

**The Autoethnography of an Ininiw from God's Lake, Manitoba, Canada:
First Nation Water Governance Flows from Sacred Indigenous Relationships,
Responsibilities and Rights to Ask**

by

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Abstract

The Ininiw of Manitou (God's) Sakahigan (Lake), now known as God's Lake First Nation (GLFN), are an Indigenous people of Turtle Island, now called North America. As a GLFN Ininiw, I tell my autoethnography, drawing on a half-century of experience, both personal and professional, as well as a literature review, government data, and fieldwork. The medicine wheel framework required that I consider the spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental aspects of GLFN's water governance. I applied another Medicine wheel teaching regarding the Indigenous learning process to analyze this data, which provided an analytical framework to systematically process the data through heart, mind, body, and spirit.

This thesis provides abundant evidence that the Ininiw of GLFN did not "cede or surrender" water governance in their traditional territory. Living in a lake environment, the GLFN Ininiw have survived, lived, thrived, and governed the aski (land and water) granted by Manitou (Creator) for thousands of years according to natural law. Through Ininiw governance, we kept God's Lake pristine. As GLFN Ininiw people's Aboriginal and treaty rights to govern over the waters of our ancestral lands were never surrendered, the GLFN Ininiw hold this governance still. I argue that natural law requires Canada and Manitoba to cede governance over aski to the GLFN Ininiw for their traditional territory.

To sustain all Creation, the Ininiw assert our sovereignty over water in our traditional territory as was granted by Manitou (Creator). This sacred pact with Manitou requires a shift in water governance to fall under First Nation self-government. This perspective requires water to be considered sacred and a health issue, rather than a technical or infrastructure issue. This reconstitution of water under the health jurisdiction will ensure safe drinking water and restore women's central role in its governance. Indigenous people hold the answers to our health. Thus, education, engineering, and health programs related to water must be Indigenous-led with adequate funding for immediate upgrades. In 2019, Health Canada data for GLFN shows that 24 homes (10%) have water storage barrels and most homes (164 or 65%) have cisterns, requiring upgrading to piped water as the water quality and quantity risks to human health are unacceptable.

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“The question of access to resources, the question of access to land, the question of governance over land is really the key... I always tell people, you know, that we shouldn’t think about ownership of land as the key, we should think of governance over land as the key and that takes it to a different kind of conversation.”

Quote of Senator Murray Sinclair
Interview by CBC Indigenous
March 25, 2018

<http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1192717891968>

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The God’s Lake First Nation (GLFN) derives its name from the English translation of Manitou (God’s) Sakahigan (Lake), upon which the Lake is located. God’s Lake is approximately 96 km long by 32 km wide or 1,151 square kilometers, making it the seventh-largest lake in Manitoba (Natural Resources Canada, 2008). The community of God’s Lake is a remote fly-in community located about 585 kilometers northeast of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. God’s Lake has an adjacent mixed Metis and non-Aboriginal community known as God’s Lake Narrows.

Our name for people at God’s Lake is “Ininiw” (Ih-ni-nihw), the root word meaning “human being,” although the Canadian government and settlers call us Cree. My first experiences in life were on God’s Lake, learning the traditional skills of hunting, fishing, trapping, and growing up in the communities of God’s River as a boy and God’s Lake Narrows in my teenage years. In my later teenage years, I left to pursue an advanced academic and work life. This doctoral dissertation reflects upon my life journey while examining water issues and water governance at GLFN and my role in water governance.

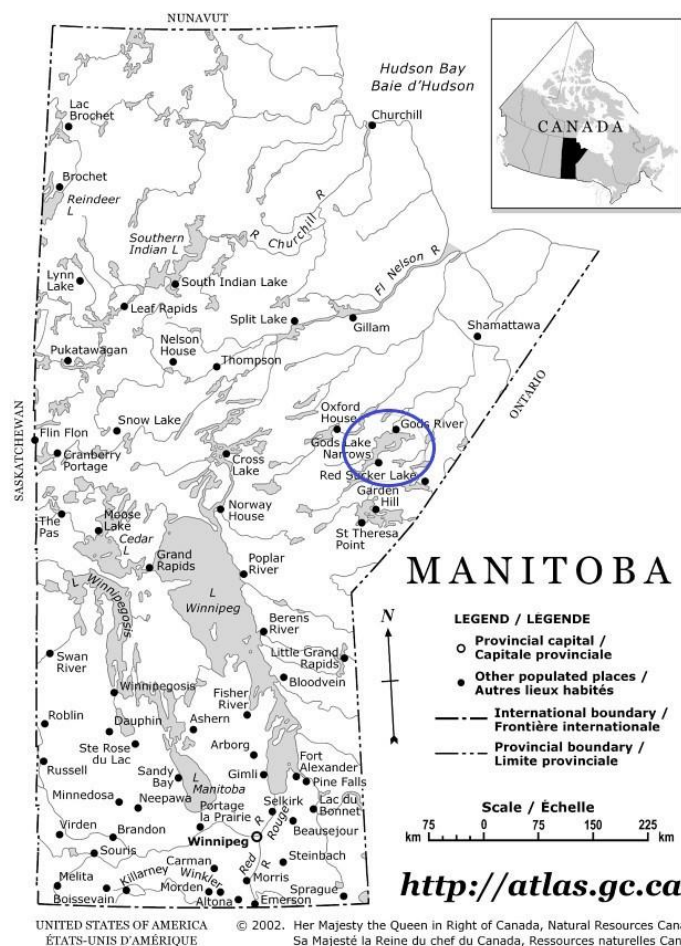
God's Lake First Nation (GLFN) has a total registered population of 2,455 people, of which 1,420 members live on reserve (AANDC, 2018). The First Nation is a signatory to the Adhesion to Treaty Five that established the main reserve of roughly 9,132 acres at God's Lake Narrows. As well, the First Nation has an outstanding treaty land entitlement from the provisions of the Treaty, only a portion of which has been fulfilled to date (AANDC, 2018). The God's Lake registered trapline block (RTB) comprises approximately 15,700 square kilometers shared with Manto Sipi Cree Nation people. The area is accessible by air year-round and by winter road, typically for three months of each year from January to March. A Chief governs the GLFN with six Council members who are elected under the Indian Act every two years (AANDC, 2018).

Living in this lake environment, the Ininiw of GLFN have a historical and continued reliance upon God's Lake for its economic, social, and cultural well-being and identity (God's Lake Elders, personal communication; Turner, 2017). Historically, God's Lake provided the resources necessary for the survival of the people, with God's Lake continuing to play a vital role in community development now and in the future (McGregor, 2004). The cultural identity, worldview, and health of my Ininiw people are tied to God's Lake's vibrancy, in terms of its resources and health of its water. The water provides the life force upon which the fish, wildlife, wildfowl, plants, trees, and all other lifeforms depend to exist and flourish. The health of this land and water ecosystem provides the resources for the people. Figure 1.1 shows the location of the GLFN in the northeast corner of the province near the Manitoba Ontario border.

The Ininiw of GLFN use God's Lake as their drinking water source after its treatment at a tertiary level water treatment plant. The water sometimes experiences drinking water quality advisories (AANDC, 2018; Health Canada, 2017). A few decades ago, in the 1990s, the Ininiw of GLFN were still hauling their drinking water from the lake in buckets and for their sewage using

pails and outhouses. After the twenty-first century, GLFN equipped households with running water and sewage systems, either by pipe or cisterns. I grew up in GLFN in a house without running water to drink, cook, wash, and clean, and without a sewage system and so I have firsthand knowledge of these conditions for water services. Today, GLFN has piped water and sewer services to parts of its community, and a cistern storage system for various parts of the community for water and sewage needs. However, some houses, due to a breakdown in the cistern system, use buckets.

Figure 1.1: The location of God's Lake, Manitoba home of God's Lake First Nation God's Lake Narrows.



The Ininiw of GLFN depend on God's Lake for drinking water supply and many "traditional" activities. The Ininiw continue to hunt, fish, trap, and participate in many other traditional and modern activities. The Ininiw relationship to God's Lake and the natural environment have formal legal aspects in their Aboriginal and Treaty rights for their territory (Morellato, 2008). These Aboriginal and Treaty rights are reviewed in this dissertation, including the Canadian Constitution, treaties, the Indian Act, and the First Nations on-going relationship with Canada.

The GLFN's relationship to God's Lake and the natural environment forms the blueprint for their Indigenous knowledge, which I refer to as Traditional Knowledge (TK). Traditional knowledge is:

Knowledge, innovation, practices, and cultural expressions of Indigenous Peoples and local communities which are often shared and are intrinsically linked to traditional territories and natural resources, including the diversity of genes, varieties, species and ecosystems, cultural and spiritual values and customary laws originated within the socio-ecologic context of these communities (IIED / Call of the Earth, 2005).

I have been interested in my people, the Ininiw, and Indigenous people in general, TK about their natural environment and have studied its many facets throughout my life and career. The TK documentation towards a land-use plan for its territory documents many uses of water.

I explore the relationship between the people of GLFN and water through an "autoethnographic" approach (Chang, 2008). The Indigenous knowledge challenges the superiority of objective Western Science to see all knowledge as relational. According to Chang (2006), autoethnography mixes ethnography, cultural analysis, and autobiography:

Autoethnography is an ethnographic inquiry that utilizes the autobiographic materials of the researcher as the primary data. Differing from other self-narrative writings such as autobiography and memoir, autoethnography emphasizes cultural analysis and interpretation of the researcher's behaviors, thoughts, and experiences in relation to others in society. Autoethnography should be ethnographical in its methodological orientation,

cultural in its interpretive orientation, and autobiographical in its content orientation.

In this dissertation, I cite literature and facts with my experiences and reflections to bring in the broader context and policy analysis regarding First Nation water issues and solutions. While I focus upon water in this dissertation, our Indigenous worldview is best summed up by “Aski,” which is an Ininiw word that means earth inclusive of the land, water, air, and everything on the planet. As a fluent Ininiw speaker, I was able to interpret Ininiw words. Additionally, I sought confirmation from two Elders in my community about the meaning of Aski, policy, and our worldview.

This dissertation's premise is that the Ininiw people of GLFN never gave up their right to govern over the lands and waters of their traditional territory, consistent with the statement of Senator Murray Sinclair quoted above. Besides, many academics researching the numbered Treaties, one through seven, concur that First Nations never surrendered the land (Krasowski, 2019). In this context, the Ininiw of GLFN that occupy and use their traditional territory now, as the Ininiw have done for thousands of years, need to implement governance structures to safeguard its land and water.

1.2 Thesis statement, research question, and objectives

My career has spanned 30 years to date in the field of natural resource and environmental researcher. My first position was with a First Nations organization in northern Manitoba known as the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), or the Manitoba northern Chiefs organization. In that position, I became aware of the 1987 Brundtland Commission report, *Our Common Future* (WCED, 1987), that discusses the need to recognize traditional rights of Indigenous people and to give them decision-making power in natural resource policies in their territory:

Tribal and indigenous peoples will need special attention as the forces of economic development disrupt their traditional life-style — life-style that can offer modern societies

many lessons in the management of resources in complex forest, mountain, and dryland ecosystems. Some are threatened with virtual extinction by insensitive development over which they have no control. Their traditional rights should be recognized and they should be given a decisive voice in formulating policies about resource development in their area (WCED, 1987, p. 27).

Our Common Future further discusses the importance of traditional knowledge to manage complex ecological systems without destroying them:

These communities are the repositories of vast accumulations of traditional knowledge and experience that links humanity with its ancient origins. Their disappearance is a loss for the larger society, which could learn a great deal from their traditional skills in sustainably managing very complex ecological systems. It is a terrible irony that as formal development reaches more deeply into rain forests, deserts, and other isolated environments, it tends to destroy the only cultures that have proved able to thrive in these environments (WCED, 1987, p. 119).

This report planted a seed for my interest in traditional knowledge and Ininiw people's rights for self-determination early in my career, and this interest continues to this day. This dissertation argues that our people of the GLFN retained their rights to govern over traditional territory's waters from historical times to the present and into the future. As the Brundtland report stated back in 1987, Indigenous peoples' traditional rights should be recognized in GLFN governance over water to formulate policies about resource development in their areas. Saddled with a colonial legacy of poverty and underdevelopment, communities increasingly demand control over their affairs by increasing capacity and community development (White, Murphy & Spence, 2012). Implementing the inherent rights of First Nations to determine their destiny I view as necessary concerning their people, lands, and waters. I returned to MKO to work on these and other environmental issues in 2018, seeing Ininiw governance's recognition as my life's work. In the context of Aski, my thesis statement for this dissertation is:

- God's Lake First Nation always retained its governance over water.

And my research question for this dissertation is:

- How does God's Lake First Nation retain its governance over water to this day?

Further, my thesis objectives are to:

1. Combine the autoethnographic method and the circular frame of Indigenous thought process to articulate and document the governance of water by the God's Lake First Nation (GLFN) based on my personal experience, living as a GLFN member but also an environmental policy analyst for Manitoba's Ininiw;
2. Describe and interpret the history of water systems in God's Lake First Nation and its connection to First Nation water governance and policy; and
3. Articulate the Ininiw worldview and the existing uses of water, lands, and other resources within the God's Lake Registered Trapline Block (RTB) to demonstrate governance over water.

"Governance" needs to embody the Ininiw relationship to water and stewardship, as experienced and lived by the GLFN members. Water intimately impacts our Ininiw health and spirituality, requiring stewarding, regulating, and managing water by the Ininiw. This relationship contrasts with the federal or provincial government management of water. Governance, through an Ininiw perspective, requires considering the meaning, spiritual significance, voice, decision-making, power, and accounting system for water in GLFN presently and what is needed in the future for healthy, sustainable water systems. Governance is multidimensional and considers not only how but who makes decisions, according to this definition:

Governance is how society or groups within it, organize to make decisions.
Governance determines who has power, who makes decisions, how other players
make their voice heard and how account is rendered (IOG, 2020).

God's Lake First Nations' people as Indigenous Peoples governed their affairs and lives, on a foundation of equality, according to natural law and customary law. An Ojibway-Cree lawyer

differentiated natural laws, which are the laws set out by Manitou (Creator or God), with customary laws created by human beings, including federal and provincial laws and Ininiw approaches. At a funeral long ago, I heard one of my Elders explain in our Ininiw language about two types of laws on this earth: the laws we have in our “minds” and the laws we make for ourselves as people. I interpret this by connecting with the teachings by the Ojibway-Cree lawyer and Elder who explained the difference between natural and customary laws. The law of the “mind” is our conscience, which the natural laws set out for us by our Manitou (Creator). The people's customary laws are the way we govern ourselves as people that includes the laws of Canada and Manitoba at this point.

As part of Indigenous culture, the Ininiw lived in small family groupings on their family hunting area until half a century ago and strove for an egalitarian, communal society to achieve Pimatisiwin (Settee, 2013). Today GLFN Ininiw live within the reserve boundaries, as was required by the Indian Act, and have elections of chief and council, according to the Indian Act (Palmater, 2015). However, the Ininiw of GLFN require a unique type of governance different from that of the Federal or provincial government. And according to s. 35 of Canada's Constitution, this way of governance by the Ininiw of GLFN has to be “recognized and affirmed” (Government of Canada, 1982). The issue of Indigenous governance will be examined further in the Literature Review and Findings chapters.

1.3 Scope

This research examines water governance by the GLFN peoples by exploring their relationship to water over time into the future. In my past work with my community on land use planning from 2007 to 2014, I worked at the community level, as an insider (emic) using the Registered Trapline Block (RTB), as the boundary for GLFN, rather than the typical outsider (etic)

doing this work. This dissertation on the Inniw's relationship to water and water governance has the same scope of this RTB boundaries, and the same emic approach. Both drinking water supply is considered and traditional pursuits, spirituality, and recreation, all of which continue today. The Ininiw actively use the entire GLFN territory, although the way Aski use the land has changed over time. Planning for the future considers the projected impact of building an all-season road and the imposition of gold, tungsten, and silver mining projects in the future.

In the 1940s, the Province required God's Lake Band, the name of GLFN at that time, to establish RTB boundaries to maximize fur harvest production (Province of Manitoba, 2017). God's Lake Elders determined the RTB boundaries in conjunction with trappers and Elders of the nearby communities at Oxford House to the west, Island Lake to the south, and Shamattawa to the northeast (Oral History, God's Lake First Nation). The God's Lake Band would subsequently split to form two communities: the parent Band at God's Lake Narrows at the southern end of God's Lake and one at the mouth of the God's River on the north shore (Manto Sipi Cree Nation).

God's Lake First Nation asserts that the God's Lake RTB does not represent its traditional territory, which is much larger. Other lands outside the RTB include: traditional use of Ontario lands known as "Wasatin," the shared traditional territory uses of GLFN, which overlaps with uses by the Bunibonibee Cree Nation to the west, Island Lake and Red Sucker Lake to the south and southeast, as well as Shamattawa First Nation to the northeast. The God's Lake RTB boundary does not conform to the God's Lake watershed boundary. For this dissertation's purposes, the RTB of the God's Lake is applied for political expediency and clarity, and to minimize conflict, despite this not being an accurate boundary of traditional activities. Currently, the RTB boundaries are between First Nation communities for Canadian colonial formal processes and examinations but not in determining ancestral territorial and traditional land use boundaries.

1.4 Theoretical framework and conceptual components

Theoretical and conceptual frameworks are two similar concepts but differ in their roles in the research inquiry (Adom, Hussein, and Agyem, 2018). A theoretical framework is the “blueprint” or guidance for research (Grant and Osanloo, 2014). An Indigenous theoretical research framework is explained by Lavallee (2009, p. 36) as an epistemology with the power to decolonize the academy, stating:

The most important lesson learned from my experience of working from an Indigenous research framework within the academy was how the “rules” of the academy and of research do not always allow an Indigenous research framework to flourish... Indigenous research is decolonizing research. As such, it is important that Indigenous ways of knowing how to resist being categorized under Western concepts, including qualitative inquiry. Indigenous research is not qualitative inquiry; however, the methods used may be qualitative. Indigenous approaches or research frameworks encompass far more than just methods. An Indigenous approach is an epistemology...The application of a research framework in the academy is an important theoretical contribution and provides a different way of knowing, one that endeavors to decolonize the academy.

The theoretical framework I apply in this dissertation is a circular Medicine Wheel with its spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental components. The circular Medicine Wheel forms the theoretical framework based on my findings presented according to these components in the findings chapter. My Medicine Wheel may vary slightly from other presentations as diverse Indigenous peoples express the Medicine Wheel different (Wenger-Nabigon, 2010). Researchers base their theoretical, conceptual, and analytical frameworks upon its circular frame to analyze and present different topics and expressions (Montour, 2000; Graham, Stamler, 2010).

I rely upon my understanding of the Medicine Wheel frame to present my findings, which an Ininiw spiritual man taught me, which is as follows. The circle in the Medicine Wheel represents the cyclical nature of life and the processes of the earth. In this Medicine Wheel, the four directions cycle in a clockwise fashion from east to south to west and then north. In the eastern quadrant is the spiritual component of all life. In human terms, the baby represents the spirit, as a person is

born into this world possessing a spirit as their life journey begins. As well, a new day starts with the sun's rising in the east. Moving clockwise, as the person grows from a baby to a child, a period of rapid physical growth begins, and so the physical aspect of human life is represented by the southern quadrant. Then in the western quadrant, in adulthood, the complexities of emotional development are experienced for a person to learn to manage emotions in a healthy way. Thus, the emotional aspects of human life are associated with the western quadrant. After journeying through the cycle of life, the adult becomes an Elder, after gaining wisdom. Thus, the mental aspect of the human is represented by the northern quadrant. Throughout a person's life cycle, a person journeys with the Creator at the center of their life, and so the Creator is depicted at the center of the circle. A Medicine Wheel that shows its foundations is illustrated in Figure 1.2.

A conceptual framework is a structure the researcher presents to explain how the research issue is explored or studied (Agom, Hussein, and Agyem, 2018). As my focus of this research is water governance in my community and territory, I apply my life's journey in the medicine wheel's theoretical framework to water governance. I tell my own story of research and community life using autoethnography as a method. Autoethnography aligns well with First Nations people's values because this method values personal experience, relationships, and oral storytelling. This qualitative research required that I engage in self-reflection to explore my personal, research experience, and political knowledge to connect my autobiographical story to cultural, political, and social meanings at both the community level and the broader territorial and Indigenous nation level. Autoethnography allows me to tell my story using qualitative and quantitative methods within my Ininiw worldview. Graham and Stamler (2010) note the importance of Indigenous approaches for respectful research: "the recent emergence and growing acceptance of Indigenous paradigms and methodologies to facilitate research and increasing commitment to engage in

collaborative and respectful research with Indigenous Peoples.” Thus, there are encouraging signs of the acceptance and inclusion of Indigenous worldviews and paradigms into the academy.

Figure 1.2: Medicine Wheel depicting the four directions in quadrants with the center as the place of Manitou (Creator).



I am Ininiw and speak my language fluently and know my culture. To some extent, I have lived the traditional aspects of our traditional lifestyle in my early years, undertaking hunting,

fishing, trapping, and other traditional pursuits with my family. As well, in my later life, I was enlightened to the spiritual beliefs of my people. I have also sought additional perspectives by studying, documenting, and researching Indigenous knowledge systems developed concerning the natural world and comparing Indigenous knowledge with western science. I have also compared Indigenous versus Canadian and provincial governmental management policies on natural resources and the environment.

I view that any examination of the relationship between the GLFN and water, considering its governance implications, must begin with the people's history. To document this history, which spans over thousands of years, requires relying on existing literature and oral stories. Indigenous oral history is considered as academic as written history. Until recently, the people living on God's Lake First Nation reserve find themselves living with a water treatment system that does not always deliver safe drinking water, resulting in boil water advisories. As well, a piped water system to some homes but trucked hauling of water and sewage to many other households in the community (INAC, 2018). How were these unhealthy conditions permitted for long periods? Going forward into the future, how can the unhealthy water delivery system be rectified to be healthy? My view is that the water problems result from a governance issue. Thus, to rectify the GLFN's governance jurisdiction over water and properly empower and resource the community to develop and operate its water system.

The governance implications of GLFN occur at many levels, including the community level and the territorial level, as Ininiw continues to use the land for traditional pursuits to this day actively. The nature and large extent of present-day use of traditional lands are documented by my personal experiences and research with my community. This territorial aspect of water governance is essential. As conveyed to me by my Elders, Aski continues to be a vital part of our community

and identity. Elders noted that the land provided life for past generations to get us to this point in our lives and take us into the future. Elders conveyed that Aski continues to be a vital part of our community and identity. As the land provided life for past generations to get us to this point in our lives, the earth provides for the Ininiw into the future.

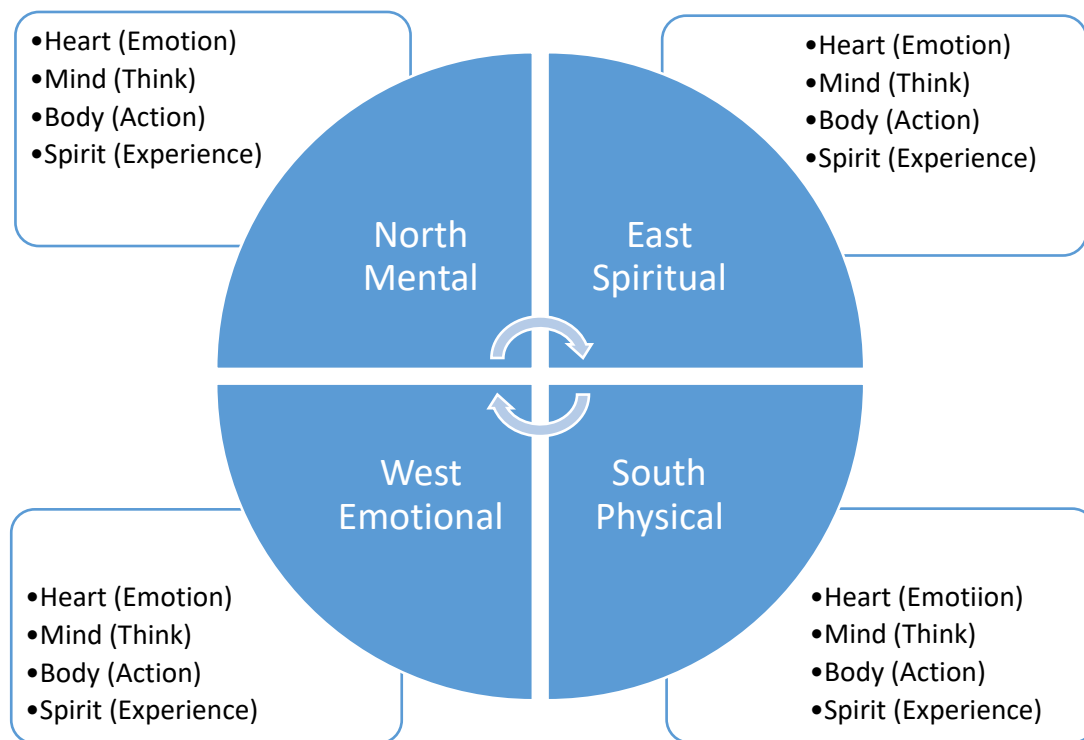
A conceptual framework is a structure the researcher presents to explain how the research issue is explored or studied (Agom, Hussein and Agyem, 2018). As my focus of this research is water governance in my community and territory, I have decided to tell my own story of research and community life using autoethnography as a method. This method aligns well with First Nations people because it values personal experience, relationships, and oral storytelling. This qualitative research required that I engage in self-reflection to explore my personal, research experience, and political knowledge to connect my autobiographical story to cultural, political, and social meanings at both the community and the broader territorial level.

Autoethnography allows my story to be told using qualitative and quantitative methods, applying my Ininiw worldview. Graham and Stamler (2010) tell how Indigenous methods are gaining acceptance, which will result in a better research process and outcomes: “The recent emergence and growing acceptance of Indigenous paradigms and methodologies to facilitate research and increasing commitment to engage in collaborative and respectful research with Indigenous Peoples.” Acceptance of Indigenous methods is an encouraging sign of progress towards the acceptance and inclusion of Indigenous worldviews and paradigms in the academy.

The method utilized in this dissertation is the autoethnography method. However, autoethnography method is applied using the Indigenous teaching of how people learn. We learn through an orderly process that starts with the: heart (emotion), then the mind (think), body (action), and spirit (understanding) (Wanbdi Wakati, personal communication). The findings are

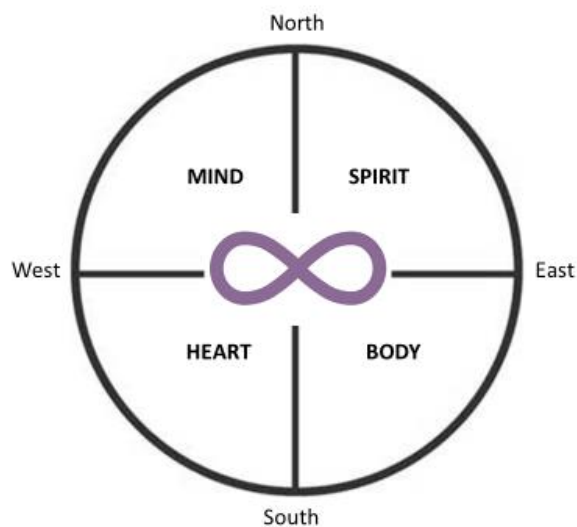
organized within the Medicine Wheel quadrants, I process the findings according to this order for learning - heart, mind, body, and spirit - within each quadrant. This order signifies how we process and express our understanding of the issues and problems we encounter in life. First, we feel an emotion, and then we think of that emotion, and we act with our body on those thoughts. Finally, we reflect and understand that issue or problem we face in our spirit (Wanbdi Wakati, personal communication). Figure 1.3 depicts this learning process in each of the quadrants of a medicine wheel.

Figure 1.3: The order of heart, mind, body, and spirit depicted in relation to the Medicine Wheel components of spirit, physical, emotional, and mental.



In Figure 1.4, I trace the order of heart, mind, body, and spirit in the medicine wheel, as had been taught to me. That this tracing formed an “infinity” symbol within the circle, as depicted in Figure 1.4, is highly symbolic of the Ininiw ways and governance.

Figure 1.4: The order of heart, mind, body, and spirit depicted in the medicine wheel resulting in the infinity symbol within the circle.



1.5 Dissertation organization

This dissertation is organized into the following chapters: introduction, literature review, methods, findings, discussion, and conclusions. The relationships between the GLFN and water with governance are the threads that unite these chapters.

Chapter 2 : Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Poor water quality disproportionately affects First Nations and is a serious and ongoing problem in Canada (Arsenault, et. al., 2018). My research into water at GLFN required I research many areas to inform my objectives, methods, analysis, and, finally, conclusions. I reviewed the literature on First Nation water issues in Canada, including water governance and health, to analyze these issues to see God's Lake water issues as part of a larger picture. I also looked at Indigenous knowledge systems, including Indigenous worldview, and Indigenous history from pre-colonial to the present colonial system, to inform my findings and conclusion. I describe environmental justice literature to consider the dysfunction of Canada in its relationship with Indigenous Peoples. Regarding autoethnography, I considered the literature aspect of this dissertation in the methods chapter.

2.1.1 Ininiw Water Governance Power as a Creator-given Right

Ininiw rights to govern the waters of their traditional territory or ancestral area is supported by the literature on spiritual law, natural law, and the treaties. This section will first explain natural law and spiritual law. Deborah McGregor (2014) describes natural law as emanating from the connection with the creator, along with the past, present, and future creations:

The Indigenous connection to the Creator, which in turn defines their connection to all creation extending to the earth, the plants, the animals, and all people on earth including our ancestors and those yet-to-be-born generations. It is these relationships with each other, with creation, and with the Creator that gives rise to natural law.

