Intercultural collaborations: A settler's lessons learned

Elaine Ho-Tassone

With contributions from Aaron Jones and Stephanie Seymour at Garden River First Nation

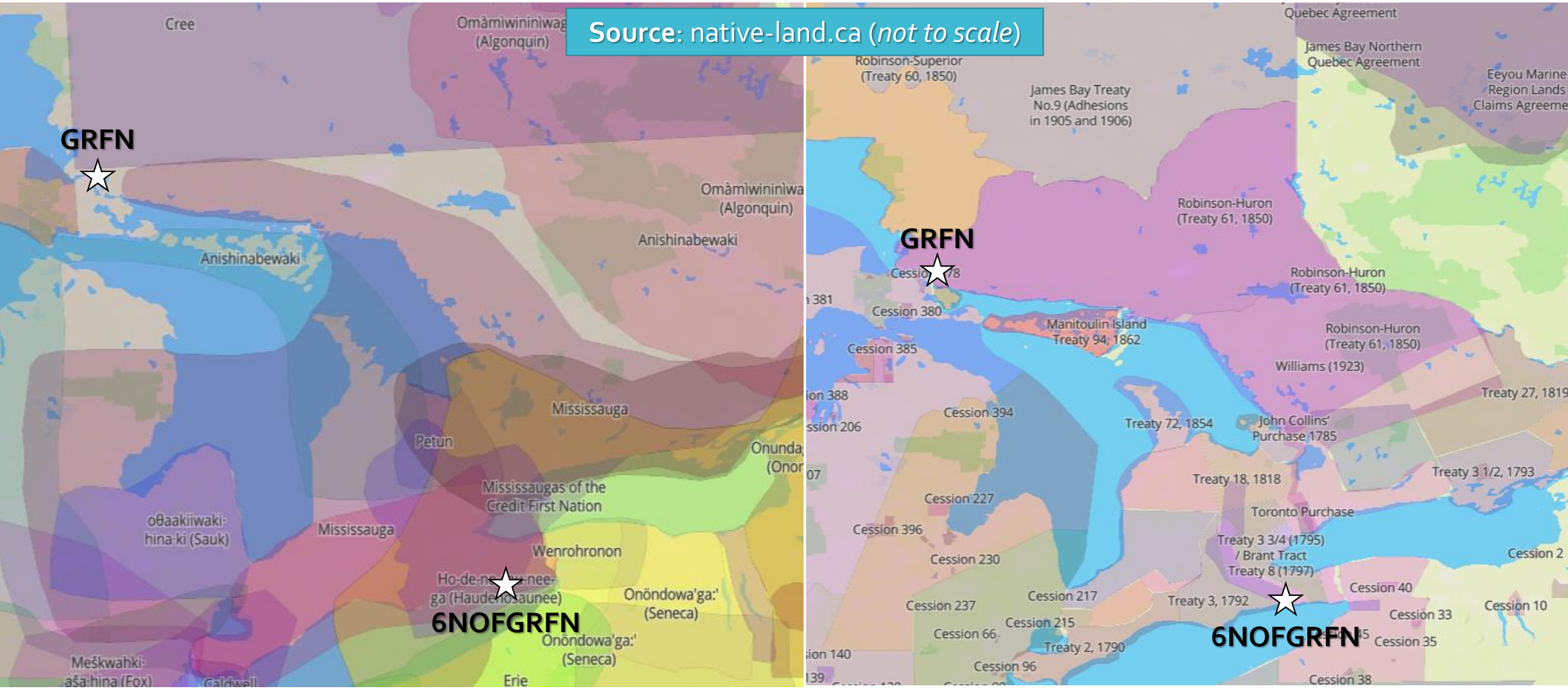
Highlights from two projects

Left: project with Garden River First Nation, November 2020-February 2022

Right: project with youth from Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation, August 2019-October 2020 (and beyond)

