

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

Great Lakes First Nations Fisheries Management

Latornell Conservation Symposium 2019

Chirag Patney, MSc. candidate
Supervision: Drs. Nicolas Brunet and
Sheri Longboat

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Purpose

To collaboratively develop our understanding of the current status of First Nations fisheries management principles and practices within the Great Lakes Basin.

The Research Team



Dr. Nicolas Brunet

Latonnell Professor in
Environmental Stewardship
B.Sc, MSc, PhD.

- Interested in the diverse knowledge systems and paradigms, and approaches that support environmental decision-making.



Dr. Sheri Lonboat

Assistant Professor

•BES, MA, B.Ed., PhD.

- 20 years experience with Indigenous communities
- Focus on water security & governance



Dr. Phil Loring

Associate Professor

BA, MA, PhD

- Specialization: Food security and sovereignty, community sustainability, and environmental change



Chirag Patney

Graduate Student

•BLA, MSc Candidate

- Interested in Environmental Impact Assessments, Indigenous Consultation, and Public Policy

Background

1

Ongoing issues with water quality, fish abundance, health and consumption safety in the Great Lakes



2

Lack of resources and published materials regarding Great Lakes First Nations fisheries and fish consumption



3

Emergence of First Nation leaders in fisheries governance and management practices in the Great Lakes.

Study context

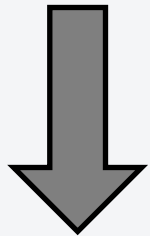
- Fisheries managed by the DFO and OMNRF in Ontario
- Constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights
- Rich legislative and policy body, provincially and federally
- Many significant court decisions regarding fisheries and governance
 - Sparrow (1990), Gladstone (1996), Delgamuukw (1997), Marshall (1999), Haida (2004) and Ahousaht (2009)