Further, Aimee Craft (2013, p. 44) discusses how natural law focuses on the tangible aspects of life, but spiritual law is the intangible sacred aspects of interactions, which include relationships and responsibilities:

Laws govern interactions between beings. In Anishinaabe law, we expand our understanding of “beings” to include life forms such as animals, plants, rocks, in other words anything that has a spirit. Spirits are considered to be beings with whom we interact. Anishinaabe law considers the interactions between and within these beings and understands them to be governed by spiritual, natural and customary laws. Sacred law is the law that is handed down to us by the spirit. Natural law is dictated by what we observe in nature and that “behaviour” which we model ourselves by.

Similarly, Craft (2013, p.8) explains how rights, obligations, and responsibilities are a part of relationships:

Anishinaabe way of life is centered on relationships, and responsibilities are associated with each of those relationships. These relationships give rise to rights, obligations and responsibilities. Rights, obligations and responsibilities are exercised both individually and collectively by the Anishinaabe.

Natural and spiritual laws convey responsibilities to the Ininiw over water, as Arsenault et. al. (2018) conclude:

The responsibility and accountability that Indigenous peoples have to water is the reason why Indigenous peoples require their own jurisdiction over water in their communities, and why they should be included in water policy decisions with other governments.

Indeed, others have drawn and asserted that same conclusion, such as the Mushkegowuk (James Bay Cree), who note that we are responsible for caring for the water as Indigenous people. That the Ininiw are only custodians of the earth tasked with maintaining the planet's original condition as bequested from our forbearers for our future generations (Chiefs of Ontario, 2007).

The right to govern the water (and land) is a responsibility granted to the Ininiw by the Creator. Kraosowki's (2019), in his book called *No Surrender: The Land Remains Indigenous*, explains that they agreed to share the land, not surrender it:

By analyzing Treaties One through Seven as an interconnected whole, and arguing against the misunderstanding thesis, I demonstrate that Indigenous Peoples did not surrender their land through the treaty process. Indigenous Chiefs agreed to share their land with settlers in exchange for treaty benefits offered by the Canadian government, including annuity payments, reserved lands, education, and assistance with transition to agriculture. But they certainly **did not** surrender the land. It was to **remain Indigenous** (p. 2). [emphasis mine]

The statements made by the Chiefs and Elders during treaty were not recorded in most cases, but oral history gives a very different perspective and understanding of what was agreed to during the treaty. An example in the case of Treaty Three, as noted by Krasowski (2019, p. 95), is where treaty discussions recorded the Indigenous view:

According to Neogezhik, the “Elder drew a circle on the ground and drew a line across...only half the circle be (shared) and that half be used for people who would be living in time forward” ...The “circle on the ground” represented the Sweat Lodge, which Anishinaabe Elder Alex Skead explains “is a sacred circle itself.” ... Describing the sharing of the land with the metaphor of the Sweat Lodge emphasized the relationship among Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Lands, and the Creator... The circle symbolized the oneness of First Nations people with the Creator and the spiritual, social and political institutions of the First Nations.

Thus, an Elder present at the time of the Treaty Three negotiations made clear that the Indigenous understanding of the treaty was that land would be shared. Only half of the land was to be shared with settlers, with some of that retained for Indigenous people. Then the other half was to remain entirely Indigenous for “people who would be living in time forward.” If one were to draw this understanding of the Elder’ Treaty Three terms, as a “pie chart” as I have done to understand this logic, then that Treaty only agreed to share a quarter of the total land base with settlers. Then, another quarter was to be provided for present-day Indigenous people, while the other half was to remain Indigenous for future use and occupation.

Aimee Craft (2013) questions the validity of the treaties' interpretation based on its one-sided perspective by the Crown, without assessing both the parties, Crown and Anishinaabe. The interpretation of the treaty by the Anishinaabe people has not been considered to any degree but needs to be fully explored in depth. Craft also quotes John Long (2010, p. 352) in his analysis of Treaty 9 as stating:

Aboriginal title and Indigenous rights were not knowingly ceded, released, surrendered, or yielded up by the Ojibwe and Cree. Indigenous people agreed to accept presents that to

them signified a renewal of their commitment to the fur trade's middle ground of compromise and co-existence.

Craft (2013) notes that Chiefs were often hesitant to join the treaty relationship because many treaty terms were not clear to them. With such ambiguity around a common language, other interpretations of the treaty by the Indigenous people need to be considered, as opposed to that only of the Crown, especially regarding land.

In their publication of essays regarding the *Tsilhqot'in* decision, First Peoples Law (2014, p. 11) note the decision does have applications and repercussions for the numbered treaties in Canada when they state the following:

Tsilhqot'in is also vitally important for Indigenous people with one of the numbered treaties negotiated in Ontario, the prairies, British Columbia and the north since Confederation... For generations successive provincial and federal governments have proceeded on the assumption that through these treaties Indigenous people ceded, released and surrendered their Aboriginal title to so-called Crown lands. In contrast, Treaty people have widely maintained that their ancestors did nothing of the kind. The numbered treaties for them are about establishing respectful, mutually beneficial relationships. The Supreme Court's endorsement of a liberal test for Aboriginal title encompassing territorial claims based on traditional Indigenous practices will embolden Treaty people to repudiate the language of 'cede, release and surrender' while they assert Aboriginal title over their ancestral lands.

Canada and the provinces' assertions of title over the nation's land are not entirely credible. Court decisions, such as *Tsilhqot'in*, call into question the validity of the Crown's assertion of title over Canada's lands. Vital to GLFN assertion of governance over water is that our people are signatory to the Adhesion to Treaty Five 1909, without releasing governance over water or land.

2.1.2 First Nation's Water Governance

This literature establishes that First Nations, including the Ininiw of GLFN, have a relationship and oneness with the Creator of all the lands and territories they use (Chiefs of Ontario, 2007; Craft, 2013; McGregor, 2014; Palmater, 2015; Krasowski, 2019). Also, First Nations have

Creator-given rights and responsibilities according to the Natural Law over their territory. Based on the Creator's law, GLFN has governance over water. However, what will it take for this to be recognized, accepted, and implemented under Canada's colonial government? Or do First Nations simply assert their Creator-given responsibility to the governance of water? Both options might be valid – assertion of GLFN water rights and responsibilities with the expectation that Canada will recognize this.

This relationship and oneness with the Creator of First Nations, providing rights and responsibilities to Aski, was not considered in Treaty implementation in Canada. The Crown's unilateral interpretation of the treaty terms misinterprets the treaty and water governance (Craft, 2013). Does the interpretation of the treaties consider that Aski is a living being and that Indigenous people are part of it? If the land was not considered to be alive and spiritual in the treaty, the treaty's interpretation is biased toward the Crown and disregards First Nation people's world view.

Canada's formed as a colonial empire with the passing of the Constitution Act, 1867. The Constitution Act, 1867, in Section 24 gave exclusive federal jurisdiction over "Indians, and Lands reserved for Indians". Through the Indian Act, the Crown enforced First Nation settlement on tiny reserves, confining First Nations to a small area, which created contamination risks for drinking water from others. These reserves that became forced settlement areas in GLFN and other remote communities were without safe water systems for almost a century after treaty. Safe drinking water systems are required when people live in close proximity, due to sewage and other contamination of water. When water systems were finally implemented in remote northern Manitoba First Nations, which in GLFN was in the twenty-first century, these were substandard and unsafe water systems relying heavily on the truck-to-cistern delivery system.

First Nations have a constitutional right to water under section 7 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* if one considers water is a fundamental human right. All humans are entitled to safe, quality drinking water in sufficient quantities to survive and well-being (United Nations, 2015). Harnum (2010, p. 314) states: “although there is no free-standing constitutional right to water in Canada, Aboriginal people living on reserves in Canada, who do not have access to suitable and safe water, may have a claim under the Charter due to the constitutional protections of life, liberty, and security of the person.” Frohlich et al. (2006) relate health inequities to unequal water and other resources, “Health disparities manifest from a long history of oppression and are inextricably linked to unequal access to resources, including education and training, as well as limited access to and control over lands and resources, including water.”

In Canada, s. 36(1) of the Constitution affirms the role of government in equity, economic development, and providing public services, stating: “Parliament and the legislatures, together with the government of Canada and the provincial governments, are committed to (a) promoting equal opportunities for the well-being of Canadians; (b) furthering economic development to reduce disparity in opportunities; and (c) providing essential public services of reasonable quality to all Canadians” (s. 36 (1) *Constitution Act, 1982*). In terms of water services at GLFN, water services within the community appear not to meet the constitutional obligation to provide public services that meet basic needs for quality of life to all Canadians and remove barriers to equal opportunity while creating economic development.

Canada's constitution does not differentiate water as a distinct jurisdiction, although resources and land are recognized as distinct jurisdictions (Walkem et al., 2004). Thus, no specific government body is in the position to take all the responsibility for water (Walkem et al., 2004),

in contrast to resources and land. The provinces were given property rights, within their provincial boundaries, over lands and resources under the Constitution Act in 1867:

All lands, Mines and Minerals and Royalties ... shall belong to the several provinces ... in which the same are situate or arise, subject to any Trust existing in respect thereof, and to any interest other than that of the Province in the same (Constitution Act, 1867, sec. 109).

Water typically falls under the natural resource management or land management schemes, under provincial jurisdiction, except fisheries and their habitat (Thompson, 2015). Provinces do not own national parks, First Nation reserve lands, and lands of national concern. As a result, First Nations reserves fall under federal jurisdiction.

Where First Nations did not confer Aboriginal title through treaties or self-government for land, the courts recognize First Nations land rights. The case of *Delgamuukw v. B.C.* had Aboriginal title for land rights defined by the courts to include oil, gas rights, and minerals, in addition to the right for the First Nation to determine its land-use (Walkem et al. 2004). Aboriginal title results from the First Nation's historic relationship with water in their used and occupied land. Aboriginal title includes water rights as recognized in 1973 by Justice Hall in *Calder v. Attorney General of British Columbia*, stating: "a right to occupy the lands and to enjoy the fruits of the soil, the forest and of the rivers and streams" (cited in Walkem et al. 2004, p. 6-6). Clearly, water is considered to be embedded in land rights by the courts for Aboriginal title. As historic Aboriginal land rights, water rights, and livelihoods existed before colonization, these rights still exist after colonial rule except when a treaty limits rights or rights have been properly or when terminated through the replacement of livelihoods that their land and water provided:

In so far as an Aboriginal people under internal law or custom had used the land and its waters in the past, so it must be regarded as having the continuing right to use them, absent extinguishment or treaty ... The fundamental understanding -the Grundnorm of settlement in Canada-was that the Aboriginal people could only be deprived of the sustenance they traditionally drew from the land and adjacent waters by solemn treaty with the Crown, on terms that would ensure to them and to their successors a replacement for the livelihood

that their lands, forests and streams had since ancestral times provided them (cited in Phare, 2009, p. 4).

During the Constitution repatriation from Britain to Canada, Aboriginal peoples successfully lobbied for Aboriginal and Treaty Rights to be recognized in the 1982 Constitution Act, sec. 35. Section 35 states that: "The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed" (cited in Walkem et al. 2004, p. 6-4).

Recognizing Aboriginal Rights and Treaty Rights in the Canadian constitution gives the courts the power to limit any act by the government to affect or infringe upon water and land rights protected. Section 35 covers the right to fish or hunt and other activities. It also covers site-specific rights (e.g., rights to fish at a particular location) and Aboriginal title. Canadian law distinguishes between an Aboriginal title that gives land rights as opposed to rights to fish, hunting, or some other activity (Thompson, 2015). The spectrum of Aboriginal rights defined by the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) include Aboriginal title, site-specific and activity-based rights.

The test for infringement of those rights is the "Sparrow test," or the R. vs. Sparrow case. This Sparrow test is basically the following four questions:

- 1) Did the Aboriginal plaintiffs prove Aboriginal title or rights exist?
- 2) Was the right or title terminated before 1982?
- 3) Was the Aboriginal plaintiffs' rights or titles infringed? and
- 4) Is the government able to justify its case? (cited in Walkem et al. 2004, p. 6-5).

Water rights confer water usage to support a decent living for First Nation community members, whether for domestic use, irrigation, manufacturing, damming, or industrial use (Thompson, 2015; Walkem et al. 2004). While Sec. 35 (1) in the SCC recognizes and protects treaty and Aboriginal rights, First Nations, under Canadian law, have to prove "the distinctive culture test" to show an activity that occurred and was important to the culture before European

contact. Regarding First Nations' water use, uses considered culturally important include traditional food activities (gathering medicines, hunting, fishing, etc.), domestic purposes, routes for travel, water ceremonies, and protection of habitat (Thompson, 2015; Walkem et al. 2004). The right to preserve First Nation cultures (whether traditional or contemporary) and reside in their traditional land requires a right to earn a moderate income from water and land resources. Also, Aboriginal rights include a right and requirement to be consulted on development affecting their treaty rights.

2.2 Aboriginal water rights and management

While the surrendering of ancestral land is questionable from different legal perspectives, the governance, use, and management over *aski* was not (Phare, 2009; Thompson, 2015; Walkem et al., 2004). This governance power without use by Indigenous people is under the federal government's exclusive jurisdiction over numerous services, activities, even in provincial lands and waters where those same Indigenous people lack resource rights. Evidence strongly asserts that either exclusive or shared First Nation's governance over the land was envisioned to uphold the sacred trust to Indigenous people by the Creator to manage their territory, for which ceding is impossible (Phare 2009; Thompson, 2015; Walkem et al. 2004).

Treaty references to water are minimal, except where specific rivers and lakes are referenced to identify reserves' borders (Thompson, 2015). But, without any extinguishment or surrender mentioned, water is still governed and owned by First Nations (Phare, 2009). As the Crown was cognizant of water and waterpower's value and failed to reference water directly, the treaties support that First Nations never relinquished water rights (Thompson, 2015). For example, according to an analysis from 1970 of ceded lands and waters in Treaty 3, First Nations rights to govern include, if desired, the following:

- limit public access to water routes and waters
- curtail non-Indigenous hunting of waterfowl and fishing;
- limit, within the headwater, the public access and use of islands;
- cancel or inhibit industries and manufacturers' use of water;
- curb fisheries impacts;
- inhibit creating hydro-electric power or creating First Nation-owned and managed hydropower;
- participate in mining activities, that may create pollution to water;
- construct dams (which could fluctuate water levels)" (cited in Phare, 2009, p. 12).

2.2.1 First Nations water issues in Canada

The relationship between Canada and Indigenous people had problems and dysfunction from the very beginning, which is continued to the present day by the Indian Act (Ballard, 2012). This dysfunctional relationship manifests itself in many ways, including the poor quality of water services on First Nations reserves. The colonial rule by the Federal government over First Nations results in inferior water services on Reserves compared to the rest of Canada.

A review of the recent history of water contamination in Canada shows the neglect of First Nations water systems despite public inquiries causing change in non-First Nation water systems. Drinking water contamination in Canada occurred in Walkerton's rural non-First Nations communities in Ontario in May 2000. Seven people died from unsafe drinking water there, due to largely having untrained people. North Battleford contamination in Saskatchewan occurred in 2001. These incidents were followed by public inquiries, capacity-building, source water protection policies/programs, and technology investment. This preventative action resulted in

water security for settler communities in Canada, while unsafe drinking water remains unresolved in First Nation communities. The high number of water-borne infections arising on First Nation reserves are so many more times that of the average for other Canadians, at 26 times the rate (Eggerton, 2006).

Phare (2009) advocates for First Nations water solutions as opposed to managing the problem. The solution requires working closely with Indigenous people in Canada to articulate a new water ethic that combines Indigenous and non-Indigenous sustainable elements (Phare, 2009). But what does a new water ethic and regime look like? What mechanisms would be available to Canada to adopt a new water ethic?

The solutions were examined in 2006 following the Walkerton, Ontario tragedy, by the “Expert Panel on Safe Drinking Water for First Nations.” The expert panel offered three possible approaches applicable to First Nations: (1) enact new Federal legislation; (2) refer to provincial regimes or a new federal regime; and (3) start with customary law (INAC, 2006). The first option was to create a regulatory regime under new Federal legislation establishing all the roles and responsibilities of the parties responsible for providing water and wastewater services to First Nations. This approach has advantages and drawbacks as proposing new legislation takes time to implement (INAC, 2006). Or the second option that the Federal government could apply provincial water quality requirements to each province. However, these provincial requirements would lack uniformity across Canada and be costly to implement and enforce (INAC, 2006). Finally, the last option is to adopt customary law, which requires First Nations to take a strong stewardship role of First Nations water systems. However, the development and implementation of customary law across the country would be challenging with the wide diversity of tribes and communities in

Canada (INAC, 2006). Regardless of which choice, the expert panel called for immediate improvement.

2.2.2 Higher health risks from water systems on Reserve

Water-borne infections arising on First Nation reserves are 26 times higher than for other Canadian communities (Eggerton, 2006). Boil water advisories occur 2.5 times more in First Nation reserves and are more often prolonged, lasting many years, than the short-term advisories in other Canadian communities (Patrick, 2011). These boil water advisories indicate a contamination problem from suspected or confirmed chemical or microbial contamination for resolution in the short-term. Boil water advisories should not be a long-standing situation (Health Canada, 2009), but according to Indigenous Services Canada (2020a), 61 long-term drinking water advisories occurred in First Nation reserves in February 2020. This number for First Nations is down, with 88 drinking water advisories that were long-term, lifted since November 2015, and 34 long-term drinking water advisories added before July 18, 2018 (ISC, 2018). The Canadian government has proclaimed eliminating all long-term drinking water advisories by March 2021 (ISC, 2020a). Also, 33 boil water advisories that were short-term existed on August 27, 2020, on First Nation reserves (ISC, 2020b). A drinking water advisory, which is short-term, signifies a temporary water quality issue on a specific water system (ISC, 2020b).

The First Nations Regional Health Surveys (FNIGC, 2018) show negative health impacts from inadequate water/sanitation infrastructure and indoor plumbing in First Nations across Canada. These regional health surveys associate worse physical outcomes, including poor self-rated health, higher gastrointestinal issues and a range of mental health effects, from a lack of running water, cistern use, and piped sewage system (FNIGC, 2018; O’Gorman, 2020). Higher rates of diseases on First Nation reserves are linked to water infrastructure issues (Statistics Canada, 2020). Viral

hepatitis, universal on many First Nation reserves by age 20 (Minuk et al., 2003), is linked to the inadequate water systems. H. Pylori is a massive risk for individuals on reserve (Thompson, Thapa and Whiteway, 2019). The transmission of viruses, including H1N1 and COVID-19, from inadequate water infrastructure on First Nation reserves is high risk. One of Manitoba's 17 remote communities, Garden Hill First Nation, had three of the 11 Manitobans (27 percent) who died from H1N1, and hundreds were sick there. Cleaning hands is vital to stop the transmission of disease, including COVID-19, and the need to water ration undermines this important disease prevention.

Poor drinking water quality on First Nation reserves is a longstanding issue. In 1977, the lack of piped water and sewage on the reserve was well documented: "a federal policy report proposed an expanded infrastructure program for reserves with the goal of providing Aboriginal homes and communities with facilities and services that both met health and safety standards and were comparable to neighboring non-Aboriginal homes and communities" (Boyd, 2011, p. 87). However, this report did not result in a comparable infrastructure.

First Nations' reserves were overlooked in water planning and management regimes (Neegan Burnside, 2011). Duncan and Bowden (2010) found First Nation reserves lack protection regarding water quality. First Nations' governance regimes on environment and water issues are non-existent with an absence of laws and regulations to provide the necessary protection for source water and drinking water provisions (Duncan and Bowden, 2010).

Regarding water, First Nations have "significant differences in service standards" from non-First Nations, according to Walters et al. (2012, p.21). Inconsistent First Nations drinking water regulations create a high risk for water quality failures (Hrudey, 2011). More than half of the water systems operating on reserves in Canada are considered between medium and high risk (Webster, 2015), signaling a systemic problem across the nation.

In 2009, Neegan Burnside conducted a Canadian-wide assessment of wastewater and water systems in Canada. Approximately one-third (30%) of reserve water systems in First Nations were considered high-risk systems (Egerton, 2006; Neegan Burnside, 2011). Specifically, in Manitoba, 62 First Nations (including GLFN) were studied, including their 74 water systems. Only five systems had a municipal agreement to receive water through their municipal systems. The remaining 69 First Nation water systems had 32 obtaining water from groundwater systems and 37 from surface water systems (Neegan Burnside, 2011). Of these Manitoba systems, 51% (7,930) of the First Nation homes have piped water, 31% (4,777) receive water by truck delivery, individual wells serve 13% (2,078), and 5% (876) of the homes have no running water service (Neegan Burnside, 2011). Resulting from this assessment, the GLFN was rated at being Medium to High Risk for the three systems in operation in their community (*Table 2.1*).

Table 2.1: Risk ratings of the three systems in operation in the GLFN community with a result of Medium to High Risk for its Final Risk Score (Adapted from Neegan Burnside, 2011)

System	Source Risk	Design Risk	Operations Risk	Report Risk	Operator Risk	Final Risk Score
Mainland	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium
Nazzie Point	High	High	High	High	Low	High
West Side	Medium	Low	Low	High	High	Medium
<p>Low Risk (1.0 to 4.0): Systems with minor deficiencies that usually meet the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality (GCDWQ)).</p> <p>Medium Risk Systems (4.1 to 7.0): deficiencies identified individually or combined-present a medium risk to water quality and human health, with corrective action needed to avoid future problems.</p> <p>High Risk Systems (7.1 to 10.0): Major deficiencies identified, which solo or combined, present a high risk to water quality for potential health and safety or environmental concerns, e.g., boil water advisories. These systems have repetitive non-compliance with guidelines and inadequate water supplies and require immediate, corrective remediation to minimize or eliminate deficiencies</p>						

Clearly, from the Neegan Burnside (2011) report, the GLFN water systems are all risky, with many categories evaluated for all three being in the high and medium risk zone. The source of the water is a medium or high concern for contamination for all three GLFN systems. For the

Nazzie Point, the design risk of no treatment is a high risk that does result in non-potable water (Neegan Burnside, 2011). For the Mainland, the source water and reporting risks were high with the operations risk-rated medium, and the design and operator risks were rated low (Neegan Burnside, 2011). If the reporting risk is high, the monitoring coverage to ensure safe water at the household level is inadequate. Overall the Mainland water system was considered a medium risk to water quality and human health (Neegan Burnside, 2011). Similarly, the west side has a medium risk for water quality and human health overall with a high risk for both reporting and operator risk, medium for design, and a low design and operations risk (Neegan Burnside, 2011). Clearly, all three systems need improvement and infrastructure to ensure safe drinking water, with the Nazzie Point needing immediate corrective action.

First Nation water systems have been found lacking without plans for source water protection, maintenance, or emergency. Only 2% of First Nation water systems had an emergency response plan (Neegan Burnside Ltd, 2011). 4% had a source water protection plan. 5% had a maintenance plan. And only one-quarter (26%) of First Nations had a certified backup operator (Neegan Burnside, 2011). The lack of planning for emergencies, source water protection and maintenance reveal grave weaknesses in the GLFN water systems. Under COVID-19 and H1N1, these vulnerabilities are particularly dangerous (Thompson, Bonnycastle, and Stewart, 2020).

Northern remote First Nation communities have water problems resulting from a lack of adequate community design and insufficient implementation of planned infrastructure. These water problems have profound impacts on the health and social functioning of the community. Oppositely, First Nation communities' water systems have recently obtained safe water treatment facilities under the federal government, but the delivery is very problematic in terms of quality and quantity (Simeone, 2010; White, Murphy & Spence, 2012). The northern geology makes laying

pipes to homes expensive. Federal funding from Indigenous Services Canada for capital and operating resources (Smith, Guest, Svrcek, & Farahbakhsh, 2006) funds only the inferior cisterns in northern Manitoba communities rather than piped water systems. Except in GLFN, and other communities, the school and health centre areas receive piped water. As well, non-First Nation Canadian communities, funded through a combination of provincial and municipal resources, typically receive piped water (Reed, 2013). This funding offers highly controlled and professionally monitored water systems regulated by provincial governments so that water quality is excellent (Dupont, 2005).

2.2.3 Hauling water to cisterns or buckets

The water system in the GLFN community is a combination of piped and cistern storage in three community areas. Although some GLFN homes have a piped distribution system to connect their homes directly to the water treatment plant, homes outside of the communities' core, or on bedrock, are often considered unsuitably located and retrofitted with a cistern (Lebel & Reed, 2010). Thus, water access and water quality issues in most northern Manitoba First Nation communities are complicated by having only cisterns or barrels/buckets rather than piped distribution systems (Jones et al., 2012). Water trucks deliver treated water from a water treatment plant to home cisterns.

Hauling drinking water to homes occurs only in the prairie region, where 31% and 21% of First Nation households in Manitoba and Saskatchewan use the truck-to-cistern method. In addition, 5% of homes on Manitoba First Nations have no water system (Neehan Burnside, 2011). This rate for these problems with the water system is lower for First Nations across Canada, with 13.5% of First Nation households having cisterns, and 1.5% of First Nation households having no water system (Neehan Burnside, 2011).

Lack of any piped water, without cisterns, is a significant health risk (O’Gorman, 2020). The lack of any piped water service to many homes in Garden Hill First Nation was considered a factor in the high rate of H1N1 deaths there (Elash & Walker, 2019; Thompson, Thapa & Whiteway, 2019). As a low-cost solution local, workers were funded through employment training to retrofit cistern with plumbing but not pipes in most homes in Garden Hill and Island Lake following the H1N1 crisis. However, one-fifth of the households could not receive cisterns for various reasons (e.g., no electrical wiring, the house not meeting building code, mobile home, etc.). Further, some cisterns broke after installation and were unusable (Harper, Whiteway & Thompson, 2018). A 2018 survey found, 21% of the houses used barrels (Barkman, Monias & Thompson, 2019), which amounts to 180 households without running water (Elash & Walker, 2019).

Many First Nations have homes that lack running water, including GLFN and O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation (OPCN). According to a survey with 87 of the 200 homes in OPCN (Statistics Canada, 2016), 33% use water barrels without piped water or cisterns (Thompson & Pritty, 2020). Barrels provide 250 to 500 gallons of water, which lasts only a few days, even rationing. Most in OPCN use 250-gallon tank cisterns to offer their water (Pritty, 2018). Barrels or buckets signify that the house has no pipes to carry freshwater into the household or remove wastewater and sewage away. For people to wash their hands, wash the dishes, or cook, people must use their feet rather than turn on a pipe to pour water from a bucket or barrel, usually near the house entrance to allow the water truck to fill.

Cisterns and barrels account for 93% of the high water contaminant exceedances. However, the scale of the problem is unknown due to lack of regular monitoring of cisterns on most reserves (Moore, 1999). Of First Nations, 94% have monitoring/reporting violations (Moore, 1999), falling short of Health Canada testing's quarterly requirement. Cistern’s water quality was tested twice

per year in Montreal Lake First Nation rather than four times per year. Lebel and Reed (2010) found the water from cisterns frequently tested positive for bacteria and required water advisories at much higher rates than piped water in Montreal Lake First Nation. Bacterial contamination was identified as the main risk for cisterns, which gets contaminated during the transfers of water transported using water trucks (Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 2006; Smith, Guest, Svrcek, & Farahbakhsh, 2006; Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2000).

Cisterns and barrels are easily polluted by soil, groundwater, as well as rodents. Contamination of cisterns can occur throughout delivery, at initial treatment, the water truck transportation process, transfer from water truck to barrels or cisterns, microbial growth in the barrel or cistern, and then within the household distribution system (Bradford et al., 2018). To decontaminate necessitates regular cleaning, but First Nations lack adequate budgets to clean these confined spaces, which requires specialized training and equipment (Lebel & Reed, 2010; IAND, 2006).

Having a truck deliver water to a cistern as the source of one's household drinking water results in worse mental and physical health outcomes. Household members with cisterns report worse health, at half the rate of those collecting their water from a river lake or pond and 2% lower rates for those with piped water according to the Regional Health Survey (RHS) data (2016). Furthermore, those homes with cisterns reported being distressed at 20% higher rates than those with water delivered by a pipe into their home and 32% higher than those having water from a well and 80% lower if they collect their water from a river, lake or pond, according to RHS data (2008) (O'Gorman, 2020). Conversely, indoor plumbing (running water) results in better health for the inhabitant, including double their rating of themselves to be in good health compared to those who do not have running water in their home, according to the RHS data (2016). As well,

those with indoor plumbing had 70% lower odds of reporting a stomach/gastrointestinal issue compared to those without running water in their home, according to the RHS data (2016) (O’Gorman, 2020). As well, those without indoor plumbing were 50% more likely to report feeling depressed compared to those not having running water in 2002, as well as 50% distressed in 2008 (O’Gorman, 2020).

Cisterns and barrels result in water shortages. Truck delivery of water is easily disrupted under normal conditions but particularly under emergencies like COVID-19, with constant water shortages every day. In northern Manitoba, First Nation households have cisterns running dry frequently. For example, 50% of Norway House homes run out of water regularly, according to Chief Larson Anderson: “About half of the homes in Norway House are often left without water for one to 10 days, because of overcrowding and tanks that quickly run dry” (Grabbish, 2020). Pritty (2018) interviewed numerous people who had been without any water for weeks many times as the water trucks cannot keep up with demand with one water truck and one sewage truck for 161 residences. Water deprivation and rationing then is an everyday occurrence in these homes. Communities find insufficient water delivery trucks, particularly when one needs repair, to prevent water shortages (Harper, Whiteway & Thompson, 2018). Water trucks break down regularly, with repairs often requiring experts and parts being flown in. Filling a cistern takes about an hour to service each house if everything goes well. However, driveways and roads in bad conditions can damage trucks or cause them to get stuck. The cistern's location under the house or behind the home can make delivering water to the cistern difficult from the driveway. Cisterns have many extra on-going costs, which amount to an ongoing financial burden to the First Nation (Harper and Thompson, 2017). Cisterns require continuous water delivery, heating the cisterns during Canadian winters to not freeze, an electrical supply to pump the water, maintenance, cleaning, etc.

