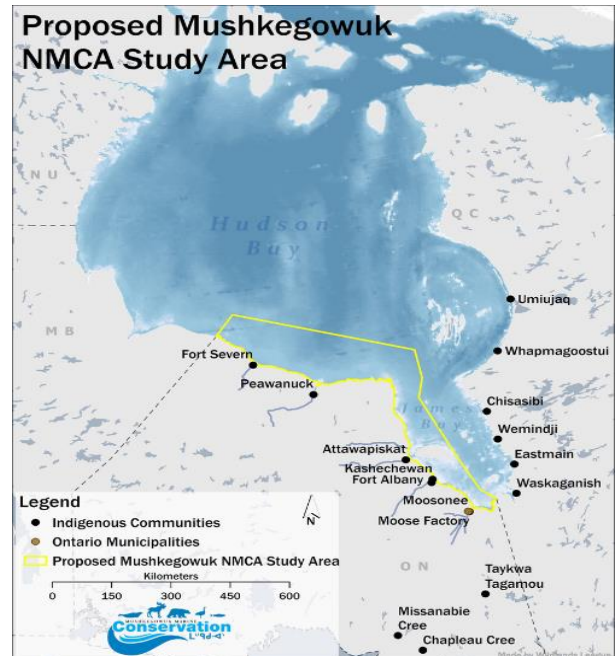
*Memorandum of Understanding signed to launch a feasibility assessment for a proposed National Marine Conservation Area in western James Bay and southwestern Hudson Bay.*

Today, the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, and Grand Chief Jonathan Solomon, the elected leader of the Mushkegowuk Council, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to launch a feasibility assessment for a National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) in western James Bay and southwestern Hudson Bay. This is a vital next step in the process to safeguard Canada's marine and coastal waters, and contributes to the Government of Canada's commitment to protect biodiversity and conserve 25 percent of land and inland waters and 25 percent of marine and coastal areas by 2025, working toward 30 percent by 2030.

Both leaders began the day by acknowledging the tragedy and legacy of residential schools in Canada especially in light of recent findings of unmarked graves at several

former residential school sites. The leaders acknowledged the pain and suffering of Indigenous people across Canada from residential schools.

The marine region covered by the MOU is over 90,000 square-kilometers, and encompasses an immense array of biodiversity. The coasts and waters are home to beluga whales, polar bears and other iconic Arctic and subarctic species. It is also an important global stopover for billions of migratory birds. This proposed marine area is adjacent to one of the largest stocks of carbon-rich peatlands in the world called the “breathing lands” by Elders. These ancient wetlands play a very important role in cooling the planet. The marine and peatland ecosystems support each other.



Enhancing the protection of marine ecosystems will not only help to conserve biodiversity, and assist with climate change mitigation, but also help maintain the culture, traditions, and well-being of Omushkego Cree communities, who have long been stewards of these lands and waters.

This MOU underlines the Government of Canada’s and the Mushkegowuk Council’s shared interest in protecting the ecological and cultural integrity of this globally significant ecosystem. By initiating a formal process to study the biodiversity, carbon, economic, and cultural values of this area, these two groups can come together to share and build a world-leading example of conservation driven by Indigenous peoples.

The MOU encourages discussion around conservation and the dual role of biodiversity and carbon in the protection of important places. It also promotes inclusivity for community groups in conservation planning and protected area forums.

Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/parks-canada/news/2021/08/government-of-canada-and-mushkegowuk-council-working-together-to-protect-western-james-bay.html>

***[Watch Grand Chief Solomon's speech](#)*** where he thanks everyone for their support to get to this point.

## [Global News Article - Shoal Lake Boil Water Advisory Set to End](#)

While Winnipeggers have used water from Shoal Lake for more than a century, the people living on its shores have been denied that right. However, as Global's Will Reimer explains, that is about to change.

If you live in Winnipeg, you likely made coffee, brushed your teeth, or cooked using water from Shoal Lake today. However, the people who live on its shores — members of Shoal Lake 40 First Nation — have been denied that right for 24 years. Until now.

On Wednesday, Sept. 15, the community expects their boil water advisory to be lifted — nearly a quarter-century after it was first put in place, in 1997. “We’ve been waiting for this for a lot of years,” Chief Vernon Redsky said. “It’s about time we have something in place for clean water, members, youth, and Elders. It’s been a long struggle; it’s finally going to happen.” Every day of that long wait, the City of Winnipeg has taken about 100 million gallons of water from the lake, something it has been doing since 1919. “For (members) to have lived this, they’re just looking forward to the day they can actually drink the water from the tap.”

