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2022

MUSHKEGOWUK
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LIVING IN HARMONY WITH THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT OF THE OMUSHKEGO

PROPOSED MUSHKEGOWUK NATIONAL MARINE CONSERVATION AREA (NMCA)

The project involves nine Omushkego (Cree) communities and would conserve 1,290 km of dynamic coastline and 91,000 km² of thriving offshore waters in Washaybeyoh (Hudson Bay) and Weeneebeg (James Bay). Establishing this Indigenous-led NMCA will protect our culture and our interconnected lands and waters that sustain all life for future generations.

This area is currently the largest proposed NMCA in progress in Canada.

OUR MARINE REGION IS GLOBALLY SIGNIFICANT

It supports:

Traditional Omushkego livelihoods and well-being including harvesting and cultural practices such as fishing

Millions of migratory birds' breeding and feeding grounds

>20% of Canada's belugas (>30,000) including a unique resident population in Weeneebeg (James Bay)

Rich stores of carbon in wetlands, coastal environments and sediments

Most southern population of polar bears in the world

And much more

STATUS

This project is currently in the Feasibility Stage which involves extensive community engagement to gather knowledge and identify conservation priorities. It also includes the synthesis and gathering of traditional knowledge and scientific studies, as well as conversations with stakeholders and other governments (Indigenous, provincial, territorial and federal).

Highlights of completed work:

- **Nation-to-Nation Memorandum of Understanding** signed in August 2021
- **Cree Terminology workshops** were held to define how to refer to terms such as 'carbon' in Cree
- **Place names workshop** were held to train Marine Research Assistants on how to document Cree names to reclaim traditional names
- The William Kennedy research vessel returned for phase 2 of the **James Bay Expedition** led by the University of Manitoba. This year, community members joined the expedition to engage in the exchange of cultural and scientific knowledge

KEY LEADERSHIP, WORKING GROUPS AND PARTNERS

- **Chiefs of the Mushkegowuk Council** in collaboration with Grand Chief Alison Linklater
- **Steering Committee** – members from Mushkegowuk Council and Parks Canada will oversee the establishment process
- **Mushkegowuk Marine Task Force** – appointed Elders, youth and community members will guide the planning process
- **Marine Research Assistants** – in each community will help facilitate engagement and assist with documenting Traditional Knowledge
- **Environmental Non-Governmental Organization (ENGO) Partners** – Wildlands League and Oceans North are providing strategic and technical support and advice
- **University of Manitoba Researchers**
- **Philanthropic Community**

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FIND US: @Omushkego @MushkegowukMM

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: mushkegowukmarine.ca



- Missanabie Cree
- Chapleau Cree