2.2.4 Sanitation on Reserve

Many northern Manitoba First Nations houses lack a sewage system and have to dump their own “honey buckets” or “slop buckets.” In O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation, 47.5% of households use “slop pails” and “honey buckets” (Thompson & Pritty, 2020). Similarly, a 2018 survey in Garden Hill First Nation found that 21% of homes relied on slop pails with another 27% having sewage cisterns (Barkman, Monias & Thompson, 2019).

Homeowners have to dump these slop pails nearby, often in their back yard, which provides ongoing contagion and safety problems. According to the Regional Health Survey (RHS), indoor toilet and sewage system (sanitation) compared to lacking indoor sanitation have healthier mental and physical health outcomes. These health outcomes are 40% higher than people without indoor sanitation, 50% lower gastrointestinal issues than those without indoor sanitation, and are 30% less distressed (FNIGC, 2020, O’Gorman, 2020).

Pritty (2018) writes about how dumping sewage in unregulated wastewater systems in backyard pits, as large as 5 foot cubed, result in unsanitary conditions, and in this story the drowning death of a child:

I lost a grandson about seven years back. And to this day, I still have angry feelings because there is no proper disposal of the sewage and not having the running water. Like I said, we've got a pail for the dishwater and honey bucket in the washroom. Therefore, my husband had to dig up a pit to dump the sewage. And I had a grandson; he was only two years old, he was outside maybe two minutes without supervision. We looked out the window, and he was standing there. I called the mother, and I said, “Could you please go get him?”. By the time she went out, the little boy was gone. We ran for 20-25 minutes around the houses, thinking he went to the neighbours or maybe across the street to Grandmas.

About 25 minutes later, we found him in the pit; he drowned. To this day, we still carry-on [with] just pits. There's no proper disposal, and I raise the issue that it's going to happen to somebody else, you know? It was very hard, and to this day, nothing has been done about it. And it is still the same concerns. Why are there just pits behind the houses, and people don't have running water? (Pritty, 2018: 66).

First Nation leaders have called on all levels of governments for not meeting the basic needs of Indigenous people (Assembly of First Nations, 2015; Nepinak, 2014). Safe water and sewage systems are needed to prevent serious adverse health consequences resulting from contaminated water and shortages of water (Hwang, Wilkins, Tjepkema, O'Campo & Dunn, 2009). Without appropriate water infrastructure, First Nations cannot improve their health status due to shortages of water and contaminated water, causing significant health risks.

2.3 Traditional knowledge

In this section, traditional knowledge (TK) is examined, comparing, and contrasting with western science. TK is a critical component of this dissertation because if I, as an Indigenous person, is to assert that we as a people have governance power over water, then we must be able to apply our knowledge and ways of doing things within that governance structure. Traditional knowledge documentation must be transparent, for its legitimacy in governance must be indisputable. Having the support of scholars and various experts in different fields provides academic legitimacy but for traditional knowledge transmission within Indigenous society, an Elder's oral story provides more legitimacy. In such an internal context, TK is a time-tested entity and way of life that holds truth and meaning.

McGregor (2010) notes that traditional knowledge (TK) does not only come from our ancestors but also pertains to our future. Traditional knowledge is a "process" as opposed to an "entity" according to McGregor (2004), who points out that non-Indigenous people view TK as a noun, a thing, or knowledge. Still, to Indigenous peoples, TK is a process that cannot be separated from the people of the land, environment, or creation and does not lend itself to being fragmented into various categories because of its wholistic nature. Traditional knowledge is a unique way of looking at the world through "Aboriginal eyes" (Rice, 2005). Authors such as Goehring provide

contrasting comparisons between science-based systems and Indigenous society (Table 2.2), which reveal many differences in viewing land and organizing society.

Table 2.2: A general comparison between industrial society and Indigenous society (Sources: Selected from Goehring, 2007).

Industrial Systems	Indigenous Society
Domination of nature	Living with nature
Linear time	Concentric time
Resources at a distance	Resources close at hand
Land/ means of production can be owned individually	Land/ means of production are held collectively
Land is an “economic” resource like any other	Land is the source of life
Land belongs to “us”	“We” belong to the land
Structures of society are formalized and rigid	Structures of society are flexible and implied
Formal education away from home	Informal education at home
“Teachers” are outsiders away from home	“Teachers” are family members at home
Literate traditions	Oral traditions
Preservation of details	Preservation of concepts
Structured religious dogma	Unstructured and fluid animism
Concepts of “god” as “above” earth	Concepts of “god” as “in” and inherently part of the earth

This list of comparisons selected from Goehring (2007) list can be easily expanded further to include all aspects of daily life for all Indigenous peoples.

The literature provides examples where scientists have validated their scientific findings with TK from First Nation communities and TK holders (Woo et al., 2007; Huntington, Gearheard, Mahoney, and Salomon, 2011). However, to answer the question of the benefits of using both science and TK in the context of water sovereignty, source water protection, and health, Absolon (2011) notes that scientific methodologies only represent one worldview amongst many other ways of looking at the world. I believe the diversity of views and information provided by TK's inclusion to scientific studies can only enhance and strengthen the results of studies and investigations.

Similar to biodiversity supporting ecosystem integrity, a diversity of views would strengthen studies and analyses.

The diversity of viewpoints and approaches from both TK and science would strengthen the examination of water and the First Nations relationship and governance over water, which would enhance the community's health. Clearly, water availability and quality impact people's health in a community (Simone, 2010). In terms of water sovereignty, the reliance upon both science and TK would enable a community or First Nation government to assert its water planning, which would be stronger because of the diversity of methodologies and viewpoints used to develop it.

However, Simpson (2004) notes that TK is often seen as a data resource by colonizing societies to address environmental problems while ignoring the worldview and values that underpin the knowledge system. MacGregor (2004) takes this argument further by differentiating two views of TK. First, an Indigenous view that includes relationships to Creation. Second, a colonial view that reflects colonial attitudes toward Indigenous people, making the point that to understand TK fully, one must appreciate the Indigenous view. I am in full agreement of this point as TK is ingrained into the culture. Being an Indigenous person, when I share my TK on some subject, communicating the full range of knowledge that I have regarding an area, site, place or a thing is impossible. All I can do is describe it verbally, which does not capture the full range of knowledge about the subject. MacGregor (2004) also notes that the acceptance of TK in law and academia is relatively recent phenomena. The acquisition and utilization of TK have rapidly grown in academia. Thus, as a knowledge system and base, TK is still evolving and gaining greater acceptance in a wide range of research in various disciplines.

In terms of governance over water and TK, Simpson (2004) asserts that to recover TK, Indigenous people must regain control over their territories and be self-governing. MacGregor

(2004) makes a similar point in noting that the trend of the expanding role of First Nations in managing and governance of the land and its resources represents a considerable opportunity for TK in resource and environmental management. The Chiefs of Ontario (2007), collected water management views from the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Mushkegowuk (James Bay Cree) and Anishinew (Oji-Cree). These Indigenous groups maintained that their TK must be used to manage water and any negotiations regarding water are to be carried out on a nation-to-nation basis (Chiefs of Ontario, 2007). Indigenous people view water as part of their sovereignty and the self-government of their societies and their territories (i.e., land base) that supports the assertion of governance power over water.

2.3.1 Roles of women in water stewardship and management

While I write from an Ininiw perspective, it is worthwhile to present information on women's role in water protection and knowledge in the Anishinaabeg culture. Anishinaabe teachers taught me about water protection in their culture, but it should be noted other Indigenous cultures have similar customs. In the Anishinaabeg culture, women are responsible for taking care of the water and retaining water knowledge (Raven, 2013; Anderson et al., 2013; Craft, 2014). Women are central to water protection and experts in Indigenous cultures. Women are key to the provision, management, and safeguarding of water as part of the four accepted water management principles internationally (Ray, 2007).

Garry Raven (2013) was a friend of mine, and he and his brother Raymond shared a lot about water and the role of women in their teachings, which were compiled in a book written posthumously. Both brothers confirmed the role of women in taking care of and protecting the water. Garry makes the correlation between the life-giving water and the women who bring life

into this world. Notably, the relationship between water and a woman's moon time and Grandmother Moon. This connection gives the women the responsibility to take care of the water by performing water ceremonies and honouring water every day. Water is sacred to women, not only because of their spiritual connection to it but also because of their use of it every day to maintain the home to clean, wash, and take care of the household and children.

The earth is also described as Mother Earth that provides life and the resources needed to maintain that life. Water is seen as the blood of Mother Earth, and any contamination of it affects all lifeforms, including us humans and our newborns. When the water becomes contaminated, it also contaminates the lifeforms that depend upon it, including ourselves.

An interesting aspect of the Anishinaabeg teachings is the existence of "male water" and "female water," where the male water is the water in the atmosphere. The water on the earth is the female water. When the male water falls onto the earth, the female water then gives rise to life on earth (Raven, 2013). Flowing water upon the earth is a "life force" that must not be altered as it is in perfect balance with all Creation. Water is an interconnected whole with many relationships within it on earth, and one must be careful not to contaminate or alter it in any way. All the earth's female elements carry the water: Mother Earth, Grandmother Moon, women, and female animals. As a final note, we must listen to women concerning their teachings and responsibilities for water.

Craft (2014) also affirms that in the Anishinaabeg culture, "Women are responsible for water," both in the immediate time and future because of their ability to give life. Craft, however, looks at the role of women in water management in terms of Anishinaabeg law regarding the water. The Elders tell her that the responsibility of women to take care of the water. The law associated with water is not so much about rights and more about the Anishinaabeg's responsibility to all of Creation. Like Raven (2013), Craft documents a myriad of relationships between water, culture,

and beliefs of the Anishinaabeg. Craft discusses the role of water in healing sickness and ailments, which was also taught to me by Garry Raven. Craft (2014) reports a deep inextricable connection between water and health, with “life and health” flowing from the water. However, when the water is contaminated, disrupted, and altered, the water suffers, and its healing properties are affected. Due to the impacts of colonialism upon the water, water needs a voice, and women are the ones to give voice to the water (Craft, 2014).

In her article, Isha Ray (2007) outlines the four principles resulting from the 1992 International Conference on Water and the Environment held in Dublin, Ireland, that became known as the Dublin Principles as follows:

1. Fresh water is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential to sustain life, development and the environment.
2. Water development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners, and policymakers at all levels.
3. Women play a central part in the provision, management, and safeguarding of water.
4. Water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good.

As you will note, women are recognized as key and central players in managing and safeguarding water internationally. However, Ray (2007) identifies a conflict in the competing uses of water for industrial development versus by people to maintain a good quality way of life. As well, gaps exist between theory and policy and policy and practice. However, principle three is a good recognition of women's role internationally in managing and safeguarding water.

2.4 Self-determination and wholistic development approach

Communities have faced long years of colonial oppression and remain still marginalized. In *Being Indigenous: Resurgence against Contemporary Colonialism*, Alfred and Corntassel (2005) discuss the discrimination faced in Indigenous communities. Although Indigenous communities have distinct characteristics, all Indigenous communities were treated the same under colonialism

and forced to leave their traditions, cultures, and economies, which disrupted social bonds. Contemporary colonialism and neoliberal economics are still a reality in their everyday life. Alfred and Corntassel (2005) discuss how colonization and neo-liberalization still define Indigenous identities. The colonial state continues to monitor Indigenous communities' political and legal movements as a threat to their colonial nation.

Corntassel (2008) states that Indigenous communities should construct self-determination processes to ensure local, regional, and international recognition for themselves. Corntassel (2008) also analyzed the current research on rights, political mobilization, and ecosystems for Indigenous people worldwide. Corntassel (2008) assessed the framing of Indigenous self-determination claims over thirty years. His reflections on colonial impacts on self-determination indicate that countries and global organizations have jeopardized Indigenous self-determination in four different ways (Corntassel, 2008). First, the legal and political recognition of the land rights of Indigenous communities is discriminated against. Second, many countries entirely deny the existence of Indigenous communities. Third, political or legal frames /entitlements are stressed for Indigenous communities. Fourth, minimal application of restoration frameworks for Indigenous communities occur. These issues have long-term impacts on the well-being of Indigenous communities and their future generations. Corntassel (2008) focused on sustainable self-determination as a notion that evolved as traditional livelihoods, food security, community governance, land rights, and relationship with the lands in everyday life.

Haugen (2014) argues that self-governance and self-determination minimize the tragedy of the commons for natural resource access in Indigenous communities. Haugen (2014) advocates for sharing international Indigenous rights to govern natural resources. This sharing between Indigenous communities will prioritize needs and resource allocation for multi-tier development.

Haugen (2014) discusses the potential decision-making problems and governance issues in applying the right to self-determination.

As a result, Indigenous communities require a more operational and wholistic approach for development, focusing more on culturally appropriate measures for Indigenous growth. The process should focus on Indigenous natural capitals (i.e., renewable and non-renewable sources), human capital (i.e., education, health, knowledge, education), socio-cultural capitals (i.e., Indigenous knowledge, values), and human-made capitals (i.e., finances, services, education).

According to Schnarch (2004), Indigenous development relies on the principles of ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP) for ethical research with First Nations to ensure Indigenous development in Canada. Indigenous research ethics is the focus of OCAP. OCAP principles focus on the self-determination aspects of the research. OCAP principles dictate that Indigenous communities need to lead in the whole process of the research. OCAP requires ownership of the process and stewardship of data, control over the resources and institutions, access to the data and information, and ultimately, possession over the data and resources when Indigenous communities finish the research. Implementing these principles is a “political response to colonialism and the role of knowledge production in reproducing colonial relations”, according to Schnarch (2004, p. 81). OCAP recommends that the capacity development among Indigenous communities is essential not only for career development but also for nation-building. However, the capacity-building approach has not been thoroughly researched in Indigenous communities. Schnarch (2004) mentions the need for some strategies to introduce significant capacity building and research for Indigenous communities for and by themselves.

2.5 Environmental justice

Environmental justice is defined as "the fair and consistent distribution of environmental benefits and burden, without discrimination based on socio-economic status, race, ethnic origin, or residence on an Aboriginal reserve" (Venton and Mitchell, nd). The literature for environmental justice posits that although modern environmental problems seem ubiquitous, higher risk falls unevenly to Indigenous, racialized and/or impoverished communities (Austin and Schill 1994; Byrne and Hoffman 2002; Pulido 1996; Thompson, 2015). This inequity occurs both within Canada and at the international level, where accusations of multinational corporations and governments exploit Indigenous peoples' lands (Kuehn 2000).

From the 1980s into the 1990s, environmental racism research conveyed that Indigenous communities in North America had similar encounters to racial minorities, including stereotyping, exclusion as well as political and economic disenfranchisement (Tsosie 2007). Toxic exposure to chemicals, including mercury, presents greater risks to First Nation people with people in First Nation communities bioaccumulating higher toxic chemicals than other Canadians (Thompson 2002). Contamination with radiation for land and water resources of Indigenous reservations close by to nuclear waste sites, such as in Washington State, USA, is the Hanford Nuclear Reservation (Tsosie 2007). Other examples are the "national sacrifice areas" that the strip-mining for coal in Navaho lands caused, which permanently damaged and polluted their lands (Tsosie 2007). Both in northern Canada and the Pacific Northwest US, hydroelectric projects have had a severe impact on Indigenous land, negatively impacting territory, water resources, sometimes to the extent that they cause permanent displacement (Waldram 1993; Tsosie 2007; Thompson, Ballard and Martin 2014).

Environmental health impacts occur from both unwanted development impacts but also the lack of services. Risks include resource extraction, pollution, water fluctuations, and also the lack

of healthy food, housing, safe drinking water, and health services (LaDuke 2002). The inequity is clear from the drinking water advisories, which provide a good indicator of drinking water quality (Isfeld 2009; Baird et al. 2012), being two and a half times more likely to occur in an FN's reserve than any other community in Canada (Eggertson 2006). On some reserves, gasoline and trihalomethane contamination remains in the water after boiling (Harden and Levallant 2008).

In the United States, environmental justice law provides an important legal framework, but not so in Canada. In response to findings showing environmental risk was elevated for low-income and minority populations, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires considering racism and environmental justice in evaluating regulation development and projects. President Clinton signed Executive Order 12898 called "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," aiming to achieve environmental protection for every community (Environmental Protection Agency 1994). The EPA defines environmental justice as: "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies" (Environmental Protection Agency 1994). This definition overlaps civil rights law with environmental justice. However, Dean Suagee, who started the first Indigenous Clinic for Environmental Justice in the US, purports that these two considerations are insufficient without considering Indigenous sovereignty over the environment:

The concept of environmental justice is not very useful unless it is broader than just the intersection of civil rights and environmental law ... [including] ... a vision of environmental justice must also include the tribal right of self-government ... [as] tribal governments must be involved in performing the full range of functions that governments are expected to do in protecting the environment: making the law, implementing the law, and resolving disputes (cited in Thompson, 2015:224).

Indigenous environmental justice first efforts prioritized "sovereignty claims" and the need for authority over the regulation of lands, resources, and services. The environmental injustice to

Indigenous peoples was that the federal government failed to recognize the sovereignty of Indigenous First Nations' (Tsosie 2007) and the exploitation of Indigenous resources without mitigation or compensation. Sovereignty claims necessitate that Indigenous people choose the development for their traditional territory, enlarging the binary choice between "preservation" and "development." However, Indigenous sovereignty cannot address the complexity of many wicked environmental problems, including climate change impacts, with the cause and effects occurring largely outside their territory boundaries.

A second fundamental tenet of Indigenous environmental justice requires recognition that Indigenous identity demands self-determination of their lands and environment (Tsosie 2007). Indigenous peoples' have deep roots in the unique histories, livelihoods, and cultures that reflect the strong bond with their lands, which necessitates environmental self-determination to meet other human rights (Tsosie 2007; Thompson, 2015). The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in article 26 establishes the need for environmental self-determination and self-governance, stating:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories, and resources, which they have traditionally owned, occupied, or otherwise used or acquired.
2. Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories, and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use and those they have otherwise acquired.
3. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories, and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned (United Nations 2007: 13).

To consider environmental justice, the EPA amended in the 1980s and 1990s some of the federal pollution statutes so that Indigenous Tribal nations had authority and responsibility as a EPA partner. Although such amendments are unnecessary as Indigenous Tribal governments have regulatory jurisdiction within their territory, they made tribal programming eligible for funding from the EPA.

Indigenous Tribal government also had some regulatory power for off-reservation polluters that impacted the reserve, including upstream impacts to water resources unrelated to inherent sovereignty. The EPA's tribal policy prioritizes the water and air quality standards set by the tribe with EPA assistance and oversight rather than applying two regulations. The tribal authority having regulatory jurisdiction over the reservation's environment provides a vaccine to prevent reservation communities from being exploited and polluted in the future. The EPA also has an environmental justice advisory committee and Indigenous Peoples' subcommittee to ensure environmental decision-making is just (Environmental Protection Agency 2014).

Pulido (1996) posits that colonialism and racism are the structural and institutional forces that create worse outcomes for Indigenous peoples for income, wealth, health, educational attainment, etc.) and environmental hazards. Indigeneity is a social risk position that intensifies environmental and health risks. Thompson (2015) compiled ten factors contributing to why First Nation reserves are higher risk for adverse health and environmental impacts, stating these reasons specifically:

“1) More historical, ancestral, and spiritual ties to traditional territory and reserves make them less mobile to avoid environmental threats (Thompson, Ballard and Martin 2014).

2) Sustenance lifestyle of hunting, fishing, and gathering require access to healthy wildlife and fertile territory (Grossman 2012; Thompson, Ballard and Martin 2014; Thompson, Wiebe, Gulrukh, and Ashram. 2012; Thompson 2002).

3) Economic assets are generally low as FN housing, land, and resources are considered Crown property (Ballard 2012); without collateral, capital or credit, FNs people have limited ability to weather difficult times.

- 4) Infrastructure poverty, with many FNs communities lacking adequate safe housing, piped water/sewage, road access, and lack of fire stations, landfills, and hospitals place people in unhealthier or higher risk situations (Thompson, Ballard and Martin 2014).
- 6) Isolation of many reserves far away from public and media observation with many FNs having no access to a road network and most having no paved roads on reserve (Thompson, Ballard, and Martin 2014).
- 7) Jurisdictional barriers with FN reserves federally managed, without FNs having the regulatory authority or ownership of resources and land/water in their ancestral territory, but with resources, including water, managed provincially (Thompson et al. 2011; Ballard 2012; La Duke 2002).
- 8) Less political clout resulting in few opportunities for Aboriginal peoples to influence policies, programs, and their development (Thompson et al. 2011; Ballard 2012);
- 9) Social crisis (e.g., higher rates of addictions and violence), as the aftermath to the residential school system, reserve settlements, and the settler education (LaDuke 2002);
- 10) Location of reserves by the government on poor or swampy lands (Thompson, Ballard and Martin 2014)."

Thompson's (2015) article also discusses the need for legal rights and political power of First Nations similar to that in the US. With these powers and rights, Canada would have to partner in court to uphold Aboriginal rights and agreements. Clearly, First Nations need a stronger voice in the decision-making process for water-management, enshrining Indigenous rights in laws, as described by Tsosie:

We cannot afford to maintain a set of domestic laws based on Anglo-American cultural categories, such as "property rights," "environmental rights," and "religious rights," just because they are the ones we have always had and we know how and when they are enforceable, if the end result is to continually perpetuate grave injustices upon indigenous peoples. We must open our collective minds to a notion of justice that is truly intercultural in nature. Such a notion of justice must incorporate an indigenous right to environmental self-determination that allows indigenous peoples to protect their traditional, land-based cultural practices regardless of whether they also possess the sovereign right to govern those lands or, in the case of climate change, prevent the practices that are jeopardizing those environments.

The past practices of national governments in dispossessing indigenous peoples of their lands and resources and forcibly colonizing them have created a grave contemporary injustice that can only be redressed through special rights that protect what little of their land remains. This argument would support indigenous claims for

repatriation of traditional lands in some cases and would also provide a positive right against the destruction or dispossessing of their remaining land-base. This argument, which to some extent can be associated with a concept of reparations, would also support the mandatory inclusion of indigenous peoples within the institutional processes that have historically excluded them (2007: 1652).

First Nation peoples have enshrined rights based on territorial sovereignty on their ancestral lands, Indigenous water, and environmental rights create an ethical imperative for new laws that support sovereignty.

2.6 Conclusions

This literature review chapter analyzes the treaties signed between the Crown and Indigenous people, traditional knowledge, and Indigenous sustainable community development issues by considering the capability approach, self-determination, Indigenous rights, and sustainable livelihood approaches. A consideration of neoliberal and natural resource policies that undermine safe water and wholistic development on traditional Indigenous territory is needed. Self-determination is described by communities, with their approach towards problem-solving skills and capacity development. The lack of access and participation to political, social, and legal rights have marginalized Indigenous communities from the mainstream economy. As a result, Indigenous communities are now facing challenges to secure their traditional livelihoods, capitals in their resources and lands, and protect water and land. Self-governance over aski is needed to create robust strategies and solutions for Indigenous communities, including community development, employment, and education. Any issue that affects Indigenous people must be examined through the lens of self-government and self-determination, including the assertion of governance power over water.

Chapter 3 : Methods

3.1 Autoethnography

I applied autoethnography as my primary research method, incorporating the Medicine Wheel's circular frame, field research in my Indigenous home territory, and a literature review.

3.1.1 The Autoethnography method, process, and validity

According to Ellis (2004) and Holman Jones (2005), autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) to understand cultural experience (ethno). Autoethnography should be ethnographical in its approach, cultural interpretation, and autobiographical content (Ellis, 2006). According to Chang (2008), autoethnography means different things to different people, and for this reason, it requires careful explanation. As Chang (2008) notes: “Because autoethnography could mean different things to different people,” Chang expects, “stories of autoethnographers to be reflected upon, analyzed, and interpreted within their broader sociocultural context.”

Autoethnography required that I deeply reflected upon my stories. Thus, I analyzed and interpreted my stories, considering the socio-cultural context and their relationship to water governance. I share my stories focused upon water in the context of Aski. In describing the community water system, an autoethnographic approach known as organizational autoethnography is applied to microsystems and macrosystems. My microsystems are my family (Doloriert & Sambrook, 2011). The macrosystems are government (Roth, 2005), particularly the ISC and legal structures, and education (Taber, 2010a; 2013). The water regime's socio-cultural context in First Nations is analyzed, placing my life journey within the Medicine wheel framework and water literature (Haynes, 2011, 139; Taber, 2010a).

A First Nation community, such as the GLFN, consists of many levels of social and governmental structures from the individual, family, community, Chief and Council and colonial governments, and several service and political organizations. For these reasons, I initially felt that organizational autoethnography would be a good fit for examining and analyzing the relationship between GLFN and water and its governance. But Chang (2008) notes that another form of ethnographical involvement is “native ethnographies,” in which Indigenous researchers write about themselves in a policy context. Native ethnographers are increasingly turning their attention to home, and as more Indigenous communities produce their anthropologists (Chang, 2008). Chang further notes that Ellis and Bochner (2000), scholars of communication arts, present a wide array of different labels, numbering thirty-nine (39), to processes with an autobiographical and autoethnographic orientation. I sought in this work to connect the three parts of autoethnography, combining autobiography, ethnography, and analysis (Ellis, Adams, Bochner, 2011).

After I had studied the autoethnography method for a while, I realized that it is another form of presenting information to academia and the world. As the world evolves and changes, so do the methods by which we communicate information. The scientific method has long been the dominant and accepted means of developing academic knowledge. However, as societies and cultures evolve worldwide, knowledge production in academia must also change. I believe the autoethnography method is one such change that is occurring in the face of societal change. While science has many valid processes for attaining knowledge of the earth and universe, the world has increasingly begun to look at and accept Indigenous knowledge.

This increased acceptance of Native autoethnography recognizes the legitimacy of Indigenous knowledge systems. As well, the Indigenous Peoples' movements for self-governance and self-determination demand Indigenous knowledge recognition. As these two forces for the

legitimacy of Indigenous knowledge continue to assert change within dominant societies, new forms of knowledge production, such as autoethnography, become more mainstream. Evolutionary change is common in the world and will continue to occur now and into the future. Indigenous scholar, Leroy Little Bear from the Blackfoot tribe, refers to this constant change as “flux” and notes that flux is an accepted part of Indigenous thought. Acceptance of Native autoethnography in the academy emerges as Indigenous scholars asserting their lifeways and cultures.

3.1.2 Autoethnography method with circular frame

I apply the three elements of autoethnography in this thesis (Chang, 2008). “Auto” is my self-critical analysis of my role as an agent with experiences in First Nation water governance. The “ethno” required my self-reflections be within a broader policy, social and cultural frame (Chang, 2008). The “graphy” concentrated my efforts on the art of writing my personal experiences as political (Chang, 2008).

According to Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011), “[Researchers] retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity.” Writing about my Ininiw culture components had me examine and reflect upon my identity and heritage as an Ininiw. Indigenous culture has many aspects that are not anything like the structured European culture, being more wholistic and having a more open structure (Simpson, 2004; Fonda, 2011; McGregor, 2012; Houde, 2007). These cultural differences are apparent in the Ininiw relationship with and governance of water in our territory. My autoethnographic journey telling about the water relationship of GLFN has provided me something akin to the concept of Tipachimowin(a). Tipachimowin(a) describes how in telling a story (situation), a person learns from the story (self-critical analysis) about their part and role in society (culture). What I learned from telling my story places responsibility for me

going forward.

Chang (2008) notes that autoethnography is not neutral but examines issues from my biased viewpoint. I explore the relationship between the community of GLFN with water in terms of their community supply and traditional uses, speaking as a community member, in all aspects, as I possess the heritage, traditional knowledge, and culture. In light of all the facts and historical events, I assert my views, knowledge, and experience of the situation, relying upon my Ininiw (Cree) cultural outlook and my over thirty years of experience working with First Nations in the field of research and governance.

My own socio-cultural relationship with my community is examined. I retrace my journey with GLFN to where I am today. My experiences, views, culture, and community knowledge are reviewed in terms of our identity, history, present circumstances, and possible futures. I describe our heritage and identity, as Ininiw Peoples, to situate us where we are today. I also profile the location, people, and sociocultural systems of GLFN. I base my assertions and arguments on my experiences and knowledge, both professionally and personally.

Analyzing GLFN people's relationship to water, the tributaries and remote lakes consider their traditional uses, such as fishing, hunting, trapping, traditional activities, and modern recreational activities. This relationship considers both needs and values. Traditional use of the land can also provide perspective on the history of the water uses by the people and any teachings connected with water and the community's future aspirations in terms of their water security based upon their traditional values and knowledge. I will use my own experiences growing up and researching with GLFN and other First Nations throughout my career as the lens for sharing and examining the eco-political situation using autoethnography methods.