Friend of the community Cuyler Cotton tries to put it in perspective. “There will be members voting in (this month’s) federal election who’ve never known what it was like to have safe drinking water come from their tap.” Construction of the site itself has taken less than a year, but the journey to get a shovel in the ground spanned more than two decades of frustration and rejection.

### **Freedom Road**

Drinking water was already an issue on the table when Redsky first ran for Chief in the late 1990s. “The struggle the first few times was the access issue,” he said. Shoal Lake 40 had no land connection to major routes. Instead, residents wishing to leave the community would have to take their car on a short barge trip across the lake to Shoal Lake 39, their sister First Nation in Ontario.



Pictured: The approximate path of the former barge that connected members of Shoal Lake 40 First Nation (lower) to the rest of Canada, via Shoal Lake 39 First Nation (upper, red pin). Google Earth  
That barge would later lead to supply issues, but also represented an inconvenience for members of Shoal Lake 40.

We had a curfew,” Redsky said. “The barge shut down at midnight. So if you were in Winnipeg and it was 10 p.m., you’d have to zip it home or you’d be sleeping in your car until 7 the next morning.” The barge was far from brand-new, and would often break down, he added. In shoulder seasons, the ice on the lake would start to thin, the paths on them becoming unstable and dangerous.

When it came to building a treatment plant, the community was told hauling material on barges would be too expensive — shutting down a pair of proposals in the early 2000s and 2010s, respectively. So for more than a decade, the First Nation yearned for land access of their own via a proposed 14-kilometre stretch of gravel road. The community’s persistence paid off in 2019, as the grand opening of Freedom Road was finally celebrated.

### **Domino Effect**

Not only did the road immediately improve the quality of life for residents, but suddenly, more opportunities were on the table. Talks soon resumed about the construction of a plant, and also a new K-7 elementary school. Construction on both projects began in late 2020. The First Nation partnered with construction firms in a joint venture to provide work opportunities for their residents.

### **A new era**

Between the road, school and water treatment plant, a lot has changed in the small community in the past few years. While most members feel it is long overdue, they are also optimistic future change may come a lot quicker than it did before.

*Source: Global news by staff The Canadian Press posted September 15, 2021:*  
<https://globalnews.ca/video/8179697/shoal-lake-boil-water-advisory-set-to-end>

# LEGISLATION AND LEGAL CHALLENGES

## **Bill C-230: An Act Respecting the Development of a National Strategy to Redress Environmental Racism**

This enactment requires the Minister of the Environment, in consultation with representatives of provincial and municipal governments, of Indigenous communities and of other affected communities, to develop a national strategy to promote efforts across Canada to redress the harm caused by environmental racism. It also provides for reporting requirements in relation to the strategy. View the Bill here:

<https://openparliament.ca/bills/43-2/C-230/>



Photo by Stephanie Allen

## **Court Declares Ontario Government Broke the Law: MZOs**

The Ontario Divisional Court has determined that the Government of Ontario broke the law when it failed to comply with the public consultation

requirements of Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR). Specifically, in a decision released on September 3, 2021, it declared that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing acted "unreasonably and unlawfully" in failing to consult with the public on changes to the *Planning Act* regarding Minister's Zoning Orders (MZOs). Reprinted from Ontario Nature.

In August 2020, after the passage of Ontario's controversial Bill 197, a legal challenge against the legislation was launched by: Earthroots, Ontario Nature, CELA, Cooper Price (a 17-year-old activist) and Michel Koostachin (who was born and raised in Attawapiskat).

"This judgement is a win for the involvement of young people in the political process. Our leaders must start listening to our voices when legislating our future," says Cooper Price. For more information:

<https://ontarionature.org/news-release/court-declares-ontario-government-broke-the-law/>

## **Ontario Species At-Risk Conservation Fund and Action Agency**

The Chiefs of Ontario recently received information from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks in relation to

establishment of a new provincial agency, the Species Conservation Action Agency. They state that this agency will have expertise to invest in strategic, large-scale, and coordinated actions that will support more positive outcomes for select species at risk.