Traditional territories

Treaty territories



Context 1:
Music for the Spirit & Indigenous Visual

Co-created research approach with youth at Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation

About the research

- **Purpose**: part of different community-based research case studies (contributing to a larger project to democratize water monitoring processes) to bring forward voices that are not usually heard by local water managers.
  - Haudenosaunee voices should always be invited due to their authority within the Haldimand Tract.
- **Method**: Co-creation; efforts led/steered by western researcher.
  - Though this collaboration began in August 2019, it was preceded by discussions and relationship building with the community's (then-)Wildlife Manager as of July 2018.
- **Analysis**: Qualitative analysis using a grounded theory approach.

Grand Expressions

Water-themed creations by Indigenous youth

March 20: Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum, 10 Huron Road, Kitchener – Water for All/Soupfest, main lobby. Free parking, paid access.

March 23-April 3*: Cambridge Centre for the Arts, 60 Dickson Street, Cambridge – 1st floor, amphitheater hallway. Free parking at City Hall, free access.
*Public reception **March 24**, 6-8pm!

April 6-17: Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre, St. Paul's University College, 190 Westmount Road N., Waterloo – room 228. Paid parking, free access.

April 29-May 24: THEMUSEUM, 10 King Street W., Kitchener. Paid parking, paid access.

May 26-28: Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum, 10 Huron Road, Kitchener – Waterloo-Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival, Shuh Barn. Free parking, paid access.

June 2-19: University of Waterloo School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability, Environment 2 building – room 2022. Free 15-minute parking/paid longer-term parking, free access.

Ken Seiling Waterloo Region MUSEUM

Cambridge Centre for the Arts

Shatitsiroth'a Waterloo Indigenous STUDENT CENTRE

THEMUSEUM

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENT

www.GrandErieStudy.ca/arts

Artists: Thomas Anderson, Adriana Johnson, Steve Johnson, Hannah Wallace-Lund

Artist: Ashley Cattrysse

Organized in partnership between Music for the Spirit & Indigenous Art and Elaine Ho, PhD Candidate, University of Waterloo

MUSIC for the SPIRIT

Grand Expressions

A Self-guided Tour (v.2)

Water-themed creations by youth from Six Nations of the Grand River

Organized in partnership between Elaine Ho (PhD Candidate, University of Waterloo) and Music for the Spirit & Indigenous Visual Arts, with support from our generous hosts