3.1.3 The validity of the autoethnographic method

The term “autoethnography” has been around since 1970 and applied to many varied studies (Berger and Ellis, nd.). However, as noted earlier, autoethnography is a combination of three research processes in one (triadic); namely, autobiography, ethnography, and analysis. All three, on their own, are accepted processes and forms of literature. Autoethnography, however, combines all three to develop another way of communicating and contributing data, knowledge, and information. “Rather than relying on questions of truth and validity, autoethnographical researchers are responsible for selecting, representing and interpreting experiences to inform meanings and shared understandings” (Haynes, 2011 p. 142)

However, autoethnography is in sharp contrast to science, scientific method, and social science research regarding validity and objectivity. A significant element in autoethnography is validity, according to Hayes (2011, p. 142): “Rather than relying on questions of truth and validity, autoethnographical researchers are responsible for selecting, representing and interpreting experiences to inform meanings and shared understandings”. As Kimlee Wong (2016) notes:

My choice of topic is clearly not neutral. My pre-conceived agenda is to examine my personal experiences in order to bring social and political illumination to this area. This is in line with other Indigenous research. Indigenous research methods are not neutral, identifying the role that colonization and anti-colonization plays within their research.

This dissertation has no pretense of neutrality, seeking to “bring social and political illumination” to the crisis of the deficient water services and infrastructure in GLFN. However, there are many First Nations in Canada having similar or worse water delivery and treatment. First Nations are doing the best they can with Federal government provisions, which are very limited in contrast to Canada's households.

Doloriert and Sambrook (2011) discuss debates within the literature of the legitimacy of the autoethnographic method and note:

“Another debate within the literature relates to how autoethnography is represented as a credible and quality methodology. We argue that autoethnography is beginning its own crisis of representation mirroring that of qualitative methods crisis in the late eighties (Denzin 1989). As did qualitative researchers for qualitative research, autoethnographers discuss the tensions of representing autoethnography because it does not fit within the conventional, positivist scientific mold (see Hold 2003; Sparkes 2003; Rambo 2007).”

However, Doloriert and Sambrook (2011) assert: “Autoethnography is more than a style of analytic writing; it is a popular contemporary methodological approach within evocative interpretivism.” Ellis et al. (2011) tell very explicitly that Indigenous ethnography is a way to overturn from the powerful, who are typically white, privileged heterosexual males to describe a different reality:

Indigenous/native ethnographies, for example, develop from colonized or economically subordinated people, and are used to address and disrupt power in research, particularly a (outside) researcher’s right and authority to study (exotic) others. Once at the service of the (White, masculine, heterosexual, middle/upper-classed, Christian, able-bodied) ethnographer, indigenous/native ethnographers now work to construct their own personal and cultural stories; they no longer find (forced) subjugation excusable (see DENZIN, LINCOLN & SMITH, 2008).

3.1.4 Circular frame analysis of the Medicine Wheel

In the findings, I first describe my community and myself in terms of who we are as a People, the Ininiw People, or as we refer to ourselves, the Ininiw. Beginning in the eastern quadrant, or the spiritual quadrant, I discuss our original worldview, spirituality, and the medicine wheel cycle framework. I reflect on our Ininiw language, legends, traditions, and history to see how the Ininiw view our world and how that determines our relationship to water and how we govern over it. In our worldview, one of the four components of Creation is water, in addition to air, fire, and earth (mineral/soil).

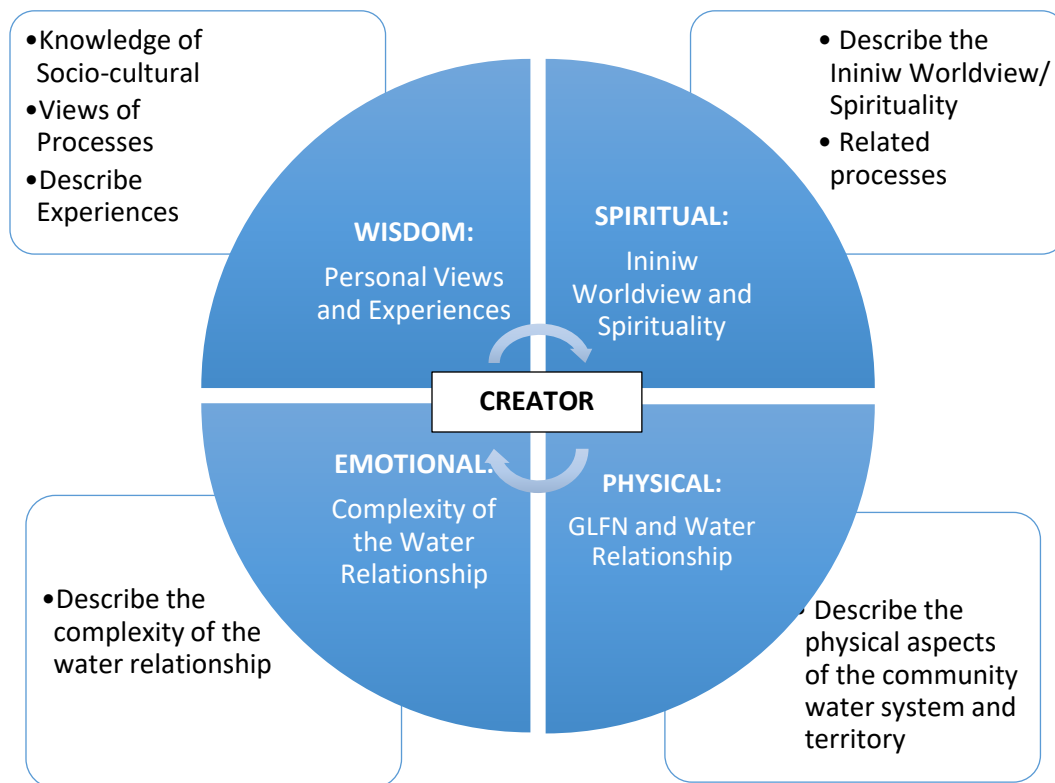
In the physical quadrant, I present the land's physical characteristics shaped by water or Aski. The word Aski is used in three different ways: to describe soil/land/ground, to represent the earth (which includes everything and is wholistic); and to signify one of the building blocks of Creation water, as well as earth, fire, and air.

In the physical quadrant, I describe our present community water infrastructure and the situation with water quality and delivery of water to the people. I also rely upon technical information from Indian Services Canada and Health Canada. I explore this data to determine: the problems with the water infrastructure layout and service, the underlying cause for the present situation in terms of water delivery, and quality? Further, in the physical quadrant, the traditional uses of the water within the traditional territory are analyzed using traditional land use maps.

The western quadrant is the emotional quadrant, representing complexity. Understanding the complex relationship, we have with water is drawn from my life and experiences on the land and my participation in the Canoe Quest in 2017. Past traditional land use and occupancy baseline research of the GLFN for their land use planning process is relied upon and referenced as facts and examples to support the description of the water use and water relationship of GLFN.

The northern quadrant embodies wisdom. I draw upon Elders guidance and my extensive experience in work and academia, searching for wisdom of the community's social and economic aspects. What is my role, real or perceived, in this scenario and dynamic? What knowledge have people expressed to me during my extensive work and experience working with my First Nation and other First Nations, and what views and conclusions have I drawn from those expressions? I conclude to consider what possible future does GLFN has in this country and society we call Canada in the face of reconciliation, decolonization, and self-determination? These four quadrants are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: My Autoethnographic Exploration of the GLFN water relationship through the Medicine Wheel framework



To analyze each quadrant systematically and analytically, I used a learning process taught to me by Dakota Elder Wanbdi Wakita (personal communication), as previously mentioned. Elder Wakita shared with me that people learn in the following order: first, through our hearts, we feel the emotion; then, through our minds, we think through that emotion; next, through our bodies, we act upon that emotion and thought; and finally, through our spirits, we experience the action, emotion and thought altogether.

3.2 Community and territorial fieldwork

In 2017, I explored some of the components of the GLFN's relationship to water during two field trips. At the community level, in January, I visited the community for two weeks, talking

to key people (e.g., councillors, water treatment plant operators, water truck delivery driver). I also observed water delivery, sewage truck pickup, and toured the water treatment plants on the Mainland and the West Side. I also toured the community to see the parts serviced by the piped water system versus those areas having cisterns or water buckets.

At the territorial level, I accompanied the GLFN Canoe Quest 2017 for three weeks. From late July to early August, we paddled as part of a healing journey from God's Lake to Norway House Cree Nation. I documented this trip through photos, videos, and field notes. My intent of participating in the Quest was to experience the land and the ways of our ancestors. But I also draw upon my early life experiences on land hunting, fishing, trapping, guiding, and being out on the land, which, to this day, I continue to take time to return to experience the land and water.

3.3 Technical information review

I have accessed and reviewed public information, such as books and journal articles, but many private documents. I was given special access to GLFN documents due to my receipt of a band council resolution from the Chief and Council for this thesis work. I searched through the private and technical information of the Government of Canada on the community water system of the GLFN at the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada library pertaining to capital projects. The search yielded mainly technical consultant reports on the GLFN water system's engineering aspects ranging from the early 1990s to the early 2000s.

Similarly, I approached Health Canada to obtain drinking water quality data, and I met with the Environmental Health Officer that services GLFN. The officer provided an overview of the administrative aspects of the water system and the entities involved. Then I asked Health Canada for all the water test records for the community from 2011 to 2017. I extracted and analyzed the data points that exceeded zero (0) E. coli. This analysis I present and discuss in the findings.

Being an insider of the community (emic), I could access consultant's reports and community reports not available to outsiders (etic). As part of my past work with my community of GLFN, I retrieved my previous research on TEK, land use, and other areas in examining the relationship between GLFN and water. These interview notes, pictures, land use maps, global positioning system points, preliminary identification of sacred sites by Elders, Google Earth mapping, and a natural resources inventory are analyzed in this thesis. This information documents my personal journey exploring the relationship between GLFN and water governance.

3.4 Timeline analysis

To review historical developments, I looked at two scales for time, geological time, but also the shorter duration of human time, using the Gregorian calendar. The geological time scale (GTS) is a chronological system that relates geological layers (stratigraphy) to time. The Gregorian calendar is the annual year used by people around the world today. Indigenous time on Turtle Island (now called North America) goes way beyond the colonial time. One can say that Indigenous history includes or encompasses colonial history in North America but is not limited to that short timeframe. The timeline for this dissertation is first presented as the circular frame of the Medicine Wheel, and then the line of the wheel is straightened out for a linear representation

Chapter 4 : Findings

4.1 Introduction

My personal reflections related to water are intertwined with an academic analysis related to GLFN governance over water in this chapter. These findings are situated within the worldview of my Ininiw heritage guided by the Medicine Wheel framework. I learned this framework through the oral tradition of my Ininiw culture from many teachers, including my parents, Elders, spiritual people, and others. This chapter follows this medicine wheel format having four parts: Spiritual, Physical, Emotional, and Mental.

4.1.1 The Medicine Wheel

The Ininiw have a complex view of what constitutes a person or human being, considering these four aspects. The Medicine Wheel teachings consider four parts of a human being, namely: Aschak or Spirit, Oyasowin or Physical, Mitehiwin or Emotional, and Mamitonentamowin or Mental. These four parts can be arranged into a Medicine Wheel where the east represents the Spiritual quadrant. This is the beginning as in a day or the birth of a baby where the newborn possesses a spirit when the newborn enters this world. The quadrant to the south is the Physical representing the child going through a lot of physical growth at this stage of life. The west quadrant is the Emotional representing the adult. At this stage of life, you have the knowledge and confidence to deal with the complexities of your emotions. The quadrant to the north is the Mental representing the Elder who possesses wisdom having lived through life.

Before a person could be considered an adult or a fully functional human being contributing to the well-being of the people, the person had to learn their roles in the different stages of life. This usually takes a long time for a person to achieve. Although the time varies depending upon the person, typically a person becomes an adult in their mid-twenties (Bird, 2005; Raven and

Bjarnadóttir, 2013). A person goes through stages in life according to their development, and in the Ininiw language, the following words are used: Oski Awasis (translation: new child) refers to a newborn or baby, Awasis refers to a child, Kischí Ayahow refers to an adult, and Keteh Ayahow refers to an Elder. Each of these phases of life had roles and responsibilities in the family and group. These life stages correspond with each of the medicine wheel quadrants.

Individuals had to learn their roles and responsibilities, which were taught from an early age as children by the Elders. The Elders taught the children and took part in child-care, alongside the children's parents. The children formed the inner circle of family life, with the Elders who were their guides and teachers. The women formed the next outer circle and they took care of the Elders and the home, while the men formed the outermost circle hunting, providing for and protecting the family. As the children grew older, youth joined either the men or women, depending on their gender, who further taught them their roles and responsibilities in the family and group by teaching them the skills required in their gender role. Each stage of life and role had its own medicine and teaching bundle. In other words, the Awasis, Elders, women, and men each had their medicine and teaching bundles (Elder Barbara Hill, pers. comm., 2014). This is the organizational frame by which Ininiw society functioned, but I was never provided the knowledge of the existence of medicine bundles until, more recently, due to colonial influences.

Along with this knowledge of the stages of life, a person also had to learn certain teachings. A person is born with four of the teachings, honesty, kindness, love, and sharing. However, a person is also taught the additional teachings of humility, truth and caring (Bird, 2005). I believe that I was taught humility, truth and caring by my parents by example and reinforcement. These seven teachings are taught so people can have a "good life," consistent with the great law of Manitou, which is Respect. The great law of Respect is to guide a person's whole life in their dealings and

interactions with their fellow human beings, treatment of animals, relationship with the elements of the earth and all aspects of life. Manitou is very kind, caring, loving and forgiving, and we as human beings have to live according to the values of our Manitou, which is why the teachings are so virtuous. Simply put, this respect is tied to a person and their relationship to all of Creation, particularly water.

The medicine bundles were never a part of my upbringing when I was a child and I did not learn of them until recently in adulthood. Although no specific teachings were taught to me, I was taught my responsibilities in another way by reinforcement. I believe the traditional aspects of the Ininiw way of life and teachings were already oppressed in most households in GLFN by colonial forces before the time I was born. However, I do believe some teachings did survive. Although indirectly, teachings were passed on to me through my upbringing fostering a good work ethic, to strive to be strong, to be enthusiastic, to be kind and compassionate, to be generous, to be humble and to respect my parents and Elders. These align with the seven sacred teachings.

However, with respect to water and the role of women in my culture, I note that my mother was always the caretaker of the household. My mother required us to carry water from the lake to meet all the drinking and cleaning needs. This would be consistent with the teachings of Barbara Hill (2014) that the women took care of the household, including the Elders and children. We grew up under the instruction of our mother as children. We listened to our mother, including her request to carry water from the lake when water was required for drinking water, cooking, laundry, and other household chores. I also noticed, having no running water, that my mother was the one to prepare the water by heating it to wash our faces in the morning and made tea for the family every morning. Washing my face every morning is a teaching I practice everyday right to the present time. My observations regarding my mother's role with water indicate women's responsibility for

water in our Ininiw culture. As well, my mother took care of us children and the household while my father was away on the trapline for about two months every winter. However, I never learned or witnessed a spiritual or ceremonial connection to water in our Ininiw culture under the oppression of the colonial regime of Canada.

Getting back to my cultural learning, I also learned some of the Ininiw ways of life. I was taught to hunt, fish (angling and net), trap, canoe, boat, as well as bush survival skills and preparing fish, game birds and animals. These traditional outdoor skills are laden with values and philosophies. When you are taught these traditional skills, you learn aspects of the seven sacred teachings. As a child, I was never allowed to ask about “traditional” things, such as medicine, spirituality and so on. This taboo around lasted into my adolescence and adulthood. Not until I was into my late 30’s would I really begin to learn about my Ininiw spirituality. However, I learned bits and pieces over the years before then but not in a coherent or deliberate, articulated way.

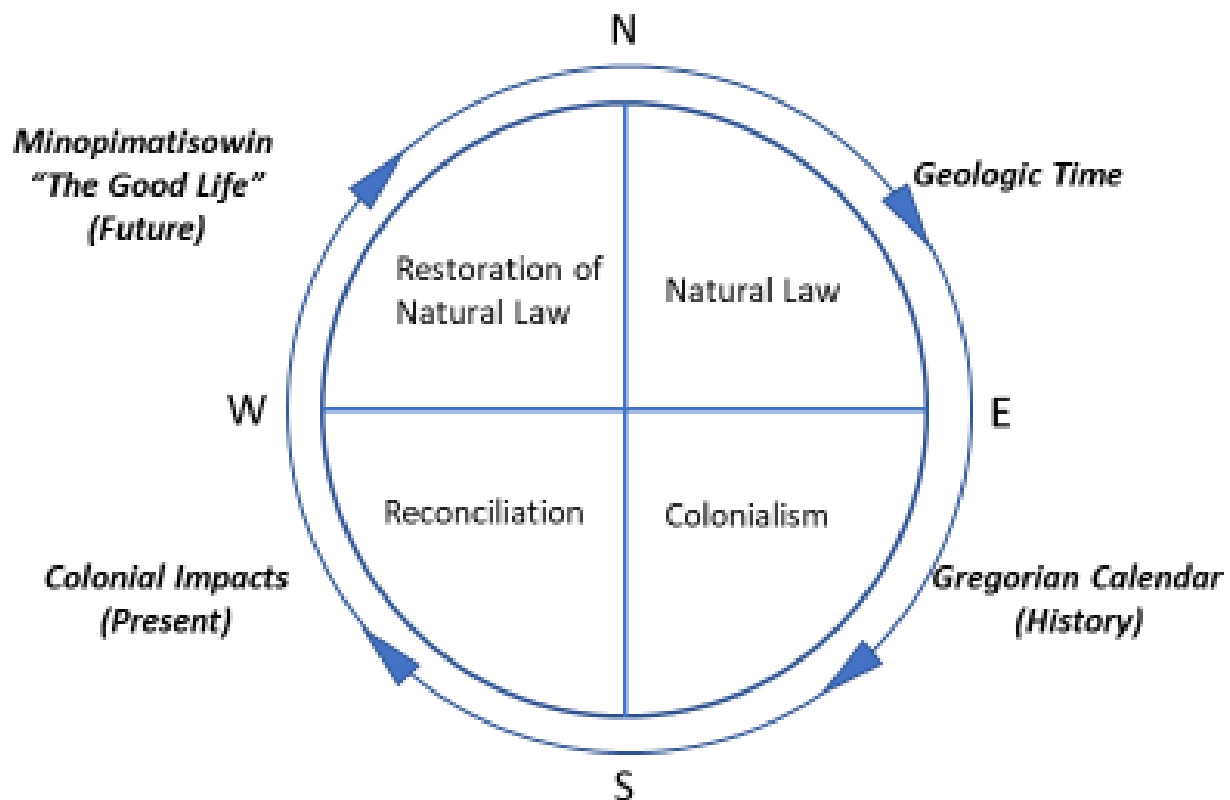
I learned that the Ininiw possess “extra” senses to aid them in their life. In addition to the five basic senses of touch, hearing, feel, smell, and sight, the Ininiw had four additional sensory capabilities. These extrasensory capabilities included a good sense of direction for the east, south, west, and north directions; the ability to sense danger, sense distress or the loneliness of a relative; and the ability to have dreams and visions (Bird, 2005). On a personal level, I have heard many stories of these “extrasensory” abilities and have experienced at least one of them and know people who have experienced these extra sensory perceptions. Elders have said back in the days of our ancestors and forebears, the Ininiw were so healthy that they could develop and tap into these extrasensory capabilities. In line with these abilities of an Ininiw person, such as the ability to sense danger, an Elder told me that if a person was very healthy, that person could sense something was wrong or to sense an oncoming event (H. Massan, pers. comm.).

The Ininiw knew that humans were weak, requiring assistance in order to survive. Ininiw sought this assistance from their beliefs and the spiritual realm. The ultimate goal is to live a “good life” according to Manitou's natural laws and implement beliefs and customary laws consistent with those natural laws and the great law of Respect. In this way, the Ininiw people were able to become masters of their environment, the boreal forest. For the Ininiw, everything was interconnected and wholistic, and water was a fundamental part of Creation and the sustenance of life. What I have shared to this point represent the components of the Ininiw worldview framework.

4.1.2 The timelines and findings

The Medicine wheel commences with the Spirit quadrant, which explores the Spirituality framework or Ininiw worldview and the era of natural law before the coming of the Europeans. The Spirit section is in geologic time, while the other quadrants - Physical, Emotional, and Mental timelines are in the Gregorian calendar. That is not to say that the geologic time scale does not exist today. It does exist. However, currently, we measure time using the Gregorian calendar. These timelines are displayed in the Medicine Wheel in Figure 4.1. The Physical quadrant examines the “colonialism” events of GLFN’s history; the Emotional quadrant analyzes the impacts from colonialism for “reconciliation;” and finally, the Mental quadrant examines the “restoration of natural law” and what is required to restore natural law.

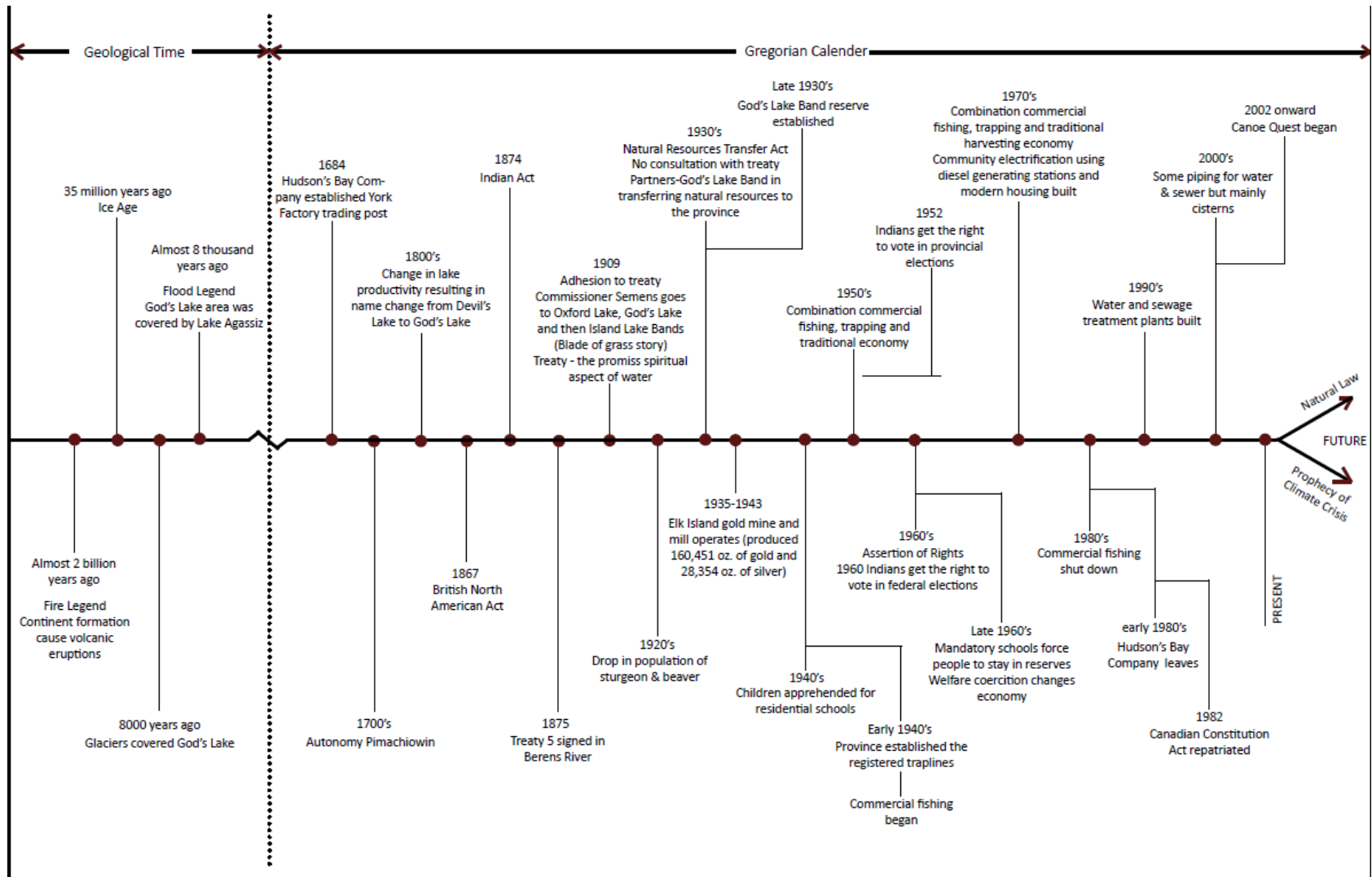
Figure 4.1: Medicine Wheel for GLFN in the geologic time scale, then the Gregorian calendar.



To show this timeline from the circle in figure 4.1 straightened into a linear representation is shown in Figure 4.2 with significant key milestone events noted for GLFN.

God's Lake is located on the Canadian shield, which is made of ancient rocks. These rocks are as old as four billion years, being some of the oldest rocks on Earth (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2019; Thompson, Harper and Whiteway, 2020). These rocks formed at God's Lake when tectonic plates collided creating volcanic mountains beginning more than three billion years ago. This shaping of the present-day continents, including Turtle Island, was largely completed about 800 million years ago. God's Lake was then shaped by glaciers formation and melting to form Lake Agassiz. A continental ice sheet formed during the Wisconsin glaciation period, covering most of central North America from 30,000 years ago to about 10,000 years ago.

Figure 4.2: Timeline of events in the history of the God's Lake First Nation.



The melting of the ice sheet created a glacial lake, which 13,000 years ago, covered all of what is now Manitoba, as well as northwestern Ontario, Saskatchewan and some of the United States. Lake Agassiz covered 440,000 km² (170,000 sq. mi), which is more expansive than any present-day lake in the world, being approximately the same area of the Black Sea. The final retreat of the ice shield to north of the border for the Canada-United States was around 10,000 years ago. Lake Agassiz refilled round 8,200 years ago. The remaining Hudson Bay ice melted which shifted the drainage to empty Lake Agassiz. Lake Agassiz's water contributed an estimated 2.6 to 9.2 ft. (0.8 to 2.8 m) rise in global sea levels. And this water and action formed God's Lake.

As Ininiw, we lived in the Gods' Lake region for millennia, with archaeological evidence putting the ancestors of the present-day Ininiw people in the area over 2000 years ago (Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation, 1989). People in the God's Lake region lived well according to the Medicine Wheel teachings and had "Minopimitisiwin" or a good life (Settee, 2014). Ininiw pursued a local wild food diet, including fish, moose, geese, and caribou, providing many health benefits. The archeological findings of ancient Indigenous skeletons displayed no arthritis, and excellent dental health, even for those with advanced ages (Thompson, Thapa, and Whiteway, 2019; Price, 1939). The wild food diet of the Ininiw provides significant pharmacologic and therapeutic benefits, with reduced sodium, unhealthy fats, carbohydrates, and sugar but abundant amounts of good-quality complete proteins and other nutrients (Batal et al., 2018). Further physiological benefits occur from the muscle-building and aerobic exercise involved in gathering, harvesting, and preparing wild food. These wild foods are protective against chronic diseases, including cancer, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and many other harmful health conditions (Thompson et al., 2012).

Harvesting by Ininiw occurs within a complex cultural system requiring ceremonies, stewardship, governance, and protocols (Settee, 2014). Aski and life are considered a gift from Manitou, with animals and plants agreeing to sacrifice themselves to Ininiw, for food, clothing, and housing, in exchange for humans stewarding the land (Settee, 2014). Spiritual practices are an critical part of all cultural practices (Thompson, Thapa, and Whiteway, 2019).

In 1670 the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), through a charter with the British Crown, legally, according to British laws, owned the land around God's Lake as part of Rupert's Land. England's royalty dictated that HBC had exclusive trade and colonial rights for all of the lands with rivers flowing into Hudson Bay, which includes the God's Lake region. This vast territory claimed by HBC included not only the region of God's Lake but the entire areas of Manitoba, west and northern Ontario, most of Saskatchewan, northern Québec and Labrador, south and central Alberta, as well as some of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and the United States (Thompson, Thapa and Whiteway, 2019).

This colonial land grab was based on the false assumption of *terra nullius*, which is Latin for empty land, and the doctrine of discovery (Palmer, 2014). *Terra nullius* was not the reality as Indigenous people fully occupied the land at that time. When in 1684, a trading post was established at York Factory, there was some interaction by the Ininiw of God's Lake with HBC fur traders. Even then, the Ininiw of God's Lake had no awareness of the Rupert's Land Charter and had not consented to this Charter. In 1825, HBC built a trading post in God's Lake, almost 200 years ago.

In 1909, the Chief of God's Lake signed an adhesion to Treaty 5 with the Dominion of Canada. As per the written Treaty, the Crown obligations were to provide hunting fishing and farming implements:

Provide 160 acres of land for a family of five or in the proportion for larger or smaller families,...maintain schools for instruction in reserve,...pay gratuity of five dollars in cash per person in extinguishment of all claims,...pay five dollars annuity per head,... [continue] right to pursue hunting and fishing throughout the tract [that is unoccupied],...pay sum of five hundred dollars per annum every year in the purchase of ammunition, and twine for nets, supply farming and gardening tools [that includes two hoes, one scythe, one axe and one spade per family; one plough for every ten families; five harrows for every twenty families; and one cross-cut saw, one hand-saw, one pit-saw, the necessary files, one grindstone, and one auger for each band], and compensate for the value of any improvements on the reserves” (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1969 para 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 23 & 24).

The oral accounts are very different from the written treaty, but even these limited terms of the written treaty were not kept.

At the time of the signing of the Adhesion to Treaty 5 in 1909, the taking of children to attend government and church-run residential schools had been in operation for decades in other reserves but not in the God’s Lake region. Most First Nation communities in Canada were inflicted in 1867 by this cultural genocide policy to “kill the Indian in the child.” The remote location of God’s Lake territory delayed Canada imposing its genocidal residential school policies until the mid-1900s. Although God’s Lake children did not escape residential school, the delay limited students taken away to residential schools to one generation, rather than the three or more generations of children stolen away to residential schools in far away communities. Before residential and day schools were imposed, the Ininiw went to the trapline for the fall, winter and spring. In the summer people camped together for different cultural events at gathering spots. To a certain extent, the people continued their seasonal rounds of moving with the various animal, bird and fish species their livelihood depended upon throughout the year.