The announcement follows information MECP shared about proposed regulations to establish the agency and enable use of the new Species at Risk Conservation Fund option. According to MECP this regulation includes a provision about the composition of the Species Conservation Action Agency's board of directors. The board of directors will include, to the extent possible, a person who has experience and expertise in at least one of the listed areas of collective experience and expertise, and who identifies as an Indigenous person. This is to recognize the important contributions of Indigenous communities and organizations and support the effectiveness of the agency and selection of activities for funding that would maximize benefits for conservation fund species. The listed areas of collective experience and expertise include relevant knowledge or scientific expertise, such as conservation biology, ecology, Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge, corporate governance experience and experience in building strategic partnerships in the area of conservation management.

MECP states that with the establishment of the Species Conservation Action Agency, work will begin to make the agency operational (e.g., accepting funds from proponents) over the coming months. As a next step, the ministry will post a job advertisement on the Public Appointments Secretariat website in the near future for qualified persons to apply to be on the Species Conservation Action Agency's board of directors. Further details about the decision can also be found on the Environmental Registry (notice 019-2636). For more information we have been directed to contact: to Megan McAndrew at [megan.mcandrew@ontario.ca](mailto:megan.mcandrew@ontario.ca)

## Carbon Pricing

Ontario Energy Board made a decision regarding carbon pricing on Indigenous customers. Chiefs of Ontario and Anwaatin Inc. challenged the application of the Federal Carbon Pricing Program charges.

***See attached Decision and Order (PDF) document received September 23, 2021.***



Photo courtesy of Kathleen Padulo

## IK Policy Framework

The Government of Canada is seeking feedback from Indigenous peoples on the draft Indigenous Knowledge Policy Framework. A letter was sent to Indigenous leadership on May 20, 2021 inviting comments from Indigenous communities until October 8, 2021. The link to the draft IK Policy Framework and background information are provided below.

The Government of Canada passed legislation on June 21, 2019 relating to the Impact Assessment Act, the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, the Fisheries Act and the Canadian Navigable Waters Act (together, the Acts). These legislative changes now require Indigenous knowledge be considered, when provided, alongside other factors, in project reviews and regulatory decisions.

The Indigenous Knowledge Policy Framework for Project Reviews and Regulatory Decisions (Framework) aims to support the consistent application of provisions dealing with Indigenous knowledge in the Acts. This is a principal based Framework.

The Government of Canada aims to edit the Framework based on comments received, prepare a What We Heard Report, summarizing comments from Indigenous communities, and share the final Framework, by winter 2021/22.

The Framework will support greater predictability in how Indigenous knowledge will be considered in project reviews and regulatory decisions. Federal organizations responsible for implementing the Indigenous knowledge provisions in the legislation will be able to use the Framework as a basis for developing more specific procedures and guidance.

### **For more information:**

#### ***Indigenous Knowledge Policy Framework for Project Reviews and Regulatory Decisions:***

<https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/programs/aboriginal-consultation-federal-environmental-assessment/indigenous-knowledge-policy-framework-initiative/indigenous-knowledge-policy-framework-project-reviews-regulatory-decisions.html>

#### ***What We Heard Report - Summary of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples to Support the Development of an Indigenous Knowledge Policy Framework for Project Reviews and Regulatory Decisions:***

<https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/programs/aboriginal-consultation-federal-environmental-assessment/indigenous-knowledge-policy-framework-initiative/what-we-heard-report.html>

# WATER HIGHLIGHTS

## **The 2021 Canada Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health**

The ninth Canada Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health (COA) came into force on June 1, 2021, and is in effect until May 31, 2026. This agreement supports the restoration and protection of the Great Lakes basin ecosystem by outlining how the governments of Canada and Ontario will cooperate and coordinate their efforts. A First Nations-specific annex, supported and advocated for by the Chiefs of Ontario since 2001, was finally included in the 2014 COA (Annex 13). The addition of the First Nations Annex was a significant achievement called for by First Nations in Ontario to distinguish their unique concerns, contributions, and relationships with the Great Lakes region.

In response to comments from First Nations and Chiefs of Ontario staff who identified major shortcomings of an earlier draft, the new COA contains several significant additions. The preamble to the agreement now states that “the Government of Canada is committed to advancing reconciliation with First Nations and Métis peoples through renewed nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationships based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership”. The preamble also notes that “Canada is committed to implementing UNDRIP”, and acknowledges the First Nations Water Declaration.