MUSIC for the SPIRIT

Cambridge Centre for the Arts

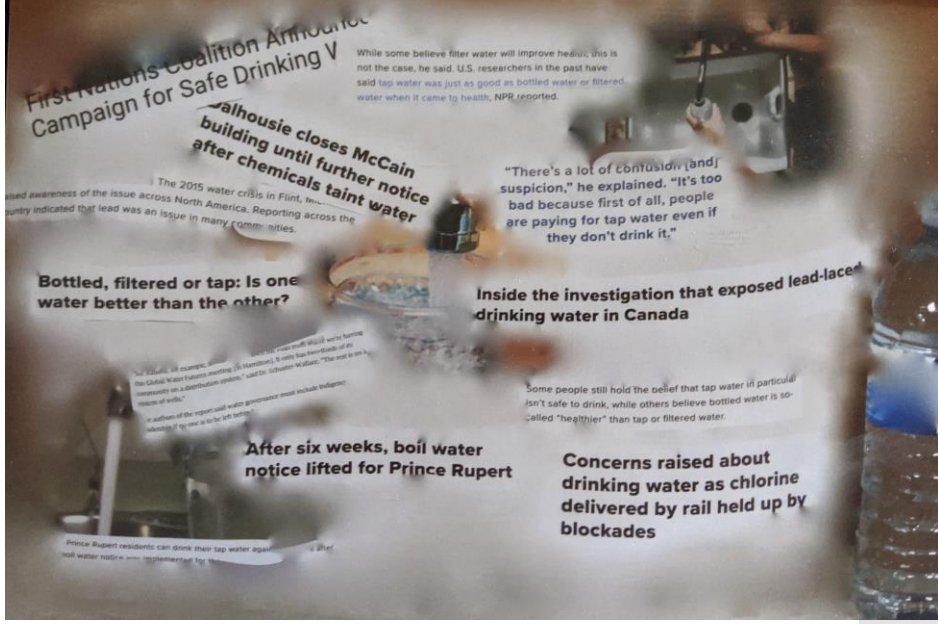
The Carolinian CAFÉ & EATERY

THEMUSEUM

Ken Seiling Waterloo Region MUSEUM

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Different ‘data’ formats



What did we do with the perspectives shared?

- Themes and recommendations were identified from across the perspectives shared.
- A list of 16 principles and values was created.
- Main themes and recommendations were identified from another phase of the research in which 21 current or recent water managers or scientists were interviewed (this informed a 'SWOT' analysis with accompanying recommendations).
- Using the youths' perspectives as a foundation, the interviewees' themes were added to the list of 16 initial principles and values.
- A shortlist of 10 principles and values was created that summarized the views shared by all.

10 principles and values for the Grand River Watershed

- Water is essential and finite.
- What we put into the watershed returns to us in one form or another.
- Impacts are shared but unequally distributed.
- We are inextricably embedded within ecosystems and are co-dependent in many ways.
- Partnerships and collaboration are the foundation of program implementation.
- We openly acknowledge diversity, histories and strive to reconcile. We recognize and value diverse relationships between water and people.
- Data and communication are open, transparent, and accessible. Cultural and intergenerational knowledge are recognized as data.
- We will manage as stewards. Waters are treated as living, sentient beings – with love, respect, and gratitude.
- We recognize that iterative, adaptive processes do not fail (they improve). Proactive, precautionary approaches are applied when feasible.
- Managers should strive to measure and enhance community experiences as part of their assessment of watershed health.

Context 2:
GRFN Lands and Resources Department

Community-based research with staff and volunteer community members at Garden River First Nation

About the research

- **Purpose**: (1) Build water monitoring capacity, (2) determine feasibility of community water monitoring, (3) build relationships across the region, and (4) develop youth leadership at Garden River First Nation.
- **Method**: Co-creation; efforts led/steered by the community (originally by the Chief, then the Lands Department).
- **Analysis**: Quantitative analyses using (1) a combination of an online data portal and descriptive statistics (water chemistry), and (2) looking at the numbers of different aquatic insects found in different locations.
- **Partners**:

Northern Ontario Research, Development, Ideas and Knowledge NORDIK INSTITUTE

KETEGAUNSEEBEE GARDEN RIVER First Nation

waterlution

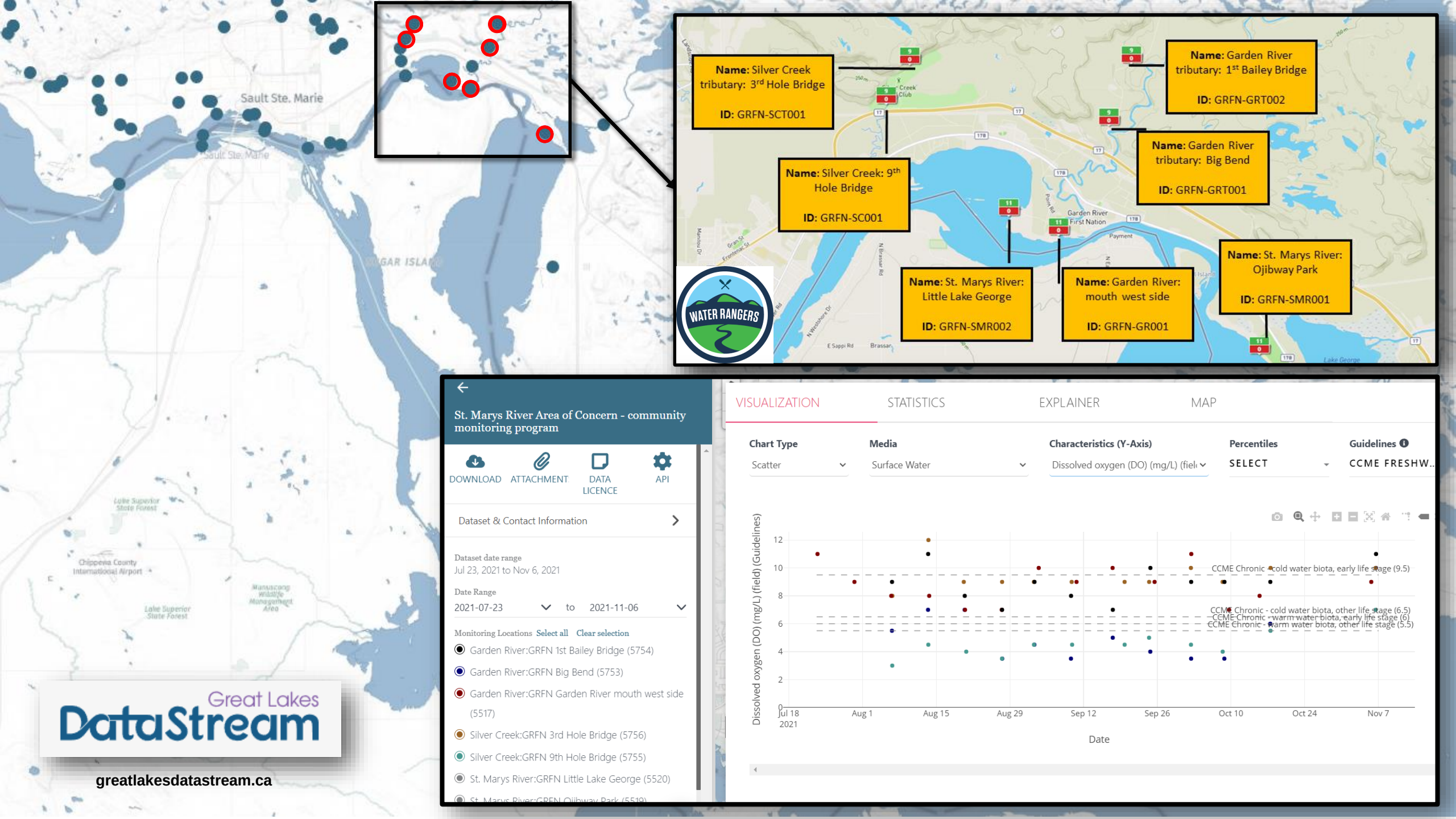
THE GORDON FOUNDATION

WATER RANGERS

SWIM DRINK FISH

Connecting people with water

CHEMets
447
NOTEPAD


Sault Ste. Marie
Name: Silver Creek tributary: 3rd Hole Bridge
ID: GRFN-SCT001
Name: Silver Creek: 9th Hole Bridge
ID: GRFN-SC001
Name: Garden River tributary: 1st Bailey Bridge
ID: GRFN-GRT002
Name: Garden River tributary: Big Bend
ID: GRFN-GRT001
Name: St. Marys River: Little Lake George
ID: GRFN-SMR002
Name: Garden River: mouth west side
ID: GRFN-GR001
Name: St. Marys River: Ojibway Park
ID: GRFN-SMR001
WATER RANGERS
St. Marys River Area of Concern - community monitoring program
DOWNLOAD
ATTACHMENT
DATA LICENCE
API
Dataset & Contact Information
Dataset date range
Jul 23, 2021 to Nov 6, 2021
Date Range
2021-07-23
to
2021-11-06
Monitoring Locations Select all Clear selection
Garden River:GRFN 1st Bailey Bridge (5754)
Garden River:GRFN Big Bend (5753)
Garden River:GRFN Garden River mouth west side (5517)
Silver Creek:GRFN 3rd Hole Bridge (5756)
Silver Creek:GRFN 9th Hole Bridge (5755)
St. Marys River:GRFN Little Lake George (5520)
VISUALIZATION
STATISTICS
EXPLAINER
MAP
Chart Type
Scatter
Media
Surface Water
Characteristics (Y-Axis)
Dissolved oxygen (DO) (mg/L) (fiel
Percentiles
SELECT
Guidelines
CCME FRESHW..
Dissolved oxygen (DO) (mg/L) (field) (Guidelines)
CCME Chronic - cold water biota, early life stage (9.5)
CCME Chronic - cold water biota, other life stage (6.5)
CCME Chronic - warm water biota, early life stage (6)
CCME Chronic - warm water biota, other life stage (5.5)
Jul 18 2021
Aug 1
Aug 15
Aug 29
Sep 12
Sep 26
Oct 10
Oct 24
Nov 7
Date
Great Lakes DataStream
greatlakesdatastream.ca

Using (community-derived) open data

Coordination

Collaboration

Education

Management response

Democratization

Ethics/OCAP®

Engaging with the community

FEB
10

Understanding Anishinaabek G'giikendaaswinmin (knowledge) on N'bi (water)

by Garden River First Nation Lands and Resources Department

12 followers Follow

Free

FEB
16

Sault area fresh water collaboration meeting

Free

Project outcomes and next steps

- The data from this pilot project contributes to a baseline understanding of conditions in the Garden River and St. Marys River.
- This project provided short-term and part-time work contracts for three Garden River community members, in addition to involving two Algoma University students, a high school co-op student, and volunteer community members.