4.2 Spirit: Natural Law, Ininiw worldview and spirituality

4.2.1 My Ininiw Spiritual Confusion

I was born into this world on July 15, 1966 with a Christian name of Stewart Lloyd Hill. I was born in Norway House, Manitoba, the nearest hospital to my home of God's River on the north shore of God's Lake. In most of my early life, I remember always wondering about what my Ininiw culture is and what the culture entailed. The only English word that comes to mind for this condition is "confusion" or feeling lost, searching for my Indigenous identity.

In my boyhood, all I knew was I lived in a small community and that there were things I needed to learn and do. I knew I needed to go to school and learn about the religion my mother wanted me to learn, the Catholic religion. There was no alternative way to live but I somehow knew that we, Ininiw, were different, having a close relationship to the land. In my boyhood years, God's Lake was always close by, and as a matter of fact, we lived close to the shoreline. I learned early how to fish and swim, and I remember my summers were filled with these activities, in addition to boating. My life seemed to center around water activities and water. This life "just is", meaning there was no thinking about it. That was life and the environment, and was unquestionable, just as the way a fish would not wonder about being in the water.

However, as a boy, I remember wondering, "Who are we?" At the time, I did not know the enormity of this simple three-word question. It would be decades into my life before I would find an answer. I must clarify what I meant by this question: I mean, who we as the Ininiw people of God's Lake are? No person from God's Lake and few who speak Swampy Cree have written about their experiences. However, a number of non-Indigenous people have written about community development in the God's Lake region (Unger, 1969), Hwacha (1999) on forest fire management. Giesbricht (1972) on the deformational history of God's Lake Narrows. A journal paper was

recently published looking at Burton's interactive website, God's Lake Narrows (Gaertner, 2015). So, this thesis provides an important contribution to Indigenous writing for the God's Lake region.

This question of who we are as Ininiw remained throughout my youth and into most of my adult life. I try to answer who we are as a people, as Ininiwak, in this chapter. I mainly document the spiritual aspect of our beliefs and way of life after many years of land use mapping and cultural research with Ininiw (Cree) communities. After a few years of working with Fox Lake Cree Nation as a community history researcher in 2004, I learned the basic framework of our Ininiw spirituality and beliefs. This knowledge had not been accessible to me at school, home, or community due to colonization sending these beliefs underground. At the beginning of researching the Fox Lake Cree history, my questions about Ininiw beliefs and spirituality met with resistance, but I kept asking. After a while, a spiritual person we interviewed would later invite me into a conversation stating, "I know what you are asking, you have asked about five or six times, so let me explain."

4.2.2 My Ininiw spiritual enlightenment

Ininiw spiritual beliefs were briefly explained to me. In the beginning was Manitou (pronounced Manto), the Creator, (Bial, 2006) who resides in a place known as Kischikisikohk (akin to heaven as in Christianity and pronounced Kis-chi-kee-si-kohk). When Manitou wanted to create the universe and the earth, Manitou called upon the many spirits that are beyond our comprehension in the number who reside in Kischikisikohk. Four spirits came forward in no particular order: Nipi (water), Notin (air), Iskwetew (fire), and Aski (soil or mineral). With these four elements, Manitou created the universe and the earth. First, to be created, were the plants and all the vegetation, and these creations were given the gift of being able to see into the future. Next to be created, were the animals and they were given the gift to be able to see into the spirit world. Last to be created were the humans who were given the responsibility to be the caretakers of the

earth.

When the Ininiw wanted to understand the world, they began to record and pass down their knowledge through stories and legends according to their oral tradition. The stories and legends that exist in the Ininiw culture are numerous and are said to be able to fill a massive library. With my limited knowledge, I know of three legends, which mention water and lakes. These legends were told to me by Elders of the Fox Lake Cree Nation with whom I worked from 2002 to 2007. I condensed these legends here, from versions that take Elders an hour to two hours to tell.

The legends of the Ininiw involves a trickster who is half human and half spirit known as Wisakechak (pronounced wee-sa-keh-chak), who was gifted with special powers, such as the ability to change shape and communicate with animals. The first legend has Wisakechak walking through the forest and comes upon some spruce hens sitting on a spruce tree. He asks them, “Who are you?” The spruce hens respond by saying they are “Okoskoniwesisak” or birds that startle. Wisakechak laughs at them and makes fun of them, saying “You are nothing but little birds and cannot scare anything”. He keeps walking and comes upon a creek, which he has jumped over many times. This time is no different, and he makes a running start. But just as he jumps, a bunch of spruce hens jumps up with a loud flutter of wings, startling Wisakechak so badly that he lands in the middle of the creek in a big white splash of water. The teaching of this legend is that you have to respect everything, no matter how small. If you do not, a similar thing will happen to you as happened to Wisakechak because he disrespected the spruce hens. Respect must guide you in your interactions with all living things and in your attitude.

The second legend has Wisakechak standing in front of a lake of fat that he had made intending to give all of the animals of the forest some fat so that they may keep warm. He called all of the animals together. But told them to wait and sit patiently until they were called one by one.

However, out of the forest comes running the rabbit who does not stop or slow down but jumps right into the lake of fat to beat everybody to the supply of fat. Wisakechak was furious and ordered the rabbit out of the lake of fat and punished the rabbit by only giving him a little bit of fat. To this day, the rabbit only has a line of fat along the waistline because of impatience. The teaching behind this legend is always to be patient because if you are not, a similar thing will happen to you as happened to the rabbit. And you will not receive what you are seeking or wanting.

The third story, according to the Elders, is a very long legend taking over an hour to two hours to tell. Again, Wisakechak is walking along in the forest. This time with his pet wolf. Every now and then, the wolf runs off and comes back, similar to how dogs behave. After a while, the wolf does not come back, and Wisakechak becomes worried and goes looking for his wolf. He finds that his wolf has been captured by the Misipisiwak (mi-si-pi-so-wak) or giant water cats. Wisakechak finds them playing roughly with his wolf, throwing the wolf back and forth between them until they kill the wolf. Wisakechak is mad and begins to seek vengeance for his wolf. He turns himself into a tree and waits for the water cats to come ashore, and eventually, they do and begin sunning themselves on the rocks. They drift in and out of sleep, looking up every time they awaken, and every time they go back to sleep, Wisakechak, disguised as a tree, moves closer.

Finally, Wisakechak gets close enough and kills one of the water cats. He runs off while being chased by the other water cats. As he is running, he grabs a piece of earth and sticks it into a tree, knowing that the water cats, in their anger, will flood the earth. Sure enough, after a while, the earth began to flood but Wisakechak was ready to build a boat. He tries to devise a way to get the piece of earth he had stuck on the tree as he was running from the water cats' way below at the bottom of the water.

The beaver comes and offers his help, but Wisakechak refuses and hits the beaver. Next comes

the otter, and Wiskechak ties a rope around the otter to get the piece of earth, but the otter does not make it and drowns. Next comes the muskrat, and Wisakechak does the same thing by tying a rope on the muskrat and down into the depths goes the muskrat. He waits for a long time and finally pulls up the muskrat, and in his paws are the piece of earth he had left on the tree. With this piece of earth, he makes land amongst all the water.

This legend tells about the flood when water (perhaps Lake Agassiz) flooded over God's Lake and northern Manitoba. The scientific story of Lake Agassiz in North America is well documented (Redekop, 2017), and the legend reiterated above is a record of that event. This legend is a "record" of a significant event in the earth's history. The earth has gone through several "cleansings" and upheavals in its history. The first transformation was by the fire, where volcanoes formed the continents that reshaped the world. The legend associated with this fire transformation involves a robin and a ring of fire. The next time the earth went through a transformation was by ice, during the "ice ages," which has its legend. The last transformation was by water, and that is the legend of the muskrat helping Wisakechak. A prophecy arising from these legends is that if humans are not careful and do not uphold their responsibility to care for the earth, the next transformation will be by air and this might be the climate change or global warming we see today.

Legends were used to teach and record pre-historical and historical events, but they were also used for entertainment. Winter is known as the time for storytelling, but these stories were told at bedtime all year long. There are different types of legends and stories in the form of Atanokan (ah-ta-noh-kan) and Tipachimowin (ti-pah-chi-mo-win). Atanokan(ah) are legends that are beyond living memory and involve "personages" that take on powerful or even mystical qualities (Bird, 2005). Tipachimowin(a) are stories of people in recent events known to or remembered by the storyteller (Bird, 2005). Achimowina is a general word in the Cree language for stories. Legends

were historical events used to teach the upcoming generation (Bird, 2005).

Indigenous knowledge is extensive about life and the natural world in all the aspects of human existence, as depicted in the Medicine Wheel with quadrants of spirit, physical, emotional, and mental. For example, most Ininiw people also possessed general knowledge of medicinal plants that aided them in taking care of themselves, and that knowledge continues to survive to this day. It seems the older the person, the more knowledge they have, which is a natural general trend or process. General knowledge of plants is probably not as extensive as in the past but most Ininiw do know some of them. To illustrate, Weches (pronounced Wee-kesh) is a very common plant root that people know: the muskrat root or mint root used for common ailments such as a sore throat, cough or cold. Weches (rat root) is a very good example of a medicinal plant that grows in water and is a source of food for water animals such as the muskrat.

The values and beliefs of the Ininiw provided the codes of conduct by which individuals must conduct and govern themselves. The values were such things as to be kind to your fellow human beings. To show your respect to people and everything around you. To be enthusiastic in work and pursuit of the hunt. To be strong in your body and mind. And to never quit. These are things that have been told to me by my parents and Elders. These values are connected to Manitou's belief, the supreme being, and how these values are a reflection of the will of Manitou. If you live by Manitou's values, then you are assured a good life, here and in eternity. There is a belief in an afterlife and the existence of a spirit world.

Trained people in the Ininiw culture with higher forms of knowledge were known as the Mitewono (Mitew for short, pronounced mih-tew-wono), commonly referred to as the Medicine Man or Shaman in English. A Mitewono is a person who is gifted and has knowledge of medicine and the supernatural. According to my late father, not just any person can be a Mitewono because

a person has to be “gifted” or trained for their calling their entire life. The root word of Mitewono is “mitehi” (mi-teh-hi) which means “heart”, so a Mitewono is a “good hearted” person or the “gifted one.”

Of course, further intricacies and detail are part of this whole system or worldview and a person can spend a lifetime studying and learning from it. However, the Ininiw worldview is presented here in this summarized form to give the reader a glimpse. This worldview is a process or way of life that connects with all things, including water.

This system enabled the Ininiw to survive in a harsh environment according to the concept of Pimachihowin (pi-mach-chi-ho-win), which, in its most literal translation, means survival. In the Ininiw language, Pimatisowin (pi-ma-ti-sowin) is the word for “life,” and Pimachiowin (pi-mach-chi-ho-win) is the word for the maintenance of life or survival (Settee, 2011). To further define the maintenance of life is the word Minopimatisowin, which means a good life. According to the Indigenous perspectives on education, the concept of Minopimatisowin, or “living well,” the best way forward to achieve sustainable livelihoods is through Indigenous education (Settee, 2011).

Water is a vital component of the maintenance of life. Minopimatisowin is tied to the values and teachings of the Ininiw culture, such as being respectful, being honest, being kind, working hard, being enthusiastic, and being spiritual, which are consistent with the seven teachings mentioned earlier in this dissertation. These teachings are similar to the seven teachings of the Anishinaabe people, but for the Ininiw, there are a few differences. However, the common point of the values and teachings is to guide an individual in a good way with positive reinforcement. I have drawn this conclusion from talking to and listening to my Elders, my life experiences as an Ininiw, and from knowledge gained by formal and informal interviews.

4.2.3 Learning about the Sweat Lodge

One of my earliest teachers of Indigenous spirituality in the late 1990's was a traditional man from the Ojibway community of Hollow Water located on the east side of Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba by the name of Garry Raven who passed away in 2010. For a course I co-taught, Garry took us twice to his camp at his community known as Raven's Creek. Part of the course experience for the students was learning how to conduct environmental audits while incorporating traditional knowledge into the process. Garry would conduct a sweat lodge ceremony for the instructors and students for the traditional knowledge part of the course in the evenings. Garry referred to them as "teaching sweats," to teach us about the sweat lodge and to give us the experience. He taught water is a healing element, which is called "Medicine" within the sweat lodge.

When you enter a sweat lodge, you purify yourself with water from the steam created by the splashing of water on the hot rocks called "Grandfathers". As part of the ceremony, you pray over four rounds, the sacred number similar to the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel described in this dissertation. By the very process of sweating, you physically cleanse yourself but also mentally, emotionally, and spiritually through prayer and talking about things that are bothering you or hurting you. When you are in the sweatlodge, you are at one with the Creator, and you can talk to the Creator, the Spirits and the Ancestors. You release all aspects of yourself that may be negative or negatively impacting your life. You are free to participate in any way you choose that is comfortable for you and that feels safe for you as you open yourself up and become vulnerable. If you need to cry, then you are free to cry as the name of the sweat lodge means in the Ininiw language: Matotisan. The Ininiw word "Mato" means "to cry" and "-tisan" describes the structure. The sweat lodge is a purification ceremony that aids in the healing process, using the healing element of water. The way I describe the sweat lodge here is only my interpretation and may not

necessarily be the same as others as the sweat lodge experience is personal. Individuals are free to utilize the sweat lodge in the way that works for them. In this sense, sweat lodges provide the true meaning and action of freedom.

Only at the age of 38 years old in 2004, would I learn of my Ininiw spirituality. Since then, I have progressed in learning more of my spirituality. I incorporate spirituality into my way of living by participating in sweat lodges, prayer, striving to see the world in a spiritual sense, and participating in church. I believe I have made progress but have also realized that spirituality is a way of life. I have incorporated components of my lived experience into my spirituality, including the Christian legacy of my Catholic upbringing left to me by my late parents and later, the adoption of my wife's United Church denomination as well as exploring my inherent Indigenous being. Through Indigenous eyes and understanding, I have pursued spirituality: learning from the bible, priests, ministers, pastors, evangelists, and others, daily prayer, listening to Indigenous ideologies and philosophies, participating in sweat lodges, learning from Indigenous spiritual people and Elders, reading scripture, learning from nature and most importantly of all, being aware of my relationship to the Great Manitou (Creator). I do this to make meaning and continue to heal from past traumas and to pursue the good life.

4.2.4 My Significant Memories of Water

Growing up as a boy in the small community of God's River, my parents taught me how to speak Ininiw and live the Ininiw way of life in combination with formal colonial schooling in English at a day school run by the Government of Canada. As a boy, I did not question these things because school was just something I had to do, and this represented, from what I know now, the colonial imposition of education upon the Ininiw way of life. Today, when I look back on this colonial imposition of education, I believe the experience prepared me for the modern world.

However, on the traditional side of life, from an early age, I was taught how to hunt by hunting little birds with a slingshot. Then I graduated to spruce hens and rabbits in my adolescence with either a slingshot or snares. As I got older, I was given a pellet gun to hunt small game and then eventually given a .22 caliber rifle and shotgun to hunt ducks and geese. I learned by observing mainly my father and older brother but other male relatives as well. This on-the-land education provides both practical and spiritual training, where one must learn to live in harmony with the environment to survive. This learning to live with nature is considered to be as much a learning of values as learning of skills (Thompson, Harper, and Whiteway, 2020). As such, this learning is vital for water governance.

While growing up as a boy in God's River one significant memory stands out with respect to water regarding an incident where I nearly drowned. I remember clearly this traumatic event when I was swimming as I always did during the summers. After eating, I went back into the water against the advice of my parents. While swimming from a reef to a dock, I became extremely tired and tried to swim back to the reef. However, due to the extreme fatigue I felt, I panicked and began to flail in the water and started going under the water's surface. At one point, I gave up and went down to the bottom, but once my feet hit bottom, I pushed up with all the strength I had. Fortunately for me, there was an older boy swimming in the area and I grabbed at him. He was able to get me to a shallow area safely. That boy who saved me is a friend of mine to this day. When we converse sometimes, he tells of that day he saved my life.

I did not realize the spiritual significance of my boyhood near-drowning experience until I became an adult. One of the things I picked up again and continued in my later life was to attend church, adopting my wife's United Church denomination, which was also my late father's denomination. While attending one of the services, I happened to hear an older gentleman recount

in front of the congregation his near-drowning experience as a young boy. He likened his near-drowning experience as his “baptism” by water and how the experience was meant to happen as part of his collective life experience. I have come to believe the same as this gentleman that my near-drowning experience was meant to happen and represented my “baptism” in the water of God’s Lake, my home and ancestral territory. Baptism brings spirit and water together, illustrating the transformational power of water. I have also learned from one of my Anishinaabe teachers that water is a healer, a healing element of the earth. I believe this to be true.

Going back to my boyhood, our family moved from the small community of God’s River to the bigger community of God’s Lake Narrows (God’s Lake First Nation) in 1979. The way of life in both communities was similar, as neither had running water or sewage services except for at the school, nursing station, store, and non-Aboriginal housing and buildings (Island Lake Tribal Council, 1984). My mother required us to carry water with buckets and store the water in containers in the house. I remember myself and my siblings taking turns getting water from the shoreline in the summer in buckets and carrying to the house. In the winter, a hole was chopped in the ice to obtain water to carry. In the spring, the ice hole was moved further away from the shore to protect against runoff contaminating the drinking water.

Hauling water in this fashion was almost a daily chore to be done in any weather conditions, hot or cold, rain or shine, calm or storm, and day or night. The amount of water carried up to the house in buckets, and the frequency depended upon how much water was stored in the house, which increased on laundry days. My mother would then cook, clean, and wash up with it, and we would all drink this water. The water in the house was used for drinking, cooking, cleaning, washing, and of course, personal hygiene, such as washing your hands and face. No baths or showers existed in those days, so summer swimming was a welcome change.

The hauling of water in those days was laborious as the pails were heavy, usually five-gallon pails on each hand. I started doing this at about six years old with smaller pails and then gradually using bigger, five-gallon pails as I grew in age and strength. This carrying of water in pails from the shoreline to the house continued until I left for the south to finish my Grade 12 in Brandon, Manitoba, when I was 16 years old in 1983. Although my younger brothers took over the water hauling duties after I left, when no children remained, and my parents became elderly, the First Nation band hired a person to haul water for them. Right up to the day my parents left their house on the reserve around 2006, when they were in their 70's and 80's they never had running water. The bucket toilet also had to be dumped on a continuous and regular basis, which they did. The year 2006 is fairly recent and other community members remain without running water at this time. I wonder why people are living like this in this day and age in such a rich developed country like Canada.

Thinking back to those days, I see how hauling water taught me a good work ethic, sacrifice, strengthened me physically, taught me cooperation as I took turns hauling water. This daily chore of hauling water resulted in my gaining a physical and mental toughness that is not always the norm in today's world. These unspoken lessons were just a part of life, and to haul water was part of my role and contribution to the family. However, I felt a sense of injustice when the remainder of the population in Canada is privileged to have running water. However, the homes of Indigenous people on reserve often lack running water, for merely being who we are.

A psychological process is also in play, as I saw a better life with running water, which intensified my desire or ambition to have such services or a life with such services. I saw piped water and sewage in the towns and cities and wanted this running water too. Particularly, when I returned home to GLFN, I lived without running water with my own family from mid-1995 to

1997 after becoming accustomed to running water after living in Thompson, Manitoba. Although this comparison wore on me mentally, I just continued living the best way I could, realizing that not everybody has the strength to live this way of life. In June of 1997, I would move my family to Winnipeg, Manitoba for job and education opportunities, and running water. I think now that the privilege of living and raising my children in my wife's and my homeland was taken away from me due to the lack of running water and the other colonial processes marginalized our people, the Ininiw.

So how did I end up in a doctoral program where the study was about water and First Nations? I had never intended to pursue doctoral studies. However, before coming into the doctoral program under the H2O CREATE program's auspices, I struggled with finding employment for two years and was living on small contracts that did not pay the bills, including the rent. As a result, my family was suffering due to insufficient income. In my prayers, I asked for something "full time and permanent" to come into my life but never imagined the opportunity to pursue full-time doctoral studies on First Nations relationship to water and its governance.

Sometimes I wondered how I ended up in a water program to study our (First Nations) relationship to water. Then I remembered this dream I had one time long ago, and I always wondered what that dream meant. I was back in God's River, and as I looked out to the deepest part of God's Lake, known as Mantounakosihk (Man-cho-na-ko-sihk). Mantounakosihk has a set of three islands, known as the Spirit Islands, which is the site of an event whereby God's Lake got its name. In my dream, I saw a "tornado" of water, as large or larger than a giant skyscraper, arising out of God's Lake near Spirit Islands. Upon reaching its full height, this water spout became shaped like a hand with a pointing finger. The finger pointed at me. I became scared as that tower of water was so huge, and I tried to hide. But the finger kept following me no matter where I tried to hide.

I believe the dream was telling me that studying or writing about water governance at God's Lake as Indigenous people was important. Alternatively, perhaps, the dream is related to my baptism event mentioned earlier. Such is the nature of our Indigenous beliefs and knowledge in that dreams include the known and the unknown. This dream is observed and considered holistically with other events, in this case, my relationship and, by extension, my people's relationship to water, which became the focus of my doctoral studies.

4.3 Physical: the GLFN water system under colonialism

In the physical quadrant, I describe our present community water infrastructure and the situation with water quality and delivery of water to the people. I describe how our community is structured and laid out physically, and how the water infrastructure services the community and its people. What is the situation, the issues and problems, and what is the underlying cause for the present situation? The baseline of the water delivery and quality in the community is laid out and described in detail with accompanying photos. Further, in the physical quadrant, the traditional uses of the water within the traditional territory is presented and described.

4.3.1 GLFN Water System

The GLFN community is depicted in the Google Earth in Map 4.1. The map shows how the community housing follows the shoreline of GLFN to allow easy access to the lake in most places, considering how recent piped water was to most of these areas and that we are lake people. This lower density layout makes water delivery costly. Depending on where the Ininiw live in GLFN, they have a different level of water/sewage service. Some are serviced by piped water and others by truck to cistern delivery of water/sewage for potable water.

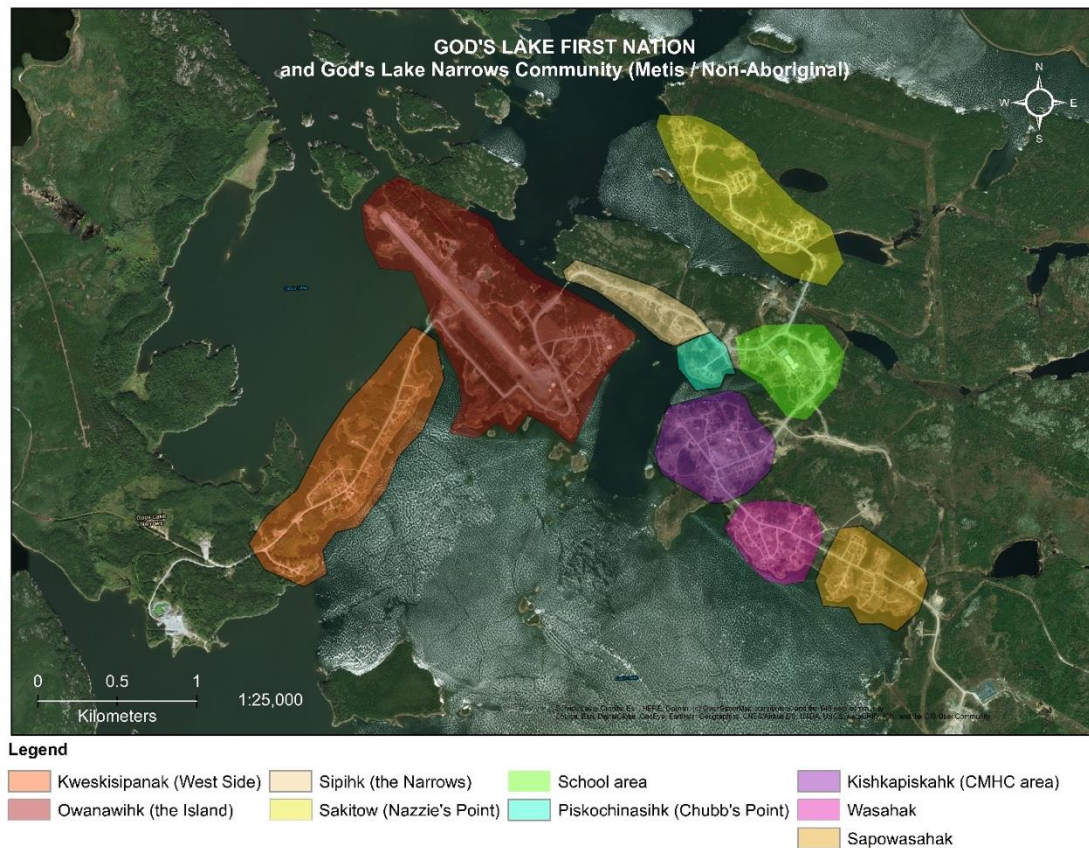
Map 4.1: General layout of the GLFN community on the Reserve established under the 1909 Adhesion to Treaty 5 with the God's Lake Narrows Metis and Non-Aboriginal community. (Source: Google Earth).



The GLFN neighbourhoods each have specific names. “Kweskisepanahk” is on the west side. The “Island” or “Owanawehk” is in the center where the Metis and non-Aboriginal community resides. “Sipihk” is the channel or narrows. “Piskochinasihk” or Chubb’s Point is the school area. “Kishkapiskahk” or high rocky area is where the Band Office is located, as well as where the CMHC housing area or central area is. “Wasahak” is the bay area. “Sapowashak” is the far end of the bay area. And the northern area is “Sakitow” or Nazzie’s Point after the main family that settled in the area. The main water treatment plant is located at Kishkapiskahk and services the area in the vicinity including the band office, the CMHC housing, the bay area, school area and some of the

narrows area. The west side is serviced by a water treatment plant of its own, but Nazzie's Point is serviced by an untreated water system that also has trucks delivering to cisterns or barrels the potable drinking water delivery. These areas are identified in Map 4.2 on the Google Earth map.

Map 4.2: Different areas of the GLFN community by Ininev name



The different level of water/sewage service is neighbourhood-dependent with some serviced by piped water but most serviced by truck to cistern delivery of water/sewage for potable water. Some have barrels only for potable water. The water delivery and supply is indicated for each area below:

Kweskisipanahk (West Side) – Mostly piped water from a water treatment plant with the newer houses using cisterns until they are connected to the piped system;

Owanawehk (Island) – Non-aboriginal and Metis community serviced by piped water by the provincial Northern Affairs department;

Sipihk (The Narrows) – Piped water system with the newer houses on cisterns until they can be hooked up to the piped water system;

Piskochinasihk (Chubb's Point) – Piped water connected to the main system;

School area – Piped water connected to the main system;

Sakitow (Nazzie's Point) – Cisterns or barrels for potable water with a non-treated water system that can be upgraded to a treated system but classified as a non-potable water system;

Kishkapiskahk (Band Office and CMHC area) – Mostly piped water from a water treatment plant with the newer houses using cisterns until they are connected to the piped system;

Wasahak - Piped water system with the newer houses on cisterns until they can be hooked up to the piped water system; and

Sapowashak – Use of cisterns or barrels for their water and sewage.

God's Lake First Nation had more than half of its water tests from cisterns come back unsatisfactory from April 2015 to March 2016 (Annable, 2016). The water from cisterns failed to meet Health Canada drinking standards when tested, with high bacteria levels. God's Lake First Nation had the highest contamination rate in Manitoba despite a low test rate, with only 27 tests for the 86 cisterns on reserve in one year (Annable, 2016). Health Canada officials commented about the need to increase monitoring within their safety program to their goal of sampling every cistern twice per year. Although some First Nations, such as Norway House, conducted 1,600 tests on their 811 cisterns in one year, God's Lake did not (Annable, 2016).

The truck-to-cistern water system presents challenges for water quality due to the difficulty of cleaning trucks and cisterns, with both highly susceptible to contamination and needing regular cleaning. Water in cisterns has both quality issues, having high rates of bacterial contamination

(Lebel & Reed, 2010; IAND, 2006) and quantity issues, with many people reporting running out of water. These health concerns of truck-to-cistern water systems demand that piped water infrastructure replace cisterns. The delivery of water to cisterns provides a temporary solution for potable water. However, the truck-to-cistern water system is not a long term solution, having a high cost for continuous water delivery and maintenance, and being high risk for contamination (Mi, 2018).

4.3.2 Community Research Trip: January 2017

I analyze the water system during a trip conducted in January 2017. At that time, I met with Chief and Council members, community members, water treatment plant operators, water delivery truck operator and sewage truck operator to discuss water issues. This meeting was also a link to my earlier land use planning process, which considered water and land use. I was able to discuss water use in reporting to the GLFN land working group on the progress of the land (and water) use planning process for the community. We discussed the undertaking of a source water protection planning process, which was my original thesis focus, which later shifted. The community was willing to cooperate with the research by appointing a working group and I believe it demonstrates the GLFN's capacity to mobilize and participate in research.

During this trip, I toured the two water treatment plants having membrane filter technology, with the water treatment plant operator and his assistant. I spent a whole day with the water delivery truck to get a sense of the process of water delivery and the issues associated with the house cisterns. A half-day was also spent with the sewage truck operator while he went on pickup and disposal rounds on the west side of the community. First-hand observation was experienced of the treatment plant operation, water delivery system via water truck, house pick up of sewage and pump out at the sewage treatment plant, realizing the difficulties with water delivery and

possible contamination points. This trip re-familiarized me with the community situation and allowed me to interact with the people and workers responsible for the community water treatment operation. I took many photos of the issues that trip.

