

CCGP MOOSE RECOVERY STRATEGY



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Aboriginal Community Engagement Report

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CCGP Moose Recovery Strategy

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

SUMMARY

The Northeast Superior Regional Chiefs' Forum (NSRCF) was formed in 2008. The NSRCF mandate was to collectively and strategically address several regional issues its member First Nations regularly encountered. In the same year, one of the initial partnerships developed was with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (OMNRF). The NSRCF and OMNRF began working cooperatively to cultivate MNRF's understanding of Indigenous peoples' relationship with the land. An NSRCF-CCGP Hunting and Trapping Action Plan (HTAP) was created in 2009 with an eye toward the development of moose recovery in the Chapleau Crown Game Preserve (CCGP).

The HTAP identified steps to be taken to further the work between the NSRCF and the MNRF. Key elements noted for success included the areas of relationship building and information collection activities. The partners mutually agreed that the NSRCF would lead the relationship building components and the OMNRF would lead the information collection aspects for the partnership.

Relationship building between the province and regional First Nations has not been an easy task over the years. One reason resonates in Premier Kathleen Wynn's letter of September 23, 2016, to Kathryn McGarry, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry of Ontario. Minister McGarry passed the same message to her Deputy Ministers: *"we are redoubling our efforts to deliver on our **top priority** — **economic growth and good jobs**".*

While economic growth is a priority for the Indigenous Nations of the Northeast Superior region, every Nation across Turtle Island (aka North America), recognizes their special relationship. Naintaing the ecological integrity of the forests, lands, animals, and waters is more important to many Nations.

Developing the moose recovery strategy and its related information collection activities such as the CCGP 2014 Moose Aerial Inventory Report completed in December 2015 and the Aboriginal community engagements session in 2016, were attempts at closing the gap on the two very different worldviews.

In 2016, the NSRCF formed a technical corporation to remove the politics from the day-to-day business of their developing partnerships. The Wahohtowin Development General Partnership Inc. (WDGPI), are the hands-on operatives to cultivate business partnerships while the Chiefs' remain the political and strategic advocates for the continued advancement of their collective vision.



ONLY WHEN THE
LAST TREE HAS
BEEN CUT DOWN,
ONLY WHEN THE
LAST FISH HAS
BEEN CAUGHT,
ONLY WHEN THE
LAST RIVER HAS
BEEN POISONED,
ONLY THEN WILL
YOU REALIZE THAT
MONEY CAN'T BE
EATEN.

Indian Prophecy

This report is the most recent document of the NSRCF and OMNRF partnership. The partners continue to seek common ground and develop solutions based approaches to mutually beneficial activities. We are hopeful that it also represents the ongoing need to continue building on the NSRCF - OMNRF eight-year partnership developed in part, under the HTAP.

The NSRCF-Wahkohtowin recognize the need to work collaboratively with the governments of Ontario, Canada, neighboring municipalities, and resource based industries.

METHODOLOGY

A series of presentations were given between August 17 and November 22, 2016. Three of four sessions were held at First Nation communities.

Recognizing that there are a number of Aboriginal people in the community of Chapleau who may not have been able to attend one of the three previous sessions or people wishing to attend may not have an affiliation with one of the three First Nations, it was decided to hold a session in the town of Chapleau for the Aboriginal community at large.

Each session had its own advertising which included flyers, door-to-door solicitation and a newspaper advertisement was purchased for the public session held at the Royal Canadian Legion in Chapleau.

The agenda focus areas for each session were mostly consistent and covered five main elements to provide participants with synopsis of who we are, why we were having these sessions and to collect data from their perspectives.

Community Presentations

1. August 17 at the Missanabie Cree First Nation Annual Gathering
2. September 29 at the Brunswick House First Nation
3. October 14 at the Chapleau Cree First Nation Traditional Hunt Week
4. November 22 at the Royal Canadian Legion, in Chapleau



Agenda

- Brief history of NSRCF/MNRF partnership
- Wahkohtowin Introduction
- MNRF scientific data
- Cultural context of Aboriginal harvesting,
- Traditional roles & responsibilities, relationship with the land
- The Peoples' Voices Q's & A's

QUESTIONS ASKED

This list of questions was asked at each session. Participants were also given handouts and encouraged to ruminate them at their leisure and provide the facilitator with any additional information they might like the Moose Recovery Strategy team to know.