Annex 13 contains several notable new or amended clauses added to support First Nations involvement in decision-making, including:

- Develop a process to engage First Nations in decision-making and the application of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)
- Develop and implement a process to engage First Nations on remediation, beneficial use impairments decisions, delisting and designation of Areas of Concern (AOCs)
- As requested, First Nations representatives will be invited to attend all COA Executive Committee meetings, in addition to the annual meeting.
- Support for First Nations community projects, including those related to TEK, potentially expands on the pilot projects from the 2014 Agreement.

- There is also a statement regarding fish consumption advisories that directs Canada and Ontario to engage First Nations and ensure advisories are “appropriate for these communities, and are communicated appropriately”.

The new 2021 Canada Ontario Agreement offers some significant, if largely incremental, improvements for First Nations roles. The intentions to collaboratively develop processes for involvement in decision-making, consideration of TEK, and in AOC determinations, all point to potentially more assertive and effective involvement. However, with few explicit requirements, and the avenues for stronger First Nations’ roles in decision-making still needing to be developed, there are no guarantees the new COA will make steps towards a partnership approach with First Nations. Capacity challenges and weak engagement in many of the Annexes is likely to persist, and robust commitments from both the federal and provincial governments are needed but never certain. Clear reference to First Nations engagement or participation is not mentioned in all annexes, and there are no specific funding commitments for First Nations in the Agreement. The new COA appears to be a small, tentative step towards a collaborative partnership approach, but in a narrow set of circumstances where treaty and Aboriginal rights are already clear to all parties, or the need to consider TEK is already established.

Work has already begun to ensure the 2021 COA lives up to its commitments to First Nations and the health of the Great Lakes region. Details of upcoming priority setting and engagement opportunities are currently being worked out. For more information, please contact [Ryan.Bowie@coo.org](mailto:Ryan.Bowie@coo.org).



Photos  
courtesy of  
Lillian Trapper

# Great Lakes Executive Committee (GLEC) Meeting

June 29-30, 2021

The following is a brief summary of issues discussed at the last GLEC meeting this past summer:

## Updates on preparations for the next triennial management cycle:

- Begun to draft the Progress of the Parties Report, which will be ready to review for the December 2021 meeting.
- Chris Korleski (EPA) noted that problems with the US contributions to the last progress report caused delays resulting in little time for review before the Public Forum – vows this won't happen this time.
- The State of the Great Lakes Report is scheduled to be released in June of 2022.
- The Public Forum was tentatively proposed to take place in Windsor in October of 2022.
- Carla Torchia (ECCC) expressed their interest in integrating Indigenous led events. Panel discussions are most the common events at the forum, but she indicated that they have no preconceived ideas about how Indigenous led events might occur and is open to proposals.

## Reports from the Annexes

Updates on recent activities and those planned for the near future were discussed by leads and guests for most of the Annexes (details in the binders pdf circulated to participants), with the exception of Annex 6 (Invasive Species) and Annex 10 (Science and TEK).

- COVID restrictions resulted in some limitations with research and monitoring activities across the annexes.
- **Annex 2 – Lakewide Management:** In a letter that was posted in the meeting binder, the co-leads proposed sun setting the existing Annex 2 subcommittee, and using the lake partnerships as the main coordinating forums. Opposition to this proposal was expressed by several participants, particularly as it would limit discussion across the different lake regions. GLEC Co-Chair Chris Korleski (EPA) noted in his closing remarks that this idea would be revisited.

- **Annex 5 – Vessel Discharges:** New Ballast Water Regulations to reduce the introduction of invasive species came into force June 23, 2021, and can be found here: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2021-120/>
- **Annex 6 – Aquatic Invasive Species:** Although there was no update presentation from Annex 6, there was discussion on referring to Asian Carp as “Invasive Carp” going forward in order to drop negative stereotypes.
- **Annex 7 – Habitat and Species:** Canada and Ontario continue to work on the Baseline Coastal Habitat Survey. Noted in the meeting that climate change is producing higher highs and lower lows in Great Lakes water levels, and added stresses to the lakes.
- Of note, Shawanaga First Nation is working on the establishment of an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area.
- **Annex 10:** The TEK Task Team’s US Caucus finalized the Guidance Document on TEK Pursuant to the GLWQA, which can be found here [https://www.bia.gov/sites/bia.gov/files/assets/bia/wstreg/Guidance\\_Document\\_on\\_TEK\\_Pursuant\\_to\\_the\\_Great\\_Lakes\\_Water\\_Quality\\_Agreement.pdf](https://www.bia.gov/sites/bia.gov/files/assets/bia/wstreg/Guidance_Document_on_TEK_Pursuant_to_the_Great_Lakes_Water_Quality_Agreement.pdf)
- The TEK Speakers series that ran from May 26 to June 30, 2021 wrapped up, and links to videos of all 6 sessions are posted here: <https://cla.umn.edu/ais/events/great-lakes-traditional-ecological-knowledge-tek-speaker-series>
- The TEK Task Team began work on an inventory documenting Great Lakes projects in Canada that mobilize or engage with TEK.