My accompaniment of the water delivery truck and delivery person yielded a number of interesting observations. We began our water delivery rounds early in the morning about 8:00 am and went until about 5:00 pm that evening. However, the water delivery person indicated he would be delivering water in the evening as well and that 12 to 14-hour days were not uncommon.

The water delivery person mentioned many problematic issues with delivering water:

- only a limited number of water fill-ups can be made within a day, with each fill-up taking approximately one hour;
- insufficient water personnel for water delivery, where ideally two people should be accompanying the water truck, but only one is sometimes available;
- water and sewage trucks sometimes break down preventing the required water delivery, so households run out of water, or prevent the carting away the sewage for sometimes long periods, resulting in sewage overflow;
- digital rather than dial measuring devices are needed for the water treatment plant;
- need measuring gauges on the cisterns to assist the water delivery drivers, to prevent spillage;
- average water delivered daily is 35,000 gallons per day or 247,000 gallons per week;
- water delivery people are subjected to abuse from residents as they are blamed for the problems in the system;
- water delivery drivers work long hours, around 12-hour days;
- some households only use barrels or other containers, not cisterns; and
- dragging the nozzle on the ground is a contamination source, so the job requires two people to deliver water but has only one.

The water delivery person identified many problems with cisterns:

- cisterns freeze and crack;
- cisterns get contaminated from debris or mice;
- the cisterns need to be cleaned on a regular basis;

- use of wood chipboard to house the cistern can be a source of contamination as the chipboard rots when wet;
- people use heaters to keep the water from freezing; and
- cisterns located in the crawl spaces are difficult to access.

To give the reader a sense of the layout and structures being noted in the foregoing section and their appearance, pictures were taken during the community visit and water delivery rounds.

Photo 4.1: The bigger mainland water treatment plant (left) compared to the smaller West Side (Kweskisipanahk) plant and the water truck fill-up station at each of the plants.



Photo 4.2: Water truck filling at the mainland water treatment plan with a close-up shot of the water hose.



Photo 4.3: Water delivery to plywood encased water cisterns come with insulation to keep the water from freezing and with heaters, as in picture on the right, which also shows debris in water.

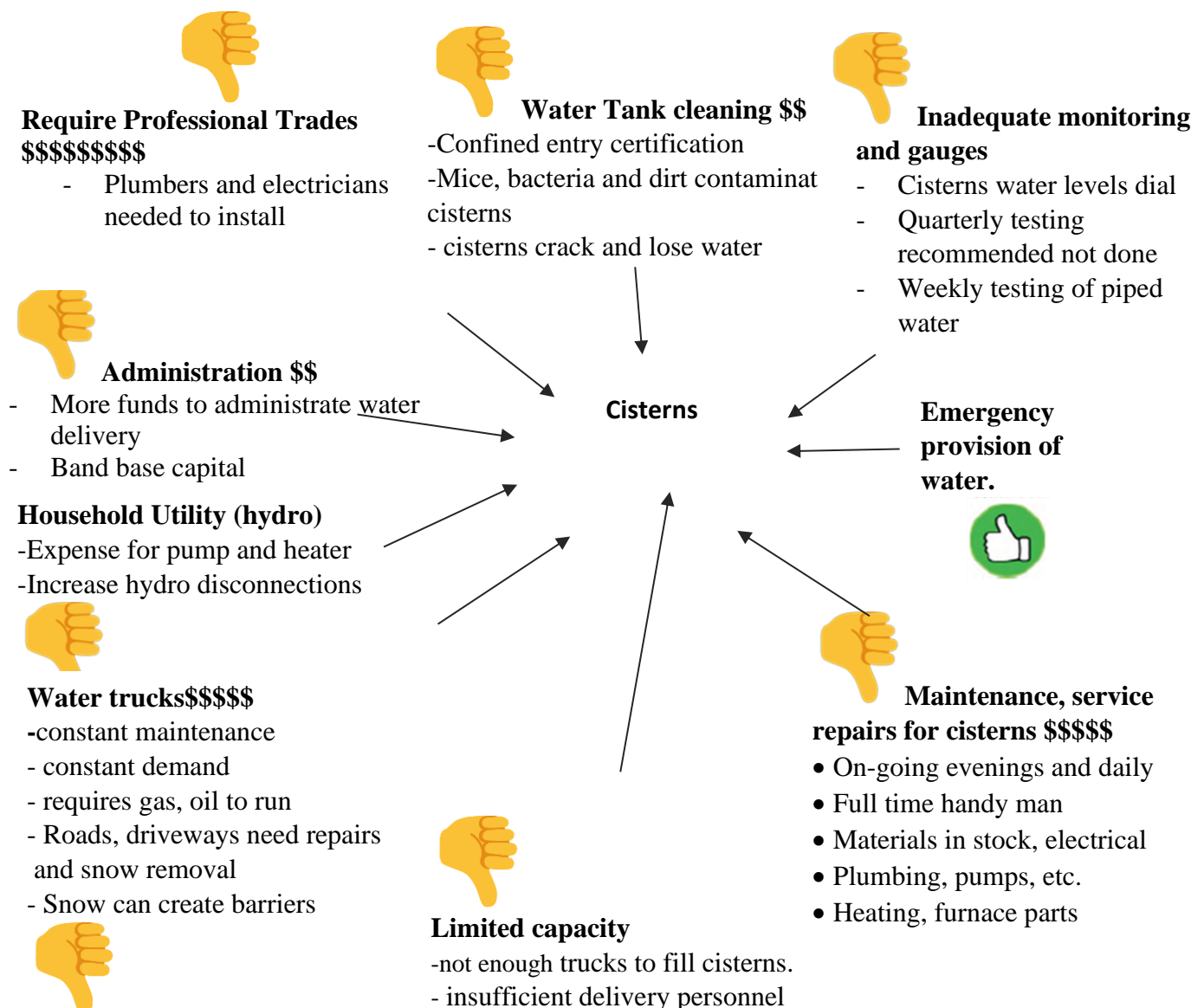


Photo 4.4: This house has a pipe on the outside leading to its cistern located in the crawlspace. The cisterns located on the inside of the crawlspace are hard to access as evidenced by the struggle to take this picture by the researcher. Such an access issue would make cleaning of the cistern very difficult, if not impossible.



Further, concerning cisterns, Figure 4.3.3 demonstrates the various aspects of cisterns that are deficient in the delivery and supply of potable water to the people of the GLFN.

Figure 4.3: The deficiencies of the use of cisterns for delivery and supply of water.



4.3.3 Federal Government and Health Canada water data

I requested a Band Council Resolution (BCR) from the GLFN Chief and Council to obtain the First Nation's data and information. This BCR allowed me to access the library of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and review engineering consultant reports generated to install the piped water system in the GLFN community. The BCR was also used to access five years of water testing data from Health Canada, which had the effect of a Freedom of Information Act request from the researcher. The data provided by Health Canada were from 01/01/2011 to 12/31/2017. The data is available in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, with the findings displayed in graphs 4.1 and 4.2. The Nazzie's Point pumphouse only services a certain number of houses and has no treatment but had treatment at one point in time. Who built the isolated Nazzie's Point system is unclear? Water tests for Nazzie's Point from 2005 to 2014 resulted in a high number of boil-water advisories. As a result, Health Canada decided to categorize it as a non-potable water system in 2014 (labeled Austin Nazzie Pumphouse PWS). This re-categorization did not lift the boil water advisory, which flags the system as not meeting guidelines. About 16 homes are on that system in the Nazzie's Point area.

Table 4.1: Comparison of Levels of Exceedances of the Three Water Systems in God's Lake First Nation from years 01/01/2011 to 12/31/2017.

Water systems in God's Lake First Nation	Maximum MPN/100 ml	Average MPN/100 ml	Minimum MPN/100 ml
God's Lake Austin Nazzie Pumphouse PWS	200	23.98	1
God's Lake PWS	200	15.32	1
God's Lake Westside Water Treatment Plant PWS	200	12.92	1

Note: Occasionally, bacteria results will be expressed as “MPN,” which is an acronym for Most Probable Number. MPN is determined by estimating based on a statistical relationship to determine the number of bacteria in your sample.

Table 4.2: Comparison of the number of Exceedances for the Three Water Systems in God's Lake First Nation from years 01/01/2011 to 12/31/2017.

	Number of exceedances from Jan. 1 2011 to Dec. 31 st 2017		
WATER SYSTEM	RAW	TREATED	OTHER
God's Lake Austin Nazzie Pumphouse PWS (Nazzie's Point)	80	13	26
God's Lake PWS	329	2	2
God's Lake Westside Water Treatment Plant PWS	308	1	5

Figure 4.4: Comparing exceedances of Water Quality standards between Nazzie's Point pumphouse, the mainland water treatment plant and west side water treatment plant.

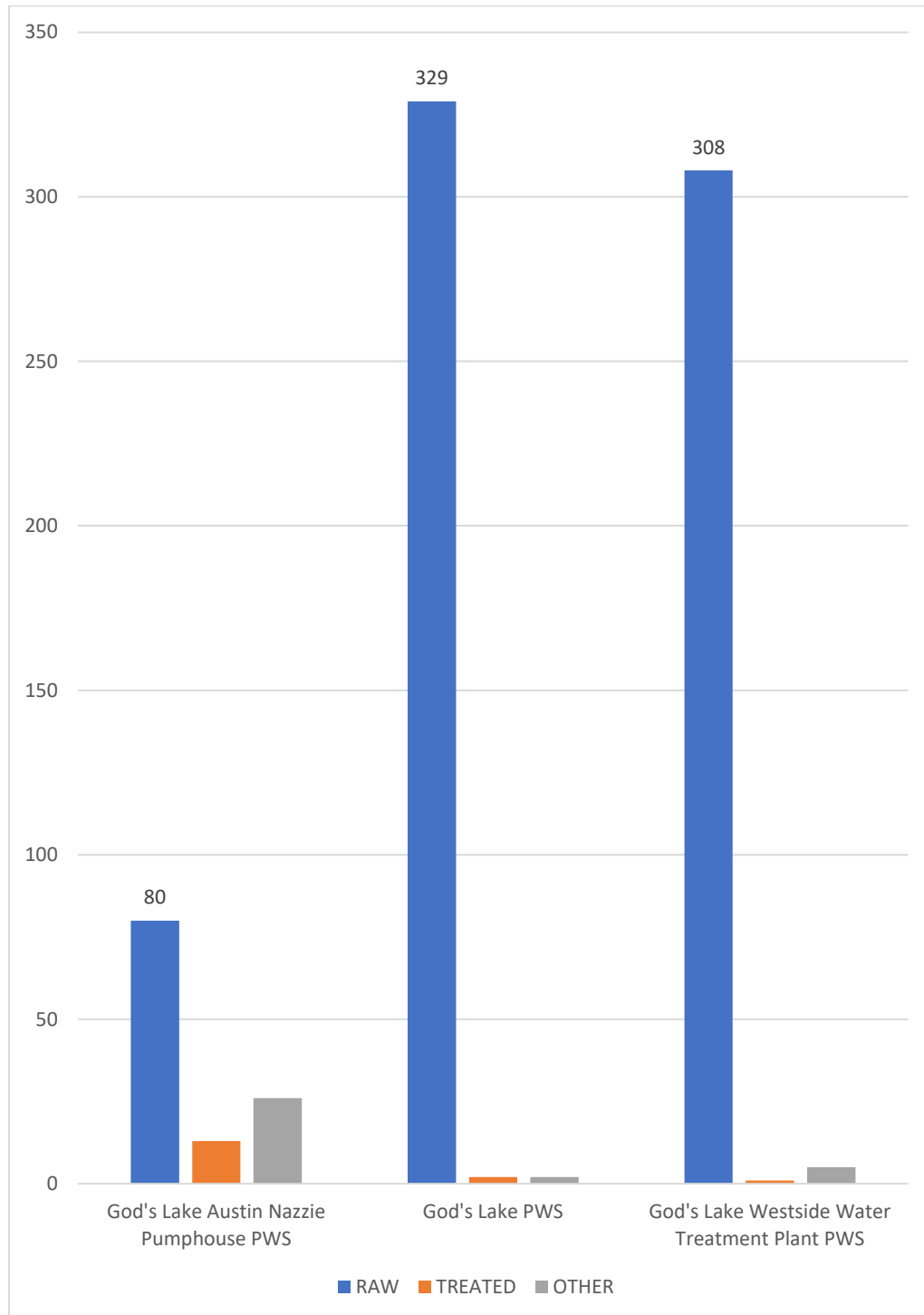
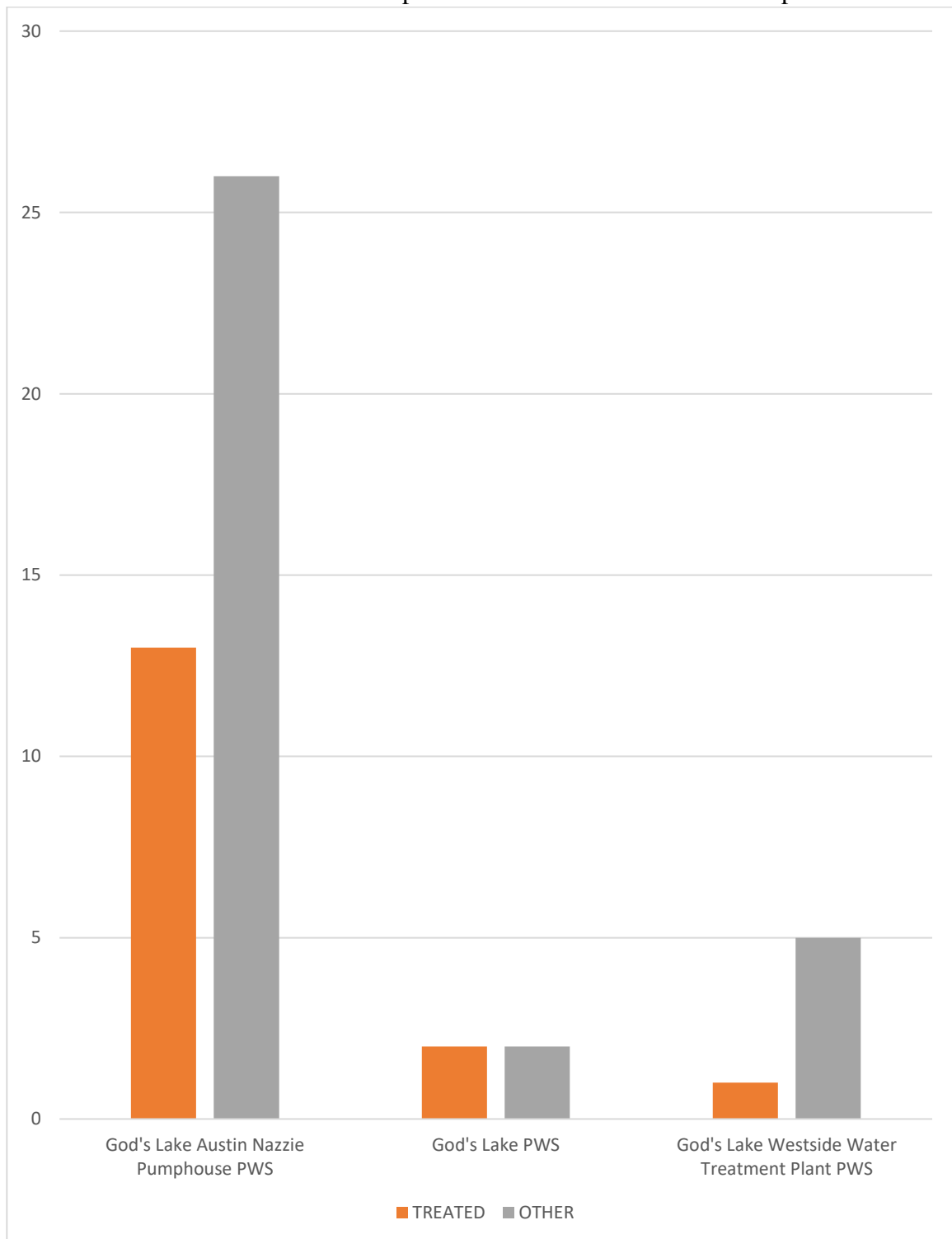


Figure 4.5: Comparing exceedances of Water Quality standards between Nazzie Point system, mainland water treatment plant and west side water treatment plant.



Treated drinking water was not available until the late 1980's in God's Lake with the building of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) housing in the community. Remoteness and government underfunding of reserve infrastructure delayed piped water access in God's Lake until after the new millennium. In a nearby community, Wasagamack First Nation, which has a very similar historical timeline with GLFN regarding water development, 95% of the community members screened tested positive for *Helicobacter pylori* [*H. pylori*] (Sinha et al., 2002). Some of these community members were as young as six weeks old (Sinha et al., 2002). *H. pylori* causes a bacterial infection of the gastrointestinal tract transmitted through water, which can cause stomach infection, stomach cancer and stomach lymphoma. Also, a highly contagious liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV), is a universal risk on First Nation reserves, which is transmitted through water and food. Health impacts from unsafe drinking water include acute gastritis, stomach ulcers, dermatological conditions, birth defects, respiratory infections, neurological dysfunction, and death (Uemura et al., 2001; Jones et al., 2012; IAND, 2006; WHO, 2004).

The World Health Organization (2004) identifies having safe, treated water in homes as a critical determinant of health. Although a few houses received piped water in the late 1990's and early 2000's, a less costly but less healthy approach of renovating houses to install cisterns was undertaken in many areas of GFLN. Water in cisterns have both quality issues, having high rates of bacterial contamination (IAND, 2006; Lebel & Reed, 2010) and quantity issues, with many people reporting running out of water regularly before the next water truck delivery in God's Lake. A number of houses continue to use buckets for water and sewage as cisterns break or are unusable, according to the tour, which poses real health risks to hundreds of people in these households. As well, higher than 50% of the cisterns in GLFN tested were found to be contaminate in 2015-2016 (Annable, 2016).

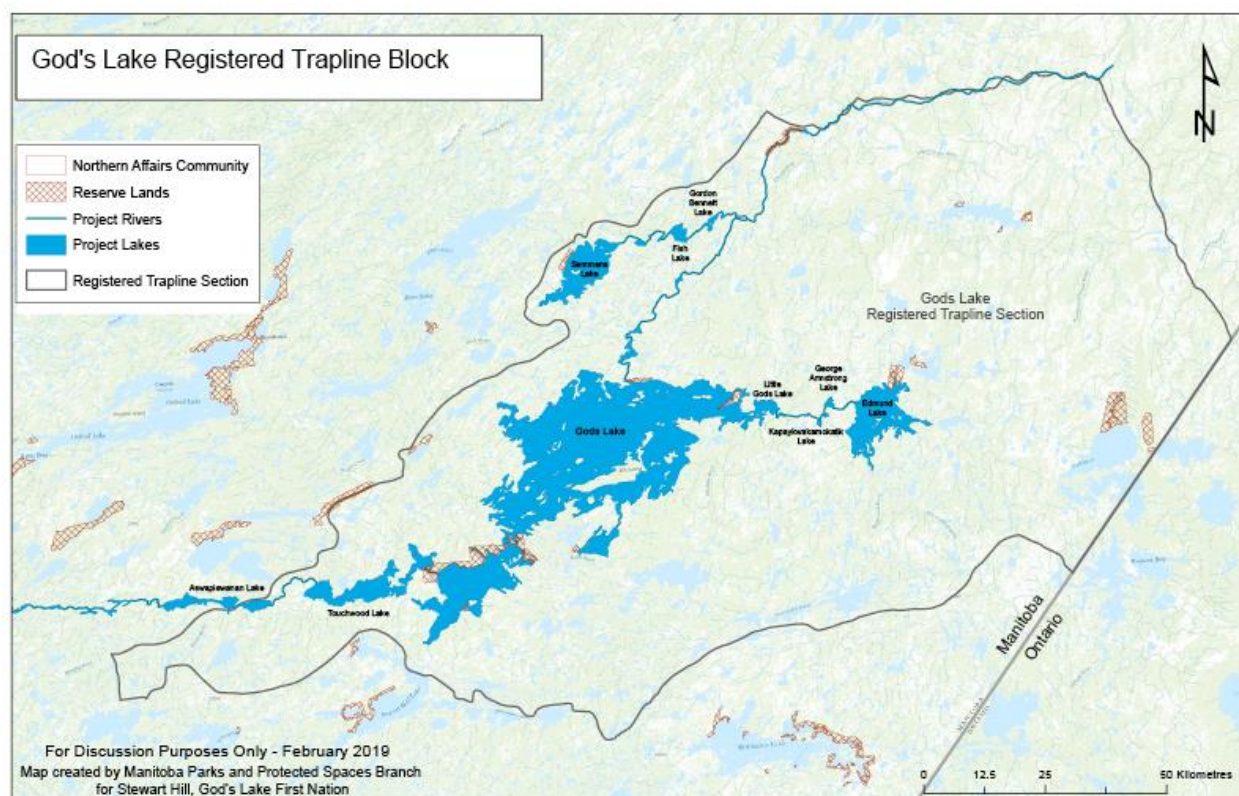
According to Health Canada data dated December 2019, approximately 164 households have cisterns in GLFN and 24 households have barrels for water service in GLFN. Thus, 188 homes have no piped water delivery. Thus, most homes in GLFN have no piped water delivery as there are only 251 private dwellings on reserve (Statistics Canada, 2016). Thus, the percent of households using water to cistern delivery method are 65%. A further 10% of homes have only barrels to store water. The combined percentage of households using cisterns and barrels at 75%. These homes are at high risk for health problems due to the quality and quantity problems with cisterns and barrels. The low rate of testing and the high percentage discovered to be contaminated at 50% raises further concerns (Anable, 2016).

4.3.4 God's Lake Registered Trapline Block

In the community context, consumptive uses of water include drinking and cooking, washing, cleaning and bathing. Non-consumptive uses include traveling, hunting, fishing, trapping and generally, being out on land. So, water needs to be examined and described in a wholistic manner in terms of the community use of water.

Water is part of the GLFN territory, which is not limited to water immediately adjacent to the reserve. GLFN people use the lands and waters for traditional purposes over a large area. The reserve boundary does not limit the GLFN territory includes the traditional and ancestral territory, roughly delineated by the boundaries of the God's Lake Registered Trapline Block (Map 4.3). Water is a vital and integral part of travel, consumption, and non-consumptive uses. Resulting from oral map interviews I conducted in the late 2000s, the following maps of traditional land use clearly show the extensive use of water and land outside the reserve boundaries.

Map 4.3: Boundary of the God's Lake Registered Trapline Block.



In Map 4.3, the grey line on the map delineates the outer boundary of the God's Lake Registered Trapline Block (RTB). This block is further delineated into individual traplines known as registered traplines (RTL's) that are usually held by a head trapper with a number of designated helpers, which is not shown on this map. In the oral history of our people of GLFN, I have personally heard stories of how the God's Lake RTB boundaries were determined in the early 1940's. The Elders with experienced God's Lake trappers met with other trappers from nearby communities, such as Oxford House, Shamattawa, and Island Lake, to determine the boundaries based upon the land's natural features. One notable story I heard was the trappers from Oxford House wanted to take the area on the southwest end of the RTB at Touchwood Lake and

Aswapaswan Lake, but the God's Lake trappers objected, and the area is part of the God's Lake RTB today. The other identifying feature is a ridge that runs between Oxford House and God's Lake. Towards the community of Shamattawa, the God's River is used as a boundary up to the Red Sucker River and then southeast to the Manitoba/ Ontario boundary. A similar use of natural features of the land was used to determine the southern boundaries of God's Lake RTB in agreement with the people of Island Lake.

In my family history, I heard my grandfather on my father's side came from Shamattawa and moved to God's Lake when he married my grandmother from God's Lake. I am told that my grandfather was a religious man and followed the bible closely in governing his life. My presumption is that my grandfather followed the rule of the bible that says a man shall leave his father and mother and reside with the family of his wife. In an interview with my elderly cousin, who knew my grandfather, he made every Sunday a day of rest where all tools and work were put aside. The point being, my grandfather's move to God's Lake to be with his wife's family made the northeast section of the block, known as Red Cross Lake or Pimichikamak in the Ininiw language, a part of the God's Lake RTB. I only had one trapping experience in 1984 from early April to mid-May when I went spring trapping with my late father, late older brother, my late uncle, and my cousin. I was 17 years old at the time and trapped muskrats, beaver, and otter, whose fur remains prime throughout the spring season until about late May to early June. The trapping was combined with hunting for ducks and geese, a little fishing, and moving throughout the trapline, never staying longer than two or three nights in one spot.

The land and water in this remote area are beautiful and pristine to this day, and I would never want to see God's Lake or Pimichikamak contaminated in my lifetime. Pristine wilderness and pure water provided a sustainable life for at least three generations of my family that I knew,

including my older brother's, father's, and grandfather's lifetimes. Before them, so many generations of my ancestors lived sustainably with the pristine water. The only word that comes to mind when I think of that land, and my experience is the word, sacred.

This sacred feeling is consistent with what my Elders have told me when I was documenting our traditional land uses in our ancestral territory. My Elders tell me that the land needs to be protected and not contaminated or destroyed in any way, in order to provide life to generations of Ininiw. The land must sustain seven generations and beyond. One Elder went on to say just because we are not on the land does not mean we have abandoned the land. The only reason the Ininiw (our people) cannot afford to go out on the land is that the fur prices are too low to make a living from trapping anymore. Of course, we are all aware that fur prices are low due to external forces condemning world markets for fur and, in the process, condemning a part of our traditional way of life and means of survival.

4.4 Emotional: Reconciliation and complexity of water issues

In the western quadrant, the emotional quadrant's complexity plays out in the relationship between land and water by the GLFN. These findings are drawn from the pre-planning trip and participation in the Canoe Quest 2017, and technical government information from such departments as Indian Affairs and Health Canada, and non-governmental information. Past traditional land use and occupancy baseline research of the GLFN, for their land use planning process, are relied upon and referenced as facts and examples to support the description of the water use and water relationship of GLFN. Examples stem from my experience in working with my community of GLFN and other communities as well.

4.4.1 God's Lake First Nation Canoe Quest and healing journey 2017

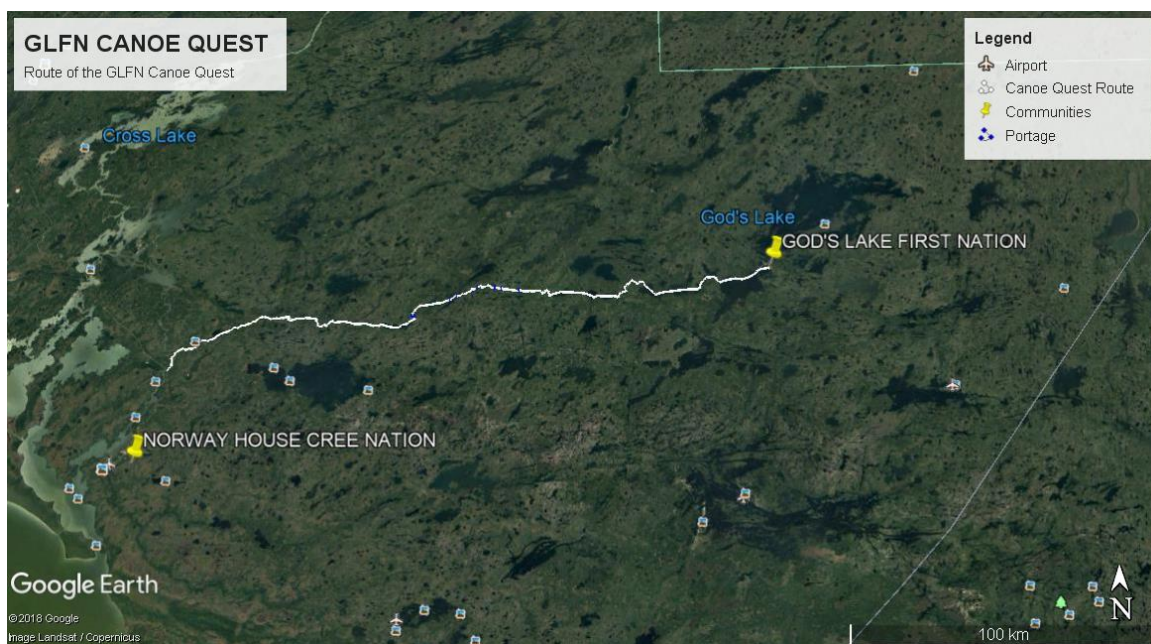
To get a better sense of the traditional and contemporary importance of water by the First Nation, I participated in the GLFN community's Canoe Quest over a three-week span from late July 2017 to early August 2017. This Canoe Quest is a canoe trip for community members and youth to partake in a "healing journey" from God's Lake to Norway House, Manitoba. The entire trip is over remote wilderness boreal forest terrain over a series of lakes and rivers, and about eleven portages. The community has been undertaking this canoe trip for healing purposes for the past sixteen years and, in 2017, I participated.

The trip is a route that has been followed by my ancestors for thousands of years, which later became a freight route for the Hudson's Bay Company from Norway House to its store at God's Lake. The route was re-opened by the people of GLFN in 2001 to become an annual healing journey for Ininiw, particularly the youth. This Canoe Quest healing journey is entirely community-driven. I captured hundreds of photos and several videos of the 2017 Canoe Quest, with eight participants. In addition to myself, there were two women leaders and five male youth participants. I participated as a paddler experiencing the trip. I also recorded the journey taking photos and notes in a journal, as well as doing brief interviews with each of the paddlers. The route from God's Lake to the Norway House Cree Nation is depicted in Map 4.6 and is about 200 kilometres. However, we were met and towed by community members at either end of the trip, as members of the two communities of God's Lake and Norway House cooperate and assist each other in their canoe journeys. At times, Norway House and Cross Lake members also paddle to God's Lake, and they assist and reciprocate in kind though out the years.