Methods & Scope

Exploratory qualitative Study

Phase 1: Great Lakes Basin scale



Phase 2: Community-based (Shawanaga First Nation) – *ongoing*

Identifying communities

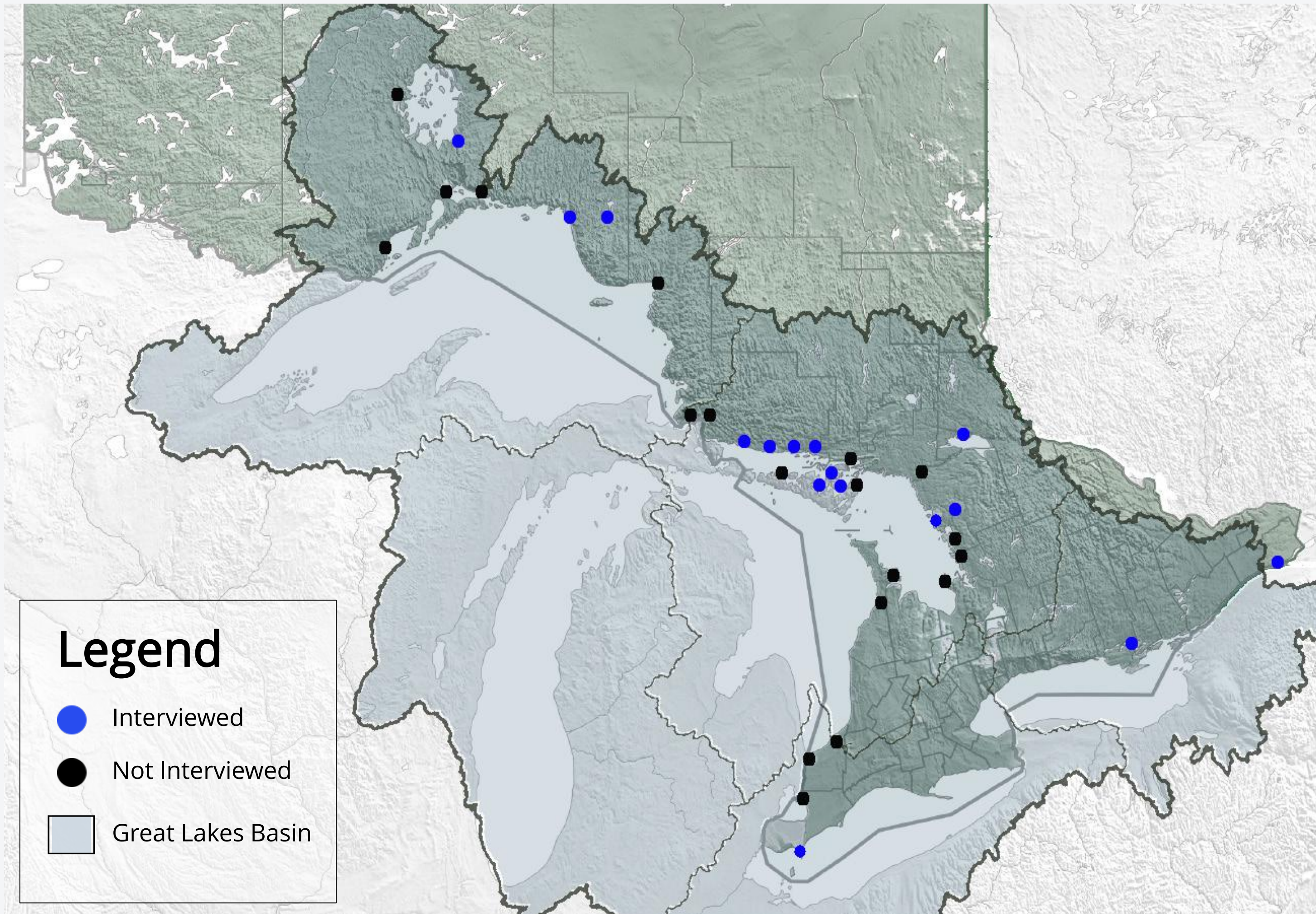
- 35 First Nations communities were identified as directly adjacent to the Great Lakes and/or with active fisheries within the Great Lakes.

Interviews & Webinars

- 20 individuals from 15 First Nations interviewed.
- Reported back preliminary findings and verified accuracy using webinars
- ‘Leader’ identification