## Canada Water Agency

Michael Goffin (ECCC) made brief remarks at the conclusion of the GLEC meeting about the proposed Canada Water Agency. He noted that Indigenous engagement is significantly weak at the moment, and pledged to improve that effort going forward.

### The Canada Water Agency: What is it?

The Canada Water Agency is a proposal from Environment and Climate Change Canada, with support from Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, intended to improve freshwater management practices and coordination across Canada. There is no specific indication as yet for how the Water Agency will be structured or what exactly it will do. The federal government

is currently in the process of soliciting feedback on objectives and issues to be considered in the potential establishment of the agency. Legislative or regulatory changes are not being considered at this time, and marine issues are not part of this process. The federal government also works under a separate mandate in its commitment with First Nations to end all long-term drinking water advisories. The scope of the Agency is potentially very large, as it could include watershed management, research, freshwater data, infrastructure, restoration and protection, as well as any other aspect that is relevant to the management of freshwater in Canada. The proposal for the Canada Water Agency advocates for a 'whole of government' approach given the number of departments and activities that affect freshwater management.

### **How might this impact First Nations?**

The activities potentially covered by the proposed Canada Water Agency will undoubtedly impact the inherent and treaty rights of First Nations. The federal government, in its proposal, claims that they intend the Agency to advance reconciliation and have an increased role for Indigenous peoples in the management of freshwater as an objective. They note that the inclusion of Indigenous governance systems in water management will be part of the dialogue with First Nations going forward. The proposal also flags the "co-development and delivery of science programs and strategies with Indigenous peoples to ensure the braiding of Western and Indigenous knowledge." There will need to be significant investment from the federal government to support First Nations' capacity and engagement on these issues in a way that respects First Nations' rights and jurisdiction.

### **How are First Nations being consulted and/or involved?**

Although the period for public consultation closed on March 1, 2021, there are dedicated Indigenous engagement that will continue through 2021. Environment and Climate Change Canada noted that the scope of Indigenous engagement would not be limited to the Discussion Paper they produced in the fall of 2020. It is prioritizing funding to support nation-to-nation and government-to-government partnerships in the engagement process. The Chiefs of Ontario Environment Sector will help facilitate the participation of interested First Nations as details become available. No date has been set for the Agency to come into effect.



# CLIMATE CHANGE HIGHLIGHTS

## **AFN Climate Action**

The AFN climate survey closed at the end of August 2021. The results are being compiled for analysis. This information will assist in developing the First Nations climate strategy. AFN Environment has plans to host another national climate gathering this fiscal year.

## **Joint Committee on Climate Action (JCCA)**

This committee was established in 2017 after the Pan Canadian Framework was developed by the Canadian government. This committee comprises of federal government representatives and First Nations regional representatives that provide technical advice on First Nation climate leadership issues, concerns, and approaches.

There have been three annual reports completed for the AFN National Chief and Canada's Prime Minister. The offices of the AFN and Prime Minister decided to release its 2020 report to the public on August 13, 2021. In general, the report speaks on a shared response to the climate emergency, First Nations approaches for climate leadership and next steps moving forward.

Please see link for report and highlights: [Joint Committee on Climate Action Annual Report highlights First Nations Leadership in addressing Climate Change](#)