We canoed five days to get to Norway House from God's Lake due to being "windbound" for one day and traveled four days to get back to God's Lake. I found the trip to Norway House

tiring as my body was not physically adjusted to the paddling and portaging. However, I adjusted significantly after the third night. Coming back from Norway House to God's Lake, I enjoyed the trip immensely as I physically adjusted to the rigours of the paddling and travelling. This is reflected in my journal entries. The Canoe Quest was intended to be a "healing journey," and I found this to be accurate in that the trip challenges every aspect of your being: spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally.

Map 4.4: Canoe route from God's Lake First Nation at God's Lake to Norway House Cree Nation on the Nelson River following the ancestral route turned fur trade route and revived as the GLFN Canoe Quest route. Source: Stewart Hill, after participating in the Canoe Quest 2017.



For the spiritual aspect, I found myself feeling very much a part of nature. I felt at one with the water, traveling by canoe with my companion paddlers, the wildlife, and fish we encountered. Every morning before we paddled off for the day, we lined up the canoes together out in the water and said the Lord's Prayer (Our Father). I am not sure if it was just me, but I noticed the eagles seemed to be following us throughout the whole trip. The eagles would perch and fly off as we finished each leg of our journey. It became especially evident to me, I thought, as we approached

the Norway House ferry crossing: an eagle flew across in front of us and perched on a tree on an island nearby. I also met up with a black bear on our way back at Robinson Portage, but I was able to scare it off and something tells me that there is a spiritual significance to this encounter. Even though the journey at times was challenging with physical work and the hordes of mosquitoes (Culex and black flies), deer flies, horse flies, and sand flies, the hardship was forgotten an hour or so after. The only explanation I can offer is that the land and water heals you.

The physical aspect of the canoe journey is self-evident but the challenge is not only to a specific part of your body, but the physical demands on your entire body. The old people say that long ago, there was no such thing as “tired” because their bodies were so adjusted to the rigours of land-based life. I found that all parts of your body are challenged from your head to your toes. You have to be especially mindful of your feet as you have to get wet for the majority of the time, pulling the canoe over shallow areas, going over beaver dams, walking over waterlogged areas in the portages, and launching and landing the canoe. Your feet need to be dried and powdered as soon as you camp for the night. I remember feeling refreshed and eager to go every morning as I felt rested, and the beauty of the land and water invited me onward. I cannot describe in words the beauty of the land and water I beheld with my eyes. The only words I can come up with are “beautiful and breathtaking.”

For the emotional aspect, at times, when we were exhausted, sometimes in the evening and sometimes in the early morning, we were emotional. During these times, emotions would run high between members. However, emotions were quickly forgotten once the paddlers were canoeing and paddling, or after resting, eating, and being quiet on the land. These incidents were not frequent but few and far between. However, nevertheless, they did occur. Again, I think the land and water heals all.

For the mental aspect, you have to think on your feet as you are traveling, to know how to paddle with the wind and waves. As well, to use the landforms to pick the most efficient and safest route through an area, lake, river, creek and rapid. Not only do you have to think and be aware, but you also have to have a “mental toughness” to go through the rigours of the canoe journey. I heard stories where some young people were unable to make the entire journey, but most paddlers do over the many years that the Canoe Quest has run.

In summary, I will attempt to explain how I felt after I completed the Canoe Quest and we arrived safely back at our community in God’s Lake. The only way I can describe it is a feeling of “euphoria” and a deep sense of accomplishment and awakening. While flying back to the south when I saw the farms, I felt very emotional and I thought to myself, “what am I doing coming here, I belong back there”. I felt at home and natural at God’s Lake, on the land, but not in this farmland. Writing about the canoe journey and remembering my experiences, I feel the urge to go back and do it again. Perhaps, I will get the opportunity again but that is up to a force greater than me. I took many pictures and videos, sharing two below (Photo 4.5 a and b).

Photo 4.5a) and b): A picture of the paddlers at Robinson Lake pointing westward on our way to Norway House and we would reach it the following day, and a picture of me on our way back to God’s Lake from Norway beside the Canoe Quest leader and another paddler. Source: God’s Lake First Nation land use planning research project (2007-2015).



Note: In picture b), Timmy, the young person wearing the red shirt, passed on before I completed this dissertation. It was an honour to have paddled with him.

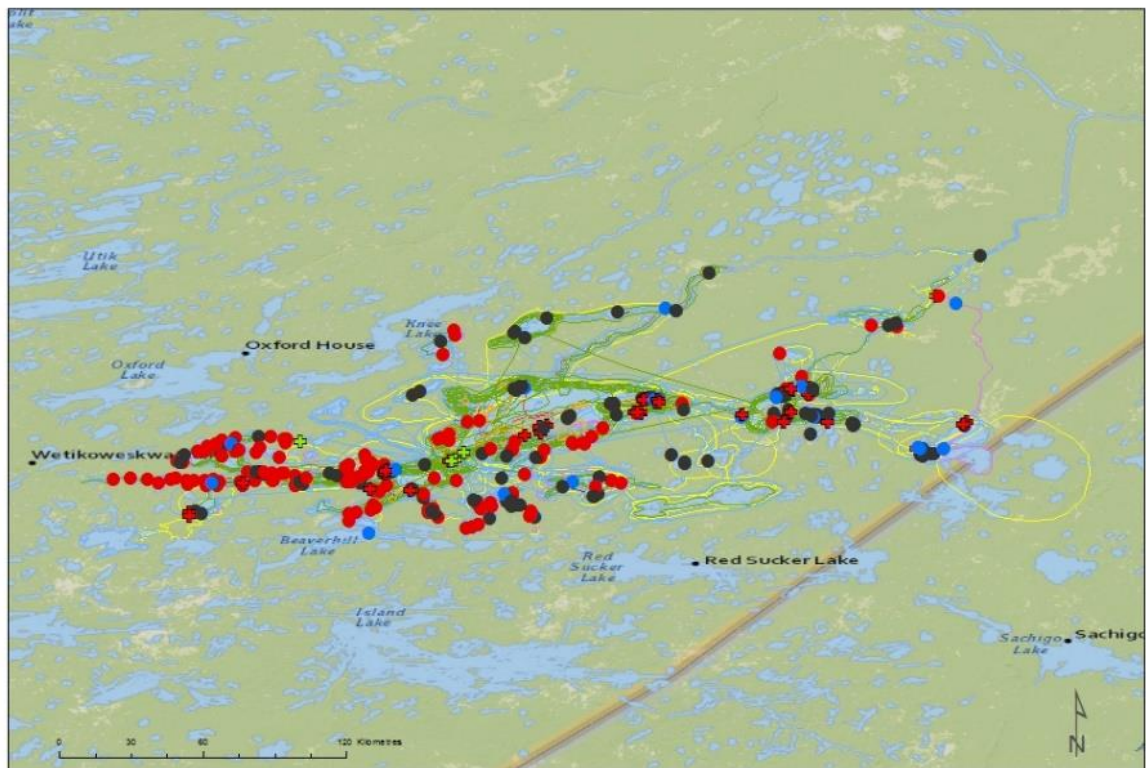
4.4.2 Past Land Use Planning Research of the God's Lake First Nation

Land use mapping has been employed by Indigenous communities to tell “their ‘story’ of their use of land and resources” (Calliou Group, 2010, “Michel First Nation”, para. 9). Traditional land use studies counter-map Indigenous territory to challenge industrial or settler development in courts of law (McIlwraith & Cormier, 2016). For example, the Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project helped the Inuit reclaim sovereignty of the North West Territories, through comprehensive land claims (Freeman, 2011).

The traditional land use mapping process requires all the travels, activities and experiences of the traditional land user (i.e. interview subject/ informant) on maps, map overlays, recordings and field notes to document their land use. The end product is a “map biography” of each informant. The map biography provides a map and audiorecording of the life experiences of an individual resource harvester much like a conventional biography tells the story of an individual in words. I undertook these land use planning activities interviewing 13 harvesters from 2007 until 2013 and then created summary maps for the First Nation. Map 4.5 demonstrates the value and use of the lakes and rivers by the people of the God's Lake First Nation community, and shows people use the vast land for many traditional uses.

Map 4.5: Traditional land use mapping data of the God's Lake First Nation. The land use data most, if not all, of the God's Lake Registered Trapline Block. Source: God's Lake First Nation land use planning research project (2007-2015).

God's Lake First Nation



Interviewees: GL001 - GL013

Reporters: Stewart Hill / Roger Mason / Keith Peskoona

Report Date: 01/06/2010 to 05/09/2013

Disclaimer: This map is intended for illustrative purposes only. Do not rely on this map for legal administrative purposes, or as a precise indicator of routes, locations of features.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| ✚ Burial site | — Berry Picking | — Community and Recreation |
| ● Cabins | — Fishing | — Timber |
| ● Campsite | — Hunting | — Trapping |
| ● Old community/gathering site | — Medicinal Plants | — Youth Training Areas |
| ✚ Spiritual/special site | | |

The traditional land use activities depicted in the traditional land use Map 4.5 are discussed regarding different traditional harvesting activities, including a section on hunting, fishing and trapping

Hunting, Fishing and Trapping

The traditional harvesting activities are often related as fishing is almost always done in conjunction with hunting and trapping. Each individual has their own style of harvesting. Hunting, fishing and trapping are at their best in a pristine environment and any disruptions to any aspect of the natural environment can affect them. These harvesting activities are also conducted at certain times of the year when the resources are most abundant, typically the fall for hunting moose and

fishing. At this time, the harvester is almost guaranteed success in obtaining wild resources maximizing the return for the harvester for the effort.

The following species are harvested by the people of God's Lake First Nation:

- Waterfowl: Various duck species and geese are hunted during peak seasons in spring and fall.
- Ungulates: Mainly moose and to a lesser extent, caribou, are hunted. Two species of caribou are in the area. The Barrenlands caribou, which are the Penn Island herd migrate through the area. And the reclusive woodland caribou stays in the area year-round. The woodland (boreal) caribou are classified as "Threatened" by COSEWIC and the Species at Risk legislation.
- Furbearers: Long hair species are valued and sought after in trapping such as marten, mink, beaver, fisher, fox, wolf, wolverine, muskrat, otter, lynx, weasel and squirrel during the winter months. Three species are trapped during the spring season from March to May as their fur continues to be prime during this season: beaver, muskrat and otter.
- Fishing: Fish species such as pickerel (walleye), pike (jackfish), whitefish, and trout are harvested for domestic consumption using nets, but other species which are not normally consumed are harvested as well such as red sucker, white sucker, burbot (myria), and cisco (tulibee). Fish species harvested by angling or sport fishing include pickerel, pike and trout (lake and brook trout). No data has yet been collected on the presence and harvest of sturgeon, which are also a species classified as "Threatened" by COSEWIC and Species at Risk legislation.

Small Game: Small game animals are harvested year-round and during peak periods such as rabbits, spruce hens, sharptail chickens and ruffed grouse, and sometimes, ptarmigan.

For the traditional activities of hunting, fishing and trapping, the following is a general description of the harvesting activities using the months of the year:

Late September – October:	Moose hunt; but moose can be hunted year-round according to custom
Late April – May:	Ducks, Goose hunting; abundant during the spring migration
September – early October:	Ducks, Goose hunting; fall migration
Mid-October – February:	Winter trapping for all fur-bearing species
April – May:	Spring trapping for beaver, muskrat and otter
April – October:	Fishing with nets in open water
November – March:	Fishing with nets under the ice
Mid-September- October:	Chicken hunting (spruce hens, sharptails, ruffed grouse)
June – August (summer):	Medicines; open water and warm season
August:	Berry picking
September:	Blueberries
Year-round:	Moose, caribou, chickens, rabbits

This is not an exhaustive list or complete calendar of traditional harvesting activities and resources but is an example of the timing of harvesting activities by the people of God's Lake First Nation throughout the year. Documentation of traditional activities' timing can help prevent or reconcile potential conflicts with other activities on the landscape of the traditional territory.

Gathering: Medicinal Plants and Berries

There are several types of berries picked along creeks and rivers, as well as lake shorelines. Blueberries, raspberries, and cranberries seem to be the most common berries picked for consumption, but there are several varieties of berries. Certainly, berry continues to be a component of the people's traditional culture and may well be revived as a significant cultural activity in the future.

Medicinal plant gathering is not as prominent as in the past with a few select individuals retaining medicinal plants' knowledge. However, as with berry picking, knowledge, and the use of medicinal plants may well be revived as a major cultural activity in the future. For example, people still pick wikese and Labrador tea.

God's Lake First Nation, like many remote Indigenous communities in Canada, obtained all their basic needs, including food, from their territory until the middle of the last century (Kuhnlein, Erasmus, Creed-Kanashiro, Engelberger, Okeke, Turner, & Bhattacharjee, 2006; LaDuke, 2002; Paci, Tobin, & Robb, 2002). Harvesting wild food plays into the continuing food story of the God's Lake First Nation people. Sharing wild foods, harvesting, and ceremonies on the land are the foundation of Ininiw culture (Cidro et al., 2015; Wilson, 2003). Sharing was an integral part of any meal, but particularly the first harvest requires a feast to feed the ancestors and community.

Indigenous food sovereignty at GLFN is contingent on the ecological integrity of GLFN lands and waters for the sustainability of wild foods and demands that people have a strong cultural foundation (Cidro et al., 2015). This cultural foundation requires expert knowledge of animal, plant, and fish habitats as well as for Indigenous protocols and practices, including ceremonies,

for hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, and living on their ancestral territory (Ballard, 2012). Indigenous knowledge is embedded in the Ininiw language and in aski, which translates to earth, inclusive of both land and water (McLeod, 2014). Place shapes the knowledge, skills, and lifestyles required for sustainable wild food acquisition (Ballard, 2012).

Cabins and Camps

Cabins and camps indicate people occupied their ancestral territory and lands. In the Ininiw language, there are different types of habitation of the land. “Katikinowin” is an overnight camp suitable for a person to stop to rest on the ancestral territory. “Mamowapowin” is a gathering place where people would meet up for visits or a specific activity such as drying or smoking fish. One such example is north of Edmund Lake in the God’s Lake territory known as Wapaminokoskak Narrows that was used to dry whitefish in the fall by families, which is a GLFN treaty land entitlement selection. Many such sites exist all over the ancestral territory of the GLFN. The other type of habitation was known as “Kitapowin,” (“Kitche” – great, “-apowin” – sitting or settling place) that would be akin to “settlements” in the English language. These Kitapowina (plural) would be used repeatedly over the years, and generations. Kitapowina are located all over the GLFN ancestral lands

Numerous “cabins and camps” were identified during mapping interviews for the land use planning process for the GLFN. These cabins and camps are part of a network of travel routes, harvesting areas, traplines, and traditional activities throughout the whole ancestral territory. The presence of these cabins and camps provide evidence of the long historical occupation of the area over countless generations. These camps and cabin sites provide important areas for archaeological study to find burial, ceremonial, spiritual and special artifacts. Camps and cabin sites are also part

of the traditional sites, resources, and activities protected under Treaty and Aboriginal rights. Photos 4.5 a) and b) and 4.6 depict examples of camps and cabins of the God's Lake people used in the year 1958. I, myself, lived in such camps in my boyhood.

Photo 4.6 a) and b): Examples of God's Lake Ininiw camps in 1958. Source: God's Lake First Nation land use planning research project (2007-2015)



Photo 4.7 a) and b): God's Lake Ininiw families standing in front of their cabins in 1958. Source: God's Lake First Nation land use planning research project (2007-2015)



Burial and Spiritual Sites

The ancestral territory of the God's Lake First Nation has been occupied for thousands of years and pre-dates colonization by several thousand years, according to oral history and academia (Island Lake Tribal Council, 1984). While the occupation of the area varied over the Ininiw long history in this area, the ancestors of the God's Lake First Nation people have occupied the traditional and ancestral area for thousands of years. Such long duration of use and occupancy has left a great number of burial sites, and spiritual or special sites on the landscape.

The Elders of today have knowledge of a significant number of burial, spiritual and special sites passed down through the generations. However, not all such sites have been retained within the knowledge and memory of the present-day people due to such an enormous passage of time, colonialism disrupting knowledge exchange, the vast geographical area, and the great number of people and events that have existed over time. The recording of these sites in the present study needs to be considered in conjunction with other evidence, such as archaeological investigations.

Burial, spiritual, and special sites have great spiritual significance to the people of the GLFN in the present day. There are great reverence and respect for such sites, which exist throughout the traditional territory. Elders today tell stories of such sites and expect them to be respected and protected from human intrusion or disturbance. Such areas are sometimes associated with present-day camp and cabin sites or gathering areas. Photos 4.8 a) and b) are examples of burial sites in the GLFN ancestral territory.

Photo 4.8 a) and b): Graves at the original community site of the GLFN Ininiw at Wasachuan that is today part of the main reserve but some distance from the community. Source: God’s Lake First Nation land use planning research project (2007-2015).



Travel Routes

Extensive travel routes criss-cross the whole traditional territory of the GLFN, with the waterways being travel routes. Travel throughout the land is mainly by boat, canoe, or snowmobile (previously dog-sled) and follows well-established routes passed down through the generations. Prior to mechanized travel such as motorboats and snowmobiles, dog teams were used in the winter, and paddling with freighter canoes were utilized (Photo 4.9 a) and b). The travel routes are evidence of an entrenched network of traditional land use activities and occupancy sites. People are “living” on the land, observing, and harvesting resources as they are traveling. The integrity of such travel routes needs to be recorded and maintained into the future for the use and benefit of future generations.

Photo 4.9 a) and b): Dog teams in the winter and paddling with freighter canoes in the summer were in used by the GLFN Ininiw people in 1958. Source: God's Lake First Nation land use planning research project (2007-2015).



Freighting and Timber Cutting

Freighting for income was also an economic activity for the people during both the summer and winter seasons. Freighter canoes were used in the summer, and dog team or helping the tractor trains in the winter. Photos 4.10 a) and b) show examples of both types of freighting in the summer and winter seasons.

Photo 4.10: a) Freighting by freighter canoe in 1958 and b) “tractor train” in 1957. Source: God's Lake First Nation land use planning research project (2007-2015).



Guiding/ Tourist Fishing Guides

When tourist fishing lodges were established in God's Lake, along with commercial fishing in the 1940's and 1950's, the GLFN Ininiw men became guides for the American fishermen. This job provided a source of income for families. The men would take their families to live in camps while they guided for one of the lodges. I remember being in a camp with my family while my late father and brother guided at "East End" and Elk Island in God's Lake when I was a boy. Photos 4.11 a) and b) show the early days of guiding for the tourist fishing lodges.

Photo 4.11 a) and b): Pictures showing the fishing tourist lodge at God's Lake Narrows in 1982 and a picture from 1957 in the early days of guiding for the tourist fishing lodges on God's Lake. Source: God's Lake First Nation land use planning research project (2007-2015).

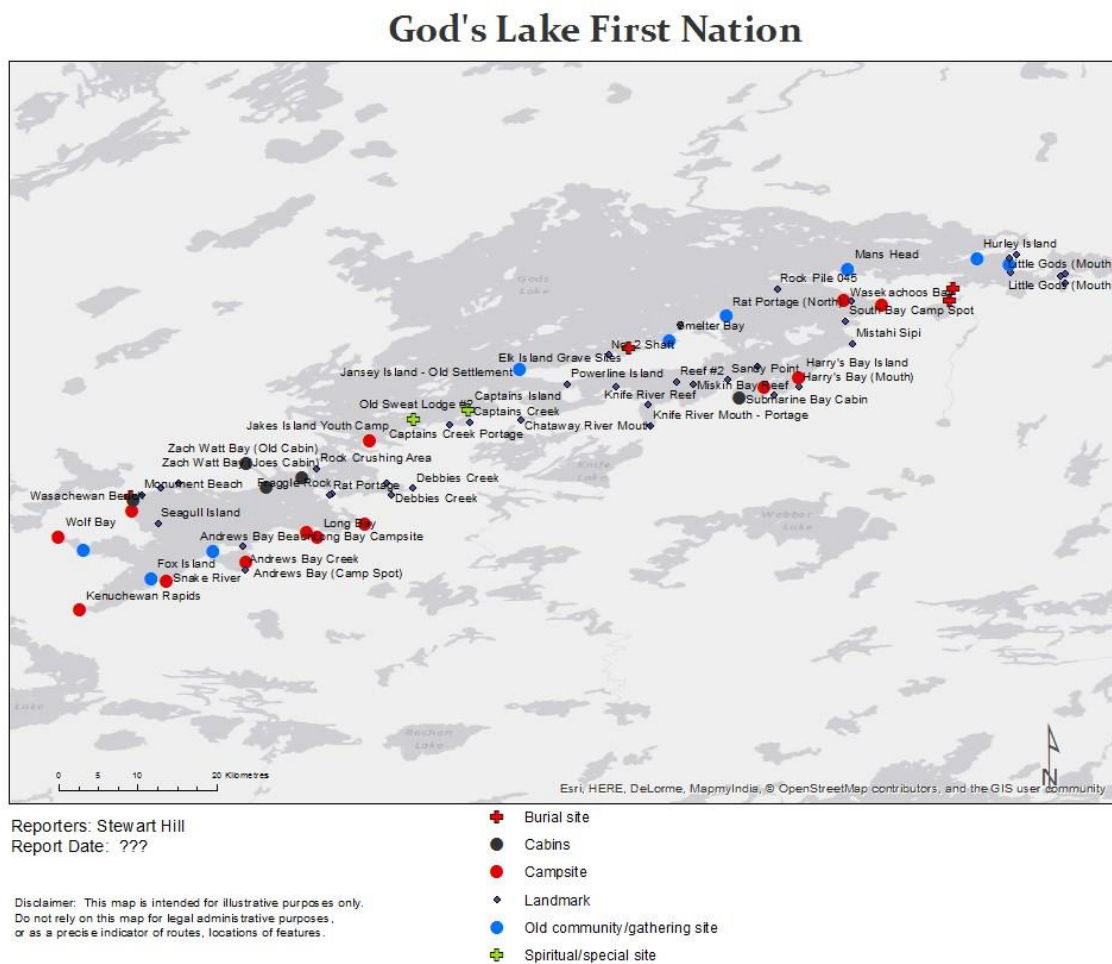


4.4.3 Global Positioning System (GPS) marking expedition

I was also able to participate in the marking out of GLFN's special sites in God's Lake to the south of the community and along the southern shore with accompanying notes and pictures of each site during research for the GLFN land use planning process. The digital marking of these

sites was accomplished by motorboat travel on God's Lake to each of the sites. The sites were then marked using a GPS device, and notes about the sites were recorded in notebooks. The map of these GPS sites is displayed in the following map in Map 4.6.

Map 4.6: Important sites for God's Lake First Nation identified in the land use planning process. Source: God's Lake First Nation land use planning research project (2007-2015).



The sites identified in Map 4.6 are as follows:

GPS locations for South Basin/ South of the community of GLFN
1. Wasahak Creek: Spring fish harvest, gathering
2. Debbie's Creek: Spring fish harvest, camping, hunting, fishing, gravel extraction, garter snakes
3. Debbie's Creek: Fish spawning area
4. Fraggie Rock: Recreation/ swimming/ diving spot, portage

5. Rat Portage: Portage for canoes
6. Father's Bay: Spring fish harvest, gathering, camping, fishing, hunting, gravel extraction
7. Long Bay: Camping spot, fishing and hunting (moose path)
8. Long Bay Campsite: Camping, mineral exploration training
9. Andrews Bay mouth: Gill net fall/ winter fishing area (mouth)
10. Andrews Bay: Camp sites, pickerel harvesting in the spring, portage, camping hunting fishing
11. Andrews Bay Creek: Spawning area and cabin
12. Andrews Bay Beach: Recreation area (swimming), camping, old settlement at north end of the beach
13. Snake River: Camping, fishing, hunting area
14. Fox Island: Recreation (swimming), fox dens
15. Kenuchewan Rapids: Camping, fishing, hunting, portage, linked to Beaver Hill Lake
16. Wolf Bay: Camping, fishing, hunting, spawning creek, fish harvesting, portage linked to Touchwood Lake (traditional)
17. Wolf Bay: Old settlement site
18. Seagull Island: Egg picking
19. Wasachewan Beach: Beach/ recreation, rapids area for fishing/ fish spawning, hunting, fishing, camping, cabins for education/retreat, grave site, monument beach
20. Wasachewan River: Grave sites
21. Wasachewan River: Cabins
22. Monument Beach: Site of old plane crash marked by a monument
23. Wasachewan Legend: Legend of Wesakechak footwear
24. Wasachewan Beach: North side, Raven Island Beach for recreation (swimming)
25. Zach Watt Bay: Cabin at the point (Zettergren)
26. Zach Watt Bay: Old cabin site, camping, fishing, hunting, spawning at creek, harvesting
27. Zach Watt Bay: Cabin (Joseph Hastings)
28. Sawmill Bay: Old sawmill site, proposed Elder gathering site
29. Rock crushing area: Rock crushing operation
GPS Locations for North Basin/ North and Northeast of GLFN
30. Jowsey Island: Old settlement
31. No. 2 Shaft: Old Elk Island gold mining operation
32. Elk Island gravesite: Graves on an island front of Elk Island Lodge
33. Smelter Bay: Old settlement and mining shaft site
34. Lake Trout Spawning: Site of fall lake trout spawning
35. Rat Portage North: Old Settlement
36. Rock Pile: Lake Trout fishing (spring/ summer)

37. Man's Head: Old settlement	
38. Hurley Island: Graves, old settlement, cabins	
39. East End: Old Hudson's Bay post and East End Lodge	
40. East End: Garbage dump and fuel storage at airstrip	
41. East End: Grave site, old settlement	
42. East End: Chicken Island for spruce hen hunting (fall)	
43. East End: Black Fly Bay (portage to Rocky Lake and blueberry picking)	
44. Little God's (mouth): Blueberry picking area	
45. Little God's: Blueberry picking area	
46. Graveyard Bay: Gravesites	
47. Graveyard Bay: Gravesites at channel	
48. Wasekochos Bay: Camping island (Kostachiw Ministic)	
49. Wasekochos Bay: Summer pike fishing spot	
50. Wasekochos Bay: Youth camp of Manto Sipi Cree Nation	
51. South Bay:	Camping, fishing
52. Mistahi Sipi (mouth):	Fishing, camping
53. Harry's Bay Island:	Camp spot
54. Harry's Bay (mouth):	Fishing
55. Submarine Bay:	Fishing, hunting, camping
56. Submarine Bay Island:	Camping at the channel
57. Submarine Bay:	Cabin, campsite, fishing
58. Sandy Bay Point:	Egg collecting (seagull/ terns eggs)
59. Sandy Point:	Hunting, fishing
60. Muskisin Bay Reef:	Egg collecting (seagull/tern eggs)
61. Muskisin Bay Reef 2:	Egg collecting (seagull/tern eggs)
62. Knife River Reef:	Egg collecting (seagull/tern eggs)
63. Knife River:	Portage, fishing, hunting
64. Powerline Point:	Old powerline for abandoned Elk Island mine
65. Powerline Island:	Old powerline for abandoned Elk Island mine
66. Chataway River:	Hunting and fishing at the mouth
67. Captain's Island:	Sweat Lodge
68. Captain's Creek:	Hunting, fishing, trapping, site of wild cabbage
69. Captain's Creek area:	Portage to Hopkin's Lake
70. Island #2:	Sweat lodge
71. Jake's Island:	Youth Camp

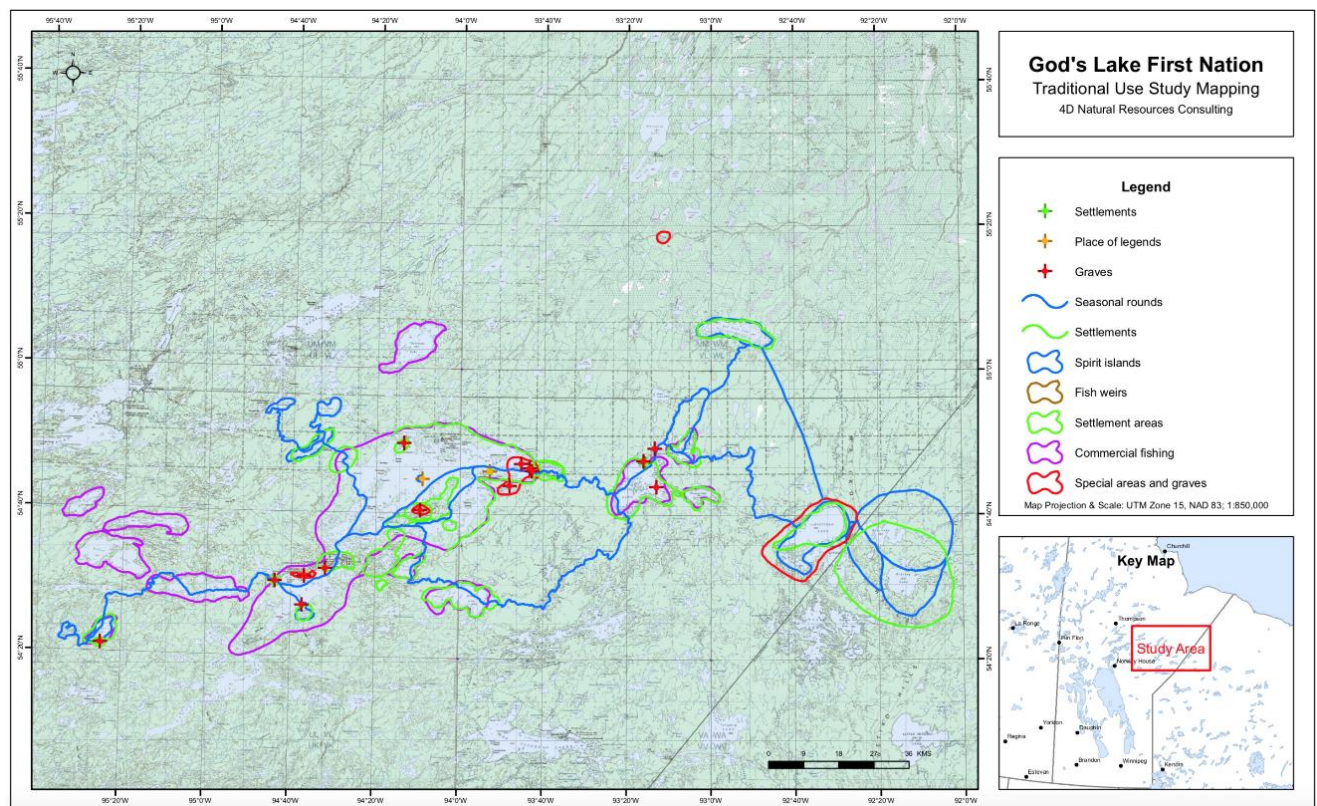
As general categories, the following sites were identified: burial sites, cabins, campsites, landmarks, old community gathering sites and spiritual/ special sites. Due to time constraints, the process used to mark each of the sites was to drive up with the boat and take the GPS reading of

that site. As well as recording the latitude and longitude, I made notes of the site's significance, and took pictures.