- Feedback from the community will contribute to continued monitoring.
- Addition of *E. coli* monitoring and, potentially, winter water quality sampling.
- Working relationships were developed with project partners that are continuing past the life of the pilot.

Recommendations and lessons learned

(A few of many!)

Collaborators' advice

- Recognize the validity of all sources of knowledge, and ownership of that knowledge
- Respect the stories; remember which are yours to tell
- Seek funding and partnerships that will fund full-time contracts (including beyond the project life)
- Co-create shared spaces; ensure community needs dictate project intent, action, and outcomes
- Fund honoraria for volunteers and community participation of any kind
  - In-kind and volunteer contributions are a privilege, never an expectation
- First Nations have capacity; funding is needed

Do, or Don't?
(For non-Indigenous researchers)

- **Do** recognize your own ignorance and take responsibility for your own education (e.g., it is not the Indigenous persons' responsibility to educate you)
- **Do** ensure consent is established and collaborative ideation occurs *from the start* (and is maintained)
- **Do** deliver on commitments; reciprocate
- **Do** co-create and build capacity
- **Do** create shared spaces
- **Do** question your worldview – e.g., whose ethics apply?
- **Don't** assume you know what is needed; do engage early
  - Vestment exists whether you recognize it, or not
- **Don't** justify inclusion; do justify exclusion
- **Don't** forget the importance of context, especially when collaborating interculturally

Guiding questions as you develop your research

- Does project ideation put the community/partner at the forefront of conceptualization? E.g., are **their needs** first?
- Was **consent** given prior to project development? How will you assess continued consent, or deal with potential withdrawal of consent?
- Are the **processes** present to engage? Designed *with* (not just *for*) participants?
- Do partners and participants have the **capacity** to meaningfully participate?

Guiding questions as you develop your research

- How are we identifying who represents diverse views? Do these groups know these processes/this **representation** exist?
- How is participation **reciprocated**?
  - Defined *by participants*
- Will your work provide **meaning and/or benefits** to the community beyond the project life (i.e., once you've left the community)?

Thank you

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