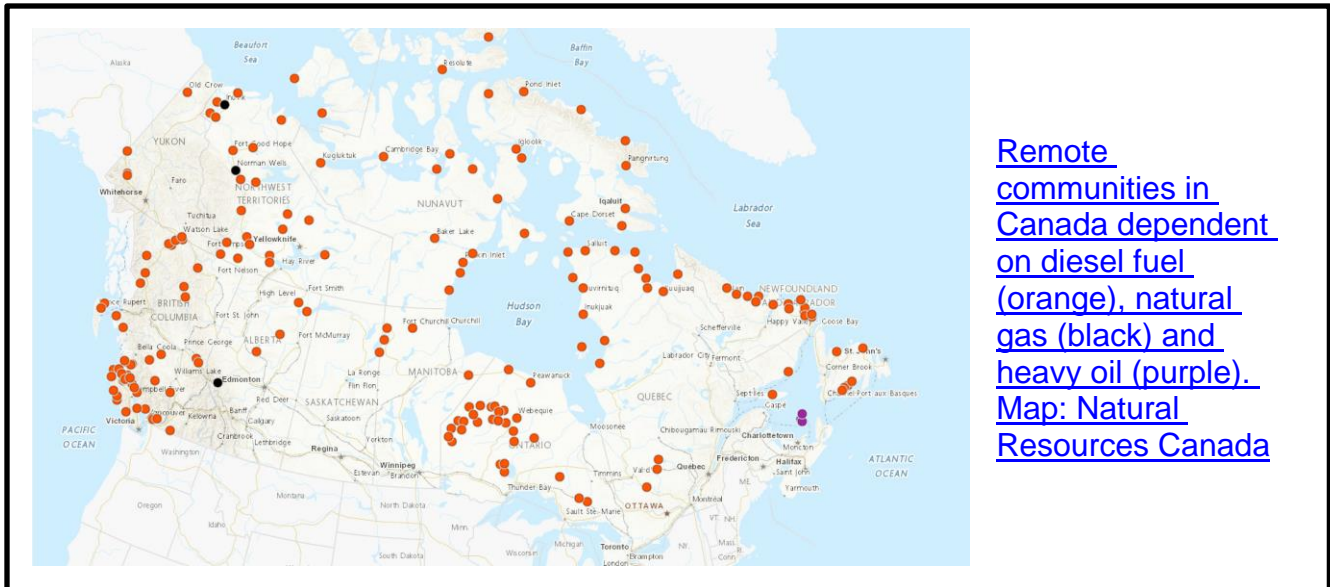
## **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)**

With the federal government plans to meet its emissions reduction target, SMR technology is being explored. The Canadian government developed a roadmap and action plan for SMRs. To date, there have been no known First Nation consultations or engagements in Ontario regarding SMRs from the Federal and Provincial governments.

[The Narwhal released an article January 4, 2021 on what you need to know about SMRs.](#)

It provides a brief overview on questions on nuclear power, SMR and nuclear reactor difference, Canadian government plan to use SMRs for remote resource development projects and remote communities, remote communities interested in SMR use, SMR reduce emissions, SMRs vs. renewable energy, nuclear waste storage, nuclear weaponry,

and other environmental concerns. There are 29 First Nation communities identified in Ontario with diesel power by Natural Resources Canada.



### Ontario Government Climate Action on SMRs

The provincial governments of Ontario, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan received their feasibility report on SMR development and deployment in March 2021. These 3 provinces have a collective interest in SMRs and signed a MOU in December 2019 to establish a framework for SMR implementation in each jurisdiction. The provincial power companies (Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Bruce Power, New Brunswick Power, and SaskPower) report includes their business cases for implementation of SMRs in their provinces. Please see link for more details:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/small-modular-reactor-feasibility-report>

The Ontario government power company OPG released an assessment report on July 5, 2021 analyzing SMR energy use for a representative arctic mine site that is off the grid in northern Canada. The case study report provides four scenarios on cost of electricity and total carbon dioxide emissions from production: diesel generators only; SMRs only; SMRs and diesel generators; and SMRs, diesel generators, wind turbines and battery energy storage. See link for details on assessment:

<https://www.opg.com/stories/canadas-first-small-modular-reactor-project-reaches-significant-milestone/>



Diagram displaying a cross-section of a SMR unit from OPG feasibility report released July 5, 2021.

## OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

The latest edition of *Lakes Letter*, the newsletter publication of the International Association for Great Lakes Research, has an article written by Environment Sector Policy Analyst Ryan Bowie entitled *Place, Knowledge, and Change*. The short piece ties together Indigenous issues, climate change, and Great Lakes research can be found here:

<http://iaqlr.org/lakesletter/>

### **Federal funding for Indigenous Leadership in Nature Conservation**

On Aug. 12, 2021 the Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced an investment of up to \$340 million in new funding over five years to support Indigenous leadership in nature conservation. This was part of Budget 2021 investment of \$2.3 billion over five years for nature conservation.

The funding announcement included up to \$173 million for new and existing Indigenous Guardians initiatives and the development of an Indigenous Guardians Network. Over \$166 million is earmarked to support Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs). This investment supports the Government of Canada's commitment to protect biodiversity and conserve 25% of land and inland waters and 25% of marine and coastal areas by 2025, and is part of the 30% by 2030 goal.

The government announcement notes that to date 52 Indigenous communities across the country have received funding to either establish IPCAs or undertake early planning and

engagement work that could result in additional IPCAs. See the article in this newsletter about the National Marine Conservation Area in James and Hudson bays being led by the Mushkegowuk First Nations. To date there are 80 Indigenous Guardians initiatives across the country, including those in Ontario First Nations such as the Shoal Lake Guardians, Shawanaga First Nations Guardians Program, Anishinabek Traditional Ecological Guardians of Georgian Bay, and the Four Rivers Regional Guardians Network.

**For more information, please visit these links:**

- Government of Canada announces \$340 million to support Indigenous-led conservation: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/08/government-of-canada-announces-340-million-to-support-indigenous-led-conservation.html>
- The Biggest Federal Investment Yet in Indigenous-led Conservation: <https://www.ilinationhood.ca/blog/investinguardiansipcacs>

## **National Species At Risk Act Consultation, Cooperation, and Accommodation Project**

As part of the Government of Canada's Indigenous Partnership Initiative, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) is partnering with The Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) on a National Species At Risk Act (SARA) Consultation, Cooperation, and Accommodation Project. This two-year project will facilitate Indigenous communities' and organizations' participation in meaningful consultation and cooperation in support of the listing, recovery and protection provisions of SARA.

Through this initiative, funding will be provided on behalf of ECCC, through participant fees and Elder honoraria to attend species-specific workshops, modest capacity funding requests, and a call for Expressions of Interest (EOI). For more information, please visit [www.yourcier.org](http://www.yourcier.org) or contact Lynn Mallet at [lmallet@yourcier.org](mailto:lmallet@yourcier.org).

**For communities in Ontario, planned virtual workshops for the first year of this project will include:**

<b>Workshop</b>	<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Description</b>
Introduction to the Species at Risk Act	<b>Oct 7, 2021;</b> <b>9am-12pm EST</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> ½ day workshop in early 2022 (date TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An introduction to the National Species At Risk Act (SARA) Consultation, Cooperation, and Accommodation Project and priority species for Ontario Region</li> <li>• An overview of the Species at Risk Act</li> </ul>
Information session on the EOI call for proposals	Dates TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview and Question &amp; Answer session on funding available to directly support Indigenous peoples' and organizations' meaningful participation in listing consultations and recovery planning for terrestrial species at risk</li> </ul>
Consultation on the addition of Black Ash to Schedule 1 of SARA	<b>Oct 21, 2021;</b> <b>9am-12pm EST;</b> additional dates to be confirmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on Black Ash characteristics, threats and reasons for COSEWIC designation</li> <li>• Discussion with participants on the potential impacts of listing and future recovery planning. We invite communities to share their knowledge and activities related to this species in your territories</li> </ul>
Overview of the current Recovery Document consultations for various species	1 half-day workshop in November 2021  2 <sup>nd</sup> half-day workshop in early 2022 (dates TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This workshop will focus on presenting general species information and threats as well as a brief overview of the contents of draft recovery documents that are currently in development and for which ECCC is seeking feedback on</li> </ul>
Early engagement on the development of a Management Plan for Wolverine	1 half-day workshop in December 2021  2 <sup>nd</sup> half-day workshop in early 2022 (dates TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present current information on Wolverine that will be included in the draft management plan</li> <li>• Discussion with participants on the importance of Wolverine and what they would like to see included in the upcoming management plan. We invite communities to share their knowledge and activities related to this species in your territories</li> </ul>
An introduction to the Land Relationship Visioning Tool	3 half-day workshops (dates TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Land Relationship Visioning tool is a community driven digital resource for First Nation Land Management Practitioners to help identify priority spaces and species within their territories. This includes tools to guide community based</li> </ul>

		development decisions and processes to map natural heritage features
Discussion of Canadian Wildlife Service's work in the Carolinian Zone of Ontario (Species at Risk and National Wildlife Areas)	2 full-day workshops (dates TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek input into species for consideration to be included in a multi-species action plan for the Long Point Walsingham Forest Priority Place.</li> <li>• Determine how communities want to be consulted and involved in the action plan as well as recovery work in the Priority Place</li> </ul>
Early engagement on the development of a recovery strategy for Monarch	2 half day workshops in early 2022 (dates TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present current information on Monarch and current implementation of recovery actions by ECCC and partners</li> <li>• Discussion with participants on current recovery work and what they would like to see in a future recovery strategy if the species is uplisted. We invite communities to share their knowledge and activities related to this species in your territories</li> </ul>

**Interesting Environmental Information Online:**

- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report on the state of the world environmental climate changes: <https://www.ipcc.ch/2021/08/09/ar6-wg1-20210809-pr/>
- The United Kingdom will host the United Nations Climate Change conference in Glasgow, Scotland from October 31 - November 12, 2021: <https://ukcop26.org>
- A National Study on the Health of First Nations Children and Youth: <http://www.fehncy.ca>
- Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) Report - June 21, 2021: <https://changingclimate.ca/>
- Canada's Energy Future 2020 Report: <https://www.cer-rec.gc.ca/en/data-analysis/canada-energy-future/2020/index.html>
- CTV News – *U.S. reports world's first deer with COVID-19*: <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/u-s-reports-world-s-first-deer-with-covid-19-1.5564334>
- Canadian Nuclear Association provides information on reactors and SMRs: <https://cna.ca/reactors-and-smrs/>
- Nuclear Newswire June 11, 2020 – *Venture formed to build microreactor at Canada's Chalk River Laboratories*: <https://www.ans.org/news/article-257/venture-formed-to-build-microreactor-at-canadas-chalk-river-laboratories/>

# UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

## Great Lakes Public Forum 2022

Planning for the Great Lakes Public Forum as mandated by the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement has begun for the fall of 2022. The event will mark the 50th anniversary since the signing of the Agreement. It is currently anticipated that the Forum will be held in Windsor, Ontario for approximately three days. The Great Lakes Executive Committee has asked the Chiefs of Ontario to work with other Indigenous organizations and communities to explore opportunities for Indigenous-led activities at the Forum. If you wish to put forth a proposal or an idea for an activity at the Public Forum, please contact Ryan Bowie at [Ryan.Bowie@coo.org](mailto:Ryan.Bowie@coo.org)

## OCTOBER 2021

- **Oct 1, 10:30 – 12 pm**, 2022 Great Lakes Public Forum Planning Advisory Committee Meeting #1
- **October 5-7 pm** State of the Great Lakes (SOGL) Draft Indicator Assessment Webinar Series
- **Oct 8, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time** IJC Great Lakes Science Advisory Board Public Webinar: Monitoring Infrastructure and Activities of Great Lakes Connecting Waters. Register today at: [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_DAroioJjQl6SqBFC3WJ9Tg](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DAroioJjQl6SqBFC3WJ9Tg)
- **Oct 12, 3-4 pm**, GLWQA Annex 10 (Science) Extended Sub-committee Discussion
- **Thursday, October 14, 12:00pm - 1:15pm ET // 11:00am - 12:15pm CT** Effects of Toxic Substances on Great Lakes Fish Health, and What it Means for the Health and Wellbeing of People and Communities - webinar, Register online: <https://cela.ca/webinar-effects-of-toxic-substances-on-great-lakes-fish-health-and-what-it-means-for-the-health-and-wellbeing-of-people-and-their-communities/>
- **Oct 6**, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission webinar on Blind River refinery license renewal. See link: <https://nuclearsafety.gc.ca/eng/stay-connected/get-involved/meet-the-nuclear-regulator/blind-river-licence-renewal-webinar.cfm>
- **Oct 15-18**, Watershed 2021 Peoples' Water Convention, online registration and tickets \$20-\$100 at <https://hopin.com/events/watershed-2021?ltclid=1c9efa38-6a05-4d59-88ae-d2fd344d0ab7>

## NOVEMBER 2021

- **Nov 1, 2-3:30 pm**, Stat of the Great Lakes Draft Assessments Messaging and Highlights Summary webinar

- **Nov 16-17**, Chiefs of Ontario Special Chiefs Assembly online

## **DECEMBER 2021**

- **Dec 1-2**, Great Lakes Executive Committee Meeting
- **Dec 7-9, 2021**, AFN Special Chiefs Assembly, hybrid format, See link:  
<https://www.afn.ca/event/special-chiefs-assembly-2021/>
- **Dec 14, 3-4 pm**, GLWQA Annex 10 (Science) Extended Sub-committee Discussion



Photo courtesy of Kathleen Padulo