4.4.4 Preliminary identification of sacred and special sites

In 2010, I participated in a two-day workshop with GLFN's Elders to conduct a preliminary identification of sacred and special sites within its ancestral area funded by a small grant of the Heritage Resources Branch of the Government of Manitoba. The resulting map 4.7 documents this research.

Map 4.7: Preliminary identification of special and sacred areas and sites by the God's Lake First Nation in 2010. Source: God's Lake First Nation land use planning research project (2007-2015).



One day of the workshop took place at the Elderly Persons Home in the community, where the above map was drawn as told by the Elders. Photos 4.8 a) and b) show the Elders that participated

in this workshop. While specific sites and seasonal rounds were identified on the map, the Elders noted that all the land in their ancestral territory and lands is sacred.

Photo 4.12 a) and b): The GLFN Elders participating in a day long workshop to identify spiritual and sacred sites within their ancestral territory and lands. The Elders in b) have all passed on, with the exception of the Elder in the red sweater, at the time of the writing of this dissertation. Source: God's Lake First Nation land use planning research project (2007-2015).



The following sections identify and discuss each of the aspects of the GLFN ancestral territory and lands.

God's Lake Registered Trapline Block

The Elders indicated that all the land within the area of the God's Lake registered trapline block (RTB) is considered sacred. The RTB boundary roughly delineates the traditional territory of the GLFN, as shared with the Manto Sipi Cree Nation. A word frequently used in the description of the land is the Ininiw word "Kischi", which means "great", such as a great gathering site or a great hunting area. This word denotes respect and sacredness when describing a site, area, river, or lake. The God's Lake RTB is depicted in Map 4.3.

The Elders discussed how vital the trapline lands were to the people in, not only the past, but also today. The Elders' recognize traplines as family areas, and do not classify these areas only

on an economic and harvesting level. The Elders strongly asserted that the lands within traplines are sacred because this land ensured the people's survival in the past. The Elders view these family areas to be important to the future of the community. Any resource allocations and developments should consider compensation for families and the community.

The trapline boundaries show the foodshed, which considers that large areas of habitat are necessary for a traditional diet to feed the community and maintain ecological integrity. To be sustainably harvested, wild food resources require that the foodshed have ecological integrity (Friedmann, 2014). The foodshed in God's Lake encompasses the people engaged in harvesting, transporting, preparing, and eating, as well as the places these occur, which are throughout the trapline. Exploring the foodshed highlights the importance of protecting *aski* as the source of food, similar to how watershed conservation protects the drinking water supply (Friedmann, 2014). The trapline that represents the foodshed to feed the community with wildlife requires protecting the wildlife's habitat range (Thompson, Harper, and Whiteway, 2020). Large areas of habitat are necessary for a traditional diet to feed the community and for ecological integrity. These maps of traditional land use provide evidence for GLFN to begin consultation and dialogue with the provincial and federal government for Indigenous land use planning of their territories. God's Lake is in the Hayes watershed, which is very large and extends into Ontario. As damming anywhere on this watershed would impact the hydrological levels throughout the Hayes watershed, including God's Lake, a dam would play havoc with wildlife, fishing, transportation, traditional uses, and ecological integrity. Watershed contamination or flooding is impossible to contain within an isolated area and will spill over to the watershed (Thompson, 2015). Therefore, the watershed level is the scale needed to ensure the protection of the ecological integrity of God's Lakes' ancestral territory for traditional land uses and water quality.

Graves

According to the Elders, graves are located all over the traditional territory as the people were nomadic and buried their deceased at all locations during the thousands of years the people have inhabited the God's Lake region. However, the known locations of graves can be found in the following areas:

East End: The word "East End" is the word used to describe an area of God's Lake which was occupied by the people. In Ininiw, it is called "kisipikamak", or "where the lake ends". In this area, at least five areas have "lots of graves". One area is the south side of Hurley's Island, two to the south of the tourist fishing lodge, and at least two to the southwest of the lodge known as wapisikamihg, which is Ininiw for "graveyard".

The GLFN Elders indicated many graves are located on an island in front of the existing tourist fishing lodge. Another location is on the land point in Johnson's Bay where the Adhesion to Treaty Five was signed. Also, graves are known to be south of the GLFN community where a settlement of people lived at the Wasachewan River's mouth, which is part of the God's Lake Reserve.

There are also many graves along the shoreline from the present-day God's Lake community to the old community site of "Wasachewan". On an island just off the shoreline to the southwest of the community are three or four graves. Graves are also located at Andrews Bay where the people resided in the past. Further, graves are known to be located at Joint Lake in the southwestern part of the traditional territory.

In the Ininiw culture, the deceased is highly respected, and graves are the epitome of "sacred". Any activities on the land by any person or entity must proceed with caution to identify and respect any possible graves. As Elders noted, knowledge of all graves' location is impossible as the people were everywhere throughout the territory living a nomadic life and buried their deceased at any

location through time. This respect and sacredness of the deceased and their resting places continue to be observed in the present day by observing two to three days of mourning with all-night vigils before the funeral.

Community Areas and Gathering Sites

The Elders always point out that the entire traditional territory was used and will continue to be used by the community and the people. From the Elders' perspective, there are no unoccupied lands within the traditional territory, and these lands are part of the community. The community areas and gathering sites are places people would have inhabited throughout the territory during their seasonal rounds. Mapping of the seasonal rounds reflects this aspect of traditional life. These areas and sites form a network throughout the territory, reflecting the seasonal abundance of various resources during the year's various seasons. For example, an area that is now a Treaty Land Entitlement selection is Wapaminikoskak Narrows at the north end of Edmund Lake. This is a seasonal fishing site where whitefish are harvested and dried on drying racks in preparation for the coming winter.

The following sites and areas were mapped during the workshop as mentioned explicitly by the Elders in their narratives and experiences: Various sites on God's Lake, Chataway Bay, Chataway Lake, Knife Lake, Webber Lake, Joint Lake, Bayley Bay, Bayley Lake, Wasachewan River, Kenuchewan River, Andrews Bay, Father's Bay, Touchwood Lake, Mink River, Elk Island, Sharpe Lake, Kistigan Lake, Little Stull Lake, Edmund Lake, Margaret Lake, Kenyon Lake, Red Sucker River, Red Cross Lake, and Semmens Lake (Wapisi Sakihigan).

A very interesting historical fact provided by the GLFN Elders is that Kistigan Lake, Little Stull Lake, and beyond, past the Manitoba/Ontario border to a place called "Wasatin" were major

settlements of people and these places would have “lots of graves”. These settlements were moved from their Kistigan Lake area location due to the signing of the Treaty, and the government's need to have the people all in one location. However, the history and ancestral graves remain in these locations on the land.

Special and Significant Sites

While graves may also constitute special and significant sites, graves are separated from this category due to their sacred nature. At least three areas, which may be classified as having special and significant sites. One site identified by the Elders is a weir at a narrows on the west side of Margaret Lake (the same site identified by MSCN Elders). In Ininiw, the Elders call these “kipapiskinikana”, or “places where the river is blocked with rocks”. These blockages were created by their Ininiw ancestors to harvest fish. Another site mentioned during the workshop was the existence of “tracks,” of possibly an otter, imprinted and embedded right into the rock at a portage at Pisew Rapids, as identified by the MSCN Elders.

The story of Sasaskwew Portage, told by the MSCN Elders, was also known by the GLFN Elders. This story illustrates the many place-based stories or legends in the oral tradition of the Ininiw. Such places need to be documented due to such places' significance to the Ininiw culture and the importance for the conservation of these places.

Another special site is Spirit Islands, which has a story about how God's Lake got its name. Generally, the story goes that a long time ago, God's Lake was known as “Devil's Lake” due to being devoid of resources. The story is that of a man who became stranded at Spirit Islands and survived for forty days and nights. This was considered a miracle and a work of Manitou (the Great Spirit). After this event, the lake's nature changed and became a place of abundance in terms of resources. The lake's name was then changed to God's Lake (or Manto Sakihigan in Ininiw).

According to the Elders, this is a true story. They say that you can still see where the man was stranded and had built a wall of rocks for shelter.

In another area of God's Lake are rocks, which seem to have been deposited in an unusual way, maybe by ice or glaciers. One such place is the "rockpile" which is, as the name suggests, a pile of rocks in the middle of the lake. Another such place is a place called "man's head", which, again as the name suggests, is the place where a huge rock resembles the head of man. Such places are considered important landmarks on the lake.

Other locations, which are considered significant, are the sites of the Hudson's Bay Company trading posts or outposts. These trading posts and outposts are near where the Ininiw lived as the company needed to buy furs from them. The first Hudson's Bay Company trading post in God's Lake was located at Johnson's Bay, where the Treaty to Adhesion Five was signed. After Johnson's Bay, the trading post relocated to "East End", and then to Elk Island, and then finally, to God's Lake Narrows. These sites are significant as they mark the locations, or the vicinity of locations, where Ininiw lived over time. These locations, however, would not be the total areas where the people lived as a practice of the Hudson's Bay Company was to travel to the winter camps of the people to buy furs.

An outpost was also established on an island at Edmund Lake by the company, which was later taken over by private entrepreneurs who were brothers by the name of Rominski. They also established a store at the "narrows" going towards Johnson's Bay from God's River. The brothers eventually established a commercial fishing operation on God's Lake, and later a tourist fishing lodge at the mouth of the God's River. The Rominski store locations and commercial operations provide further evidence of Ininiw people sites over time, indicating the possible cultural

significance of the areas. This history, as shared by the MSCN Elders, is supported and affirmed by the GLFN Elders.

Other special and significant sites are medicinal plant gathering sites. However, the workshop discussion was general, with no specific sites identified. The Elders did mention some common medicinal plant types, such as “wiches” (pronounced “wee-kesh”, which is “rat root”), Labrador tea, and Juniper berries. The Elders stated that every plant has medicinal value, but a person has to have the knowledge on how to utilize the plant. These plants are located all over the territory, but perhaps the knowledge of their preparation and application is being lost. The present generation of Elders told stories of healers they knew in the past.

Seasonal rounds

The Ininiw travel routes throughout the traditional territory during various seasons were also mapped, according to the Elders' knowledge. Again, the Elders indicate people went “all over,” but the marked areas are their known travel routes. In Ininiw, they describe seasonal rounds as “papamacihowina”. The identified seasonal rounds form a network of the identified community areas and gathering sites identified earlier in this report.

Seasonal rounds had time periods (i.e., seasons) and areas which would provide an abundance and maximization of available resources, such as fish and big game. Seasonal rounds are not a random pattern of land use but rather areas and movements, which would have maximized available traditional resources. These areas were key to people's survival. These seasonal rounds further indicate interests in the landscape throughout the traditional territory.

Commercial fishing lakes

In 1958 people were fishing. While commercial fishing would not be considered a “traditional” aspect of the Ininiw way of life, the commercial fishing lakes mostly correspond to the traditional use areas identified by the Elders. Commercial fishing would have been a natural evolution of the Ininiw lifestyle as the people already knew where fish were abundant through their traditional knowledge and way of life. Lake with an abundant supply of fish provide evidence of where people would have traveled in their seasonal rounds. The GLFN Elders identified the following lakes as being past commercial fishing lakes: God’s Lake, Red Cross Lake, Edmund Lake, Margaret Lake, Little Stull Lake, Kistigan Lake, Sharpe Lake, Semmens Lake, Fish Lake, Fishing Eagle Lake, Sellers Lake, Knife Lake, Touchwood Lake, Joint Lake, Webber Lake, and Beaverhill Lake.

Photo 4.13 a) and b): Commercial fishing on God’s Lake in 1958. Source: God’s Lake First Nation land use planning research project (2007-2015).



Traditional values

A discussion of traditional values illustrated how the Elders view and understand their relationship with the land. The central guiding principle of the traditional relationship with the land is respect. Traditional values were taught in various ways, including beliefs, relationships, behavior, practice, values, and so on. The concept of respect permeated every aspect and facet of life.

The Elders recognize this aspect of the relationship to the land and the peoples' place in the universe as being different from that of mainstream Canadian society and European society (described as “Emistikoso” in the Ininiw language referring to the white man). The Elders recognize that their traditional ways of living and believing are unique from other non-indigenous cultures, especially relating to the land within their traditional territory. Due to this uniqueness, governments and other “outside” entities must respect and take careful consideration of the Elders' views and values in any allocations or resource developments. Traditional values made way to the imposition, and later, adoption of Christianity. Photos 4.14 a) and b) show scenes of GLFN Ininiw families gathering after church services. However, traditional beliefs continued to be retained, albeit in a hidden way, and today, have made their way back in a more relaxed way with sweat lodges and sun dances in the community.

Photo 4.14 a) and b): GLFN Ininiw families gathering outside the United Church after services in 1958. Source: God's Lake First Nation land use planning research project (2007-2015).



4.5 Mental: Indigenous learning and existence within colonial governance

The northern quadrant represents wisdom from the land and academia. I realize my role, real or perceived, is first, as an Ininiw who has grown up on the Reserve and on the land. Secondly, my role is as an Ininiw who had his traditional education intertwined with science and mainstream

Canada's academic system. Thirdly, my role is as an Ininiw and the first generation of my family to totally rely upon the wage economy in a “professional” line of work by mainstream Canada. Fourthly, my role as an Ininiw who lives with the reality of living within a colonial society that regulates my life from the cradle to perhaps the grave under the racist legislation known as the Indian Act. Finally, my role as an Ininiw who looks to the future with hope in light of the cultural resurgence occurring within the Indigenous cultures of Canada. I see my role in light of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the adoption by Canada of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

In this section, I provide examples of the wisdom shared by other people to me from my own life and during my extensive work and experience working with my First Nation and other First Nations. I also provide an example of mineral development occurring within and in the vicinity of the GLFN traditional territory and ancestral lands. This wisdom is all tied to the Ininiw concept of Aski that includes all things on earth, including water.

4.5.1 Learning to navigate the waters of God’s Lake

I started learning how to drive a boat and motor at an early age, maybe around 11 or 12 years, taught by my late older brother. I remember my brother letting me at an early age do things like driving a motorboat and hunting and fishing to learn by experience. But my late father’s teaching when I drove the boat with my family in rough water was not by criticizing me directly but telling my mother what I did wrong and what I should do, so I could hear. My father said to my mother, “He does not know how to drive. You do not keep the motor running fast but you slow down, speed up and slow down again as you need to and ride the waves. And take your time.” After hearing that, every time I went out on the lake and water was rough, I tried out this method of slowing down and speeding up and riding the waves with the boat to the best of my ability. And

found it to work. This also became a valuable skill later in my young life when I started guiding American tourist fishers at God's Lake's fishing lodges. Over the years, I have found this teaching of navigating rough waters with a boat and motor to be applicable to many life situations.

Whenever I have encountered “rough waters” in my life and in certain situations, I remember this teaching. Firstly, do not try to go too fast to get past a situation but slow down and speed up in an alternating fashion as you navigate the situation. Secondly, take your time and be patient, and you will get through it. The teaching can be likened to the lesson learned by the rabbit in the legend shared earlier in this dissertation. The rabbit was so impatient that it charged into the lake of fat that Wisakehak had made to provide to all the animals. The result of charging past everyone and being impatient was being given only a small amount of fat. This would apply for not only yourself but also to your family and descendants. You do not do that in life. Otherwise, your impatience and audacity will have negative consequences.

4.5.3 Elders' views of the Treaties

In my line of work, I have had the good fortune of working and talking to Elders and learning from their knowledge and wisdom. Two memories stand out for me when I asked two Elders about their understanding of the treaties. The first Elder I interviewed was from my community of GLFN. This Elder interview was during my role as a Framework Agreement Initiative on Self-Government coordinator for my community, where we were given the responsibility to consult with and get feedback from the GLFN people. One of the tasks was to interview Elders and get their views on the community's prospect of attaining self-government. I asked the Elder in Ininiw what his understanding of the treaty was that was signed by our “Band”, as the government called us back in 1909. The treaty in our language is known as “Asotamakewin”, which translates to “the Promise” in the English language. The Elder said when the treaty was

signed, the Queen sent her representative here to God's Lake. And that representative came ashore and shook hands with the people promising that the Queen (the Crown) would take care of them. Part of those promises was to set aside land where our people can live known in the Ininiw language as "Iskonikan" or "left-over land" in the English language. When I explained to the Elder that we do not own the land and that it is held in trust on our behalf by the Federal government, he reacted by saying, "Moch, moch, moch", which means, "No, no, no" in the English language. He indicated his understanding of the treaty terms were that we owned the reserve land. This is significant in that there were confusion and misunderstanding of the treaty terms. Moreover, the fact that he never mentioned the written terms of the treaty, only the "hand-shake" with the people and the promise to take care of them. There was no mention of land surrender, governance, or water.

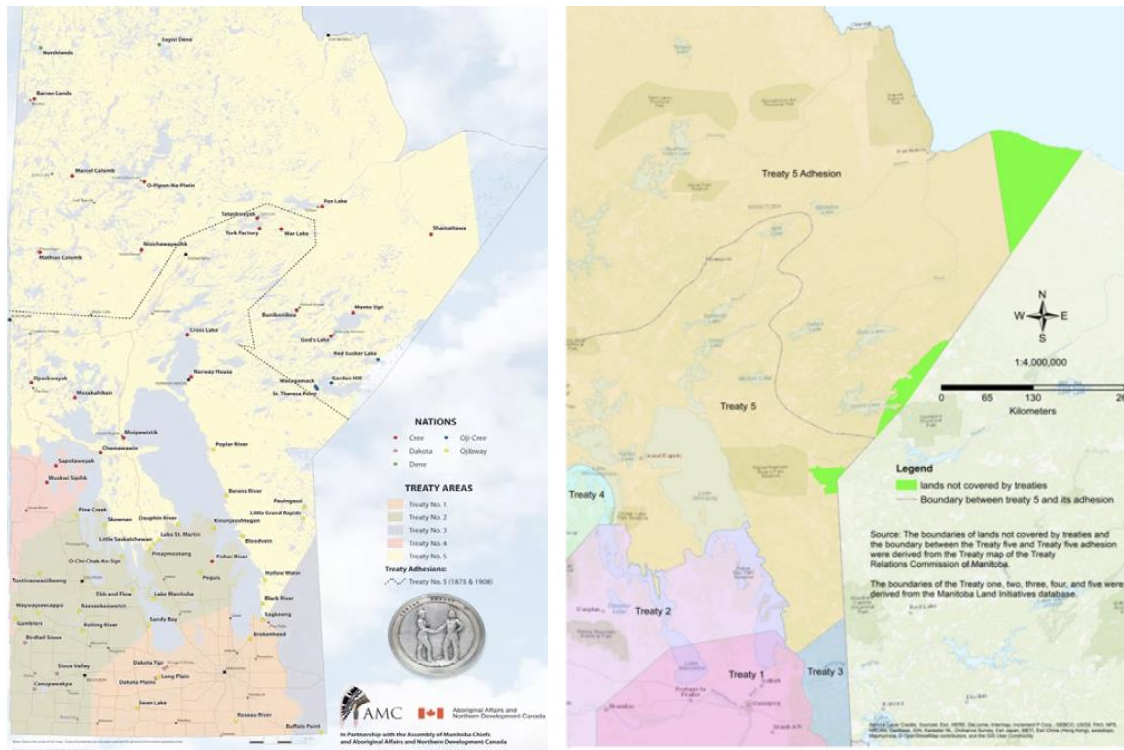
The other Elder I asked about the treaty was in his early 90's from Bunibonibee Cree Nation at Oxford House, Manitoba. The way I framed my question in Ininiw to this Elder was, "What is your understanding of the treaty and what do you know of the treaty." In his response, the Elder stated that he knew the men present at the signing of the treaty, and he knows that they told the truth, and he believed them. This is significant in the Ininiw and oral culture in that if such a statement is made, then this statement is to be accepted as fact. There is no doubt regarding its truthfulness. The story of the treaty signing passed to the Elder was that the Queen's representative (the Commissioner) presented to the people two blades of grass and stuck them on the ground. One blade was left standing whole, and the other was bent in half, and the people were told, "If you sign the treaty, the blade of grass that is whole and standing will be you, you will grow and prosper, but the grass that is bent in half and broken will be the half-breeds (the Metis) who have no Treaty with the Queen (the Crown)." Again, there was no mention of governance or water or

the written terms of the treaty. But, the overriding tone of “The Promise” was that the Queen (the Crown) would take care of the people to ensure growth and prosperity (as represented by the healthy blade of grass).

4.5.4 The treaty area and exclusion area

An interesting issue has arisen from surveys documenting the area covered by Treaty that apparently missed large areas on the north-east corner of the province within the ancestral territory of GLFN. As a result, with these areas not under the Treaty, according to the map of the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TRCM) and historical research, GLFN has unceded land. The TRCM clearly delineates that some areas are not covered by treaty agreements in the God’s Lake area and so these lands cannot be considered crown land but should be considered unceded First Nation land. The map on the left is the TRCM map depicting the treaty boundaries of the various treaties in Manitoba, which has the treaty exclusion areas highlighted in green on the right (TRCM, nd). If GLFN used the boundary of the God’s Lake registered trapline block, an upper north portion of the treaty exclusion area in the east would be subject to claim by the GLFN.

Map 4.8: Treaty Relations Commissions of Manitoba (Source: TRCM, nd). <http://www.trcm.ca>



4.5.5 Water and the issue of consultation

The Supreme Court of Canada has in several decisions, directed the governments to consult and accommodate the Aboriginal rights of Indigenous people such as the Ininiw of GLFN (Palmatar, 2014). While corporations can participate in the consultation's administrative aspects, ultimately the governments are responsible for fulfilling the duty to consult and uphold the Honour of the Crown (Palmatar, 2014). This is significant for water, water management, and water allocation. Consultation is part of the provincial government's management regime in that they are legally obligated by case law and the constitution to consult in a meaningful way with Aboriginal people (Palmatar, 2014). The difficult question or determination is the degree by which the effect or impact occurs.

Simply put, Indigenous peoples in Canada have a right to be consulted based upon their

Aboriginal and Treaty rights to hunt, fish, and pursue their traditional lifestyles and pursuits. Many issues come up when resource extraction companies come into a First Nation's traditional territory. First and foremost, the duty to consult with the First Nation is triggered due to the potential to infringe upon the Aboriginal rights of the people of a First Nation (Morellato, 2008). The company is also required to comply with the governments' environmental laws under whose jurisdiction the proposed activity or extraction of resources is to occur; usually, these are both the provincial and Federal governments (Morellato, 2008). Prior to issuing permits or licenses to allow the company to begin their work, there is a requirement to consult with the First Nation whose rights may *potentially* be infringed upon (Morellato, 2008). The requirement of statutory and case law in Canada for governments and companies is to engage First Nations about the proposed work or activity affecting their Aboriginal rights (Morellato, 2008).

The typical position taken by governments and companies regarding a proposed work or extraction is that the impact of the work on Aboriginal rights is non-existent or negligible (Newman, 2015). However, the First Nation and its people often disagree that the impact is non-existent or negligible due to their more wholistic view of their territory's land and resources. Meaning, Indigenous people view the environment as a system instead of compartmentalized and individual units to be examined and studied to determine the impact of the proposed work or extraction (Newman, 2015). For example, an all-season road or mineral exploration operation's impact on an untouched boreal forest wilderness and its people are studied by narrow, separate assessment. By this narrow review that separates social impacts from each environmental impact, rather than wholistic review, is this impact considered negligible. However, by assessing impacts at the project in its entirety with its accompanying activities such as flying transport of goods, equipment, and people into the area, in combination with the physical disturbance of the land and

water, then the impact becomes more significant. When viewed holistically and cumulatively, and not in compartments, the impact of proposed work or extraction becomes significant.

The two limiting factors of the Aboriginal rights of First Nations in Canada in decisions handed down in various court cases and the Supreme Court of Canada are *safety* and *conservation* (Newman, 2015; Morellato, 2008; Promislow, 2013). When an activity or extraction is proposed in a First Nation's traditional territory, the duty to consult with First Nations is triggered. Once the duty to consult is triggered, the governments of Canada and Manitoba are obligated to engage First Nations in the process of consultation. And depending upon the outcome of the process, the development must accommodate the issues and concerns expressed by a First Nation. An activity that impacts the environment, such as mining extraction or road development, usually involves the introduction of non-Indigenous and non-local people to a traditional territory, which *potentially* is a safety concern with concerns for gender violence (Stokes et al., 2019). Therefore, a government to unilaterally declare or claim that work or extraction will have no or negligible impact upon the Aboriginal rights of First Nations, without engaging or extensively consulting with the people is unreasonable.

This determination of First Nation risk is not within the Canadian or provincial government knowledge range to understand holistically all the elements. The determination that the impact of work or extraction is non-existent or negligible needs to be made *jointly* between governments and First Nations. For example, an all-season road being built into a First Nation, such as the one proposed for the GLFN, has impacts. During construction of the road, increased traffic and activity in the territory and construction camps will be occur, with quarries mined and heavy equipment brought in. During the road construction phase, safety will become an issue, which will limit the right to carry out traditional activities within certain areas. The road, when built, will also

physically displace an area of traditional activities, as long as that road exists, rendering the area into a barren, alienated ground and triggering the issue of safety, a limiting factor of Aboriginal rights. Also, the road construction causes a disturbance to an area, either scaring away or attracting wildlife. In either case, road construction is a disturbance to the balance within the ecosystem. Constructing a road into a traditional territory also creates *access* to the area, putting pressure upon the land and its resources, depending upon the type of resource.

Not only the *physical* aspect of the road is significant, the road becomes even more significant when you consider the regulatory requirements imposed upon the Aboriginal right to hunt. For the consideration of safety, hunting within or along the road right-of-way, which in Manitoba is 30.18 meters is unlawful: [Status Indians may not:] “hunt from a Provincial Road or Provincial Trunk Highway, or discharge a bow or firearm from such a road or highway, or shoot along or across such a road or highway (including the road allowance)” (Howard, 2015). After construction of the road, traffic and people access will create pressure upon wildlife resources such as moose, caribou, fish, etc., and limit the Aboriginal right to hunt, fish, and harvest resources sustainably.

Another factor in consultation with Indigenous people is that rights and responsibilities to the land and its resources differ. This needs to be understood by both parties. Ininiw people view the natural world wholistically and understand the land and resources were put upon the earth so that humans can make a living and survive from their own effort and sweat. This concept is a natural law that was disrupted when the Crown unilaterally interpreted the Treaties with Indigenous people in Canada to mean a surrender of the land. By usurping the land and delegating Indigenous people as wards of the state, the Crown put Indigenous people in a dependency state.

This state of dependency was legislated through the Indian Act, which rules an Ininiw person's life from the cradle to the grave. When governments consult with Indigenous people, they engage from a position of strength, rather than respect, and as the “rights giver or grantor.” When, in fact, Indigenous people already have the rights, the land, and resources, as granted to them by Manitou (Creator). Ininiw access to the land and resources has been taken away by the Crown in a dysfunctional system that does not serve Indigenous people well but diminishes them. The Creator gave the sacred gift of water to Ininiw, for spiritual and health purposes, not for commodification. Water is a common resource needed for the survival of all human beings and all life.

4.5.6 Mineral exploration without consultation with GLFN

Mining interests, in the God’s Lake Territory, hold great power now and in the past over land use. The changing of the border between Manitoba-Ontario in 1925 to claim the greenstone belts at Monument Bay for Manitoba displays the power of mining interests (Thompson, Harper, and Whiteway, 2020). The mining interests of the Manitoba government shifted some of God’s Lake territory to Manitoba from Ontario at: “the eastern point of Island Lake between the twelfth baseline and Hudson Bay” (Peters and Rorke, 1925, p. 9 cited in Thompson, Thapa, and Whiteway, 2019). This border dispute in the God’s Lake and Island Lake regions was due to “considerable mining development...[in] close proximity to the said boundary” (Peters and Rorke, 1925, p. 9 cited in Thompson Thapa and Whiteway, 2019). The Manitoba Ontario border was shifted “from Island Lake to Hudson Bay.... across the Laurentian Shield, a distance of about 110 miles” (Ontario Manitoba Commission, 1955, p. 6).