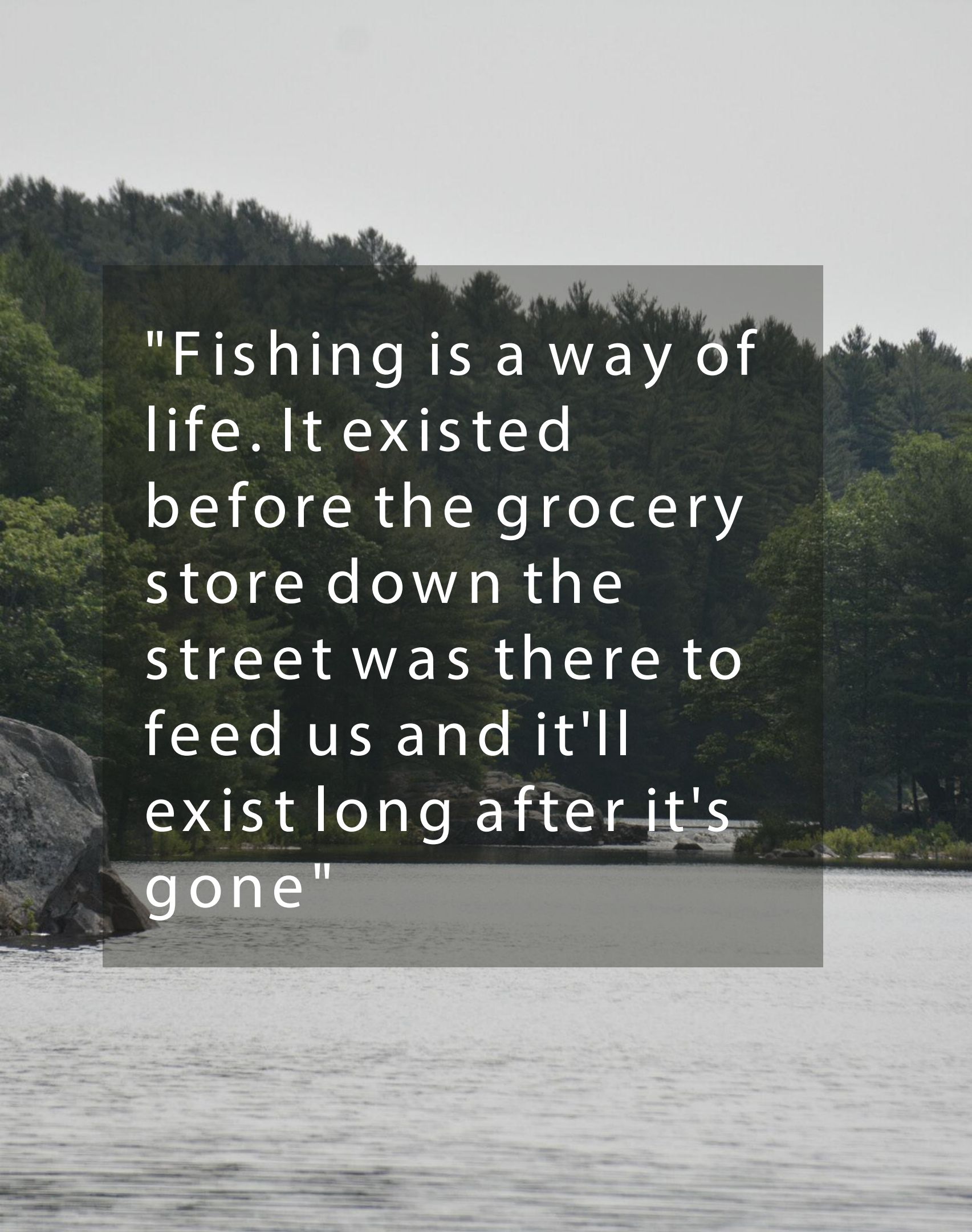
Interviews and participatory video

- 20 interviews completed in Shawanaga First Nation
- Participatory video project (ongoing)



What did we ask?

- Can you talk to me about fishing and fisheries in your community?
- How does your Community manage their fisheries?
- How would you characterize your Community's relationship with the Provincial OMNRF and/or Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)?
- Can you tell me about the relationship between fisheries and the rights of your nation?
- Are there any links between fisheries management and case law in your Community?