1. How many harvesters are in the room? (Hunters, trappers, berry or medicine pickers)
2. How often are you on the land
3. How long have you spent on the land?
4. In the CCGP?
5. What are your observations as far as harvesting moose, other animals, trees, plants etc?
6. What do you know about moose hunting practices in the CCGP?
7. Should people hunt moose in the CCGP?
8. If yes to #7, should people:
 - a) hunt what they want, when they want;
 - b) not hunt moose at all in the CCGP;
 - c) have a controlled hunt
9. Should a Hunter's Code of Conduct be developed for all Nations hunting in the CCGP?
10. If you could do anything to increase the moose population in the CCGP, what would you do?
11. Are you familiar with Ancestral Teachings and our connect with Creation?
12. Do you know harvesting ceremonies and songs? If you don't, are you interested in learning?
13. Do you think a multi-day ceremony with all Nations who harvest moose in the CCGP is important to have? Would you attend?

WHAT WE HEARD

- ☼ People want their Grandchildren seven generations from now to know moose and a healthy environment.
- ☼ First Nations are ready to reclaim their rightful place as land stewards.
- ☼ Education is key
 - Provincial & Federal Governments need to start educating settler harvesters that there are Aboriginal & Treaty Rights
 - First Nations need to bring language & teachings that were previously outlawed back to their people to strengthen their relationship with the land so it will become familiar again.
- ☼ Aboriginal people may consider potential moratoriums as long as they aren't the only ones making concessions.
- ☼ Moose have little to no habitat left. Harvesting needs to be more sustainable
- ☼ Herbicide/pesticide spraying needs to be banned asap. It's poisoning the land, animals, water & people.
- ☼ A balanced approach to "give & take" is necessary from all three levels of government and resource-based industries.
- ☼ Moose harvest limits need to be reduced throughout the Province. Non-Aboriginal hunters in attendance at the Legion session suggested harvest limits have to go beyond the CCGP boundaries and there should be 5 hunters per moose tag.
- ☼ True reconciliation will take time, money and partnerships.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. As the Ministry responsible for natural resource management, the MNRF needs to continue to support the work of the WDGPI. Financial, human resource, and scientific data collection efforts must continue to be maintained and even enhanced in the long-term.
2. OMNRF should be working with First Nations on advancing the Guardianship program. The Guardian program could effectively have First Nation citizens monitoring moose habitat and populations in the CCGP. Gathering knowledge of other resource-based activities can be essential components for the Guardians. They can be the eyes and ears on the land.
3. The history of Aboriginal-non Aboriginal relations in Canada reveals both an active interference and benign neglect on the part of the provincial and federal governments. The government led marginalization that Aboriginal people experience today, stem from both historical and recent events. It's time to make things right.

A regional public education agenda needs to be developed for both Aboriginal and non-aboriginal people. While the First Nations can be partners in the development and delivery of this educational program, the funding must come from the provincial and federal government. It is imperative that all levels of society understand what should have been taught in schools and day-to-day activities:

- as the original people of this land Aboriginal people agreed to share the land and resources with the settler societies;
- what are Aboriginal and treaty rights
- what is a healthy, sustainable relationship with the land
- how can we bring the moose population back
- who needs to be involved in raising moose population numbers

4. Government policies are lax in their versions of sustainable natural resource management. When questioned about their methods of operation, all resource based industries relentlessly voice that they are within government policies and guidelines. Sustainability is an oxymoron when it's connected to provincial policies, especially those of the MNRF, Ministry of Environment & Climate Change and their policies. The NSRCF Chiefs should be encouraged by WDGPI to continue moving the political yardsticks related to developing policies that work for all life. Economics can no longer be the primary driver.

The Earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the Earth.
All things are connected, like the blood that unites us all.
Man did not weave the web of life, he is but a strand in it;
whatever he does to the web, he does to himself

INFORMATION HANDOUTS

1) CCGP Moose Recovery Strategy Development Process Summary of Discussions from a Science-Based Workshop held in Timmins, ON Dec 13 & 14, 2011

- prepared January 2012 by Colin Lachance, B.A., M.E.S, NSRCF Corporate Secretary

2) CCGP 2014 Moose Aerial Inventory Summary Report

- prepared for OMNRF December 2015 by Colin Lachance, B.A., M.E.S, NSRCF Corporate Secretary

3) Missanabie Cree First Nation Hunter's Code of Conduct

4) CCGP Moose Recovery Strategy Results from Two Community Focus Group Sessions held with the Members of Missanabie Cree First Nation – February 2016

5) Questions To Consider

6) CCGP Map for reference purposes