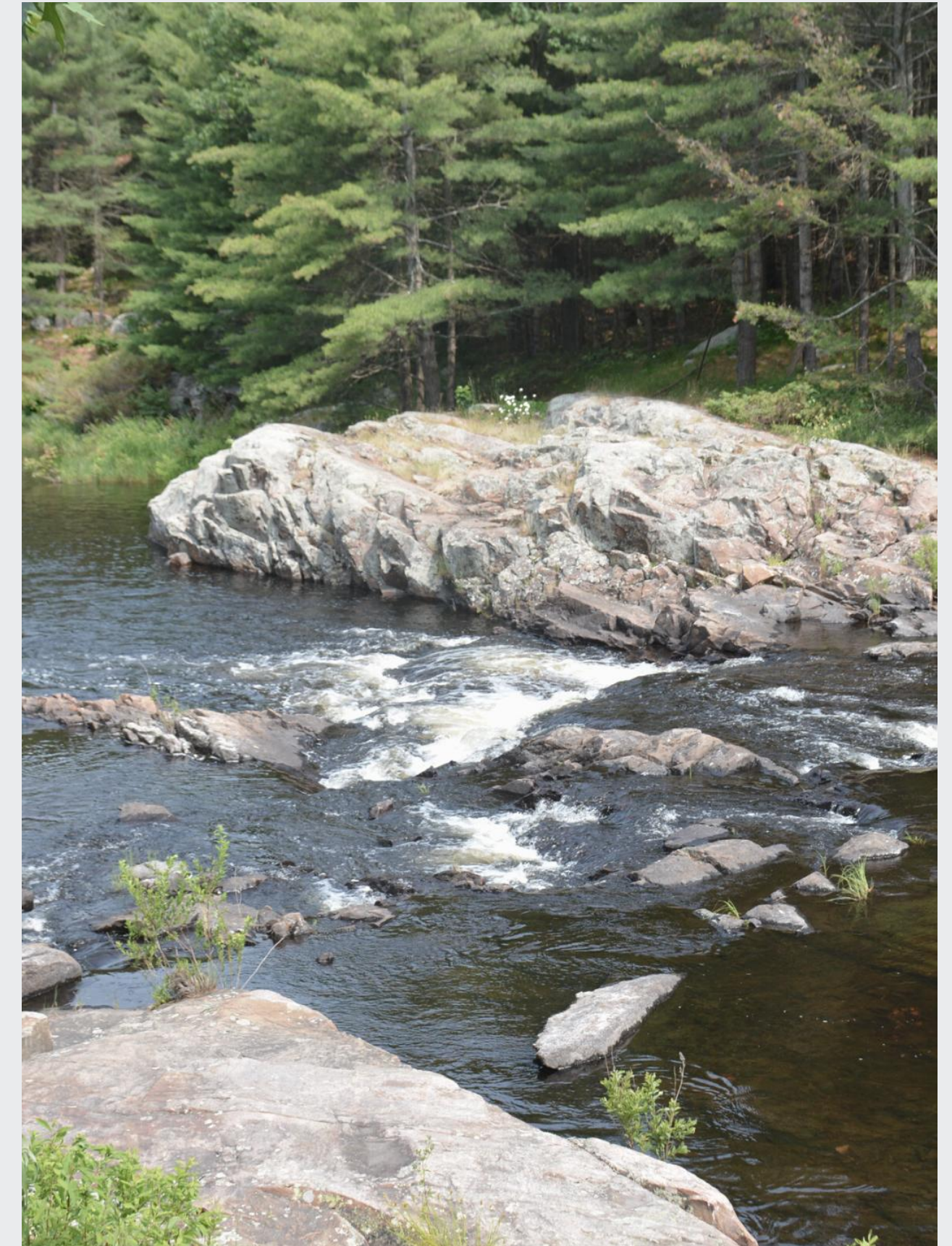
"Fishing is a way of life. It existed before the grocery store down the street was there to feed us and it'll exist long after it's gone"

Why is fishing important for our research participants?

- Provides sustenance
- Brings community together
- Source of economic gain
- Part of ceremony
- Avenue to exercise rights

What is the current status of fisheries within our study?

- Traditional and commercial fishing practice
- Many practice rights-based fishing
 - Rejection of Aboriginal Communal Fishing License
- Commercial fishing is often small scale or on its way out
 - Low catch allowance allocations
- Some First Nation fishers are limited due to equipment
 - Evident more so when equipment is tampered with because some don't agree with the fishing technique
- Decline in fish population noticed inland and in the Great Lakes





**"Our rights were not
given to us through the
process of treaty
making." - Chief McLeod**

What goals and visions did participants have regarding their fisheries?

"Our teachings say we have to look after the next 7 generations so that way, you know, the youth now they'll have something."

- Next 7 generations of people have fish to eat
 - Need for an active, healthy fishery
- Local community building
 - Passing on knowledge from generation to generation
 - Involving youth in activities and decisions
- Having their laws recognized by the federal and provincial governments
- Assertion of rights over the lands and water within their traditional territory

Challenges and Barriers



Lack of Support for Monitoring and Assessments

- A/OFRC received a 70% budget cut in May 2019

Lack of Personnel

- Often a couple people doing the work of many

Lack of recognition of Indigenous Laws as formalized processes

- Results in lengthy processes for customary laws to be recognized through formal agreements

THANK YOU
MEEGWETCH
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Questions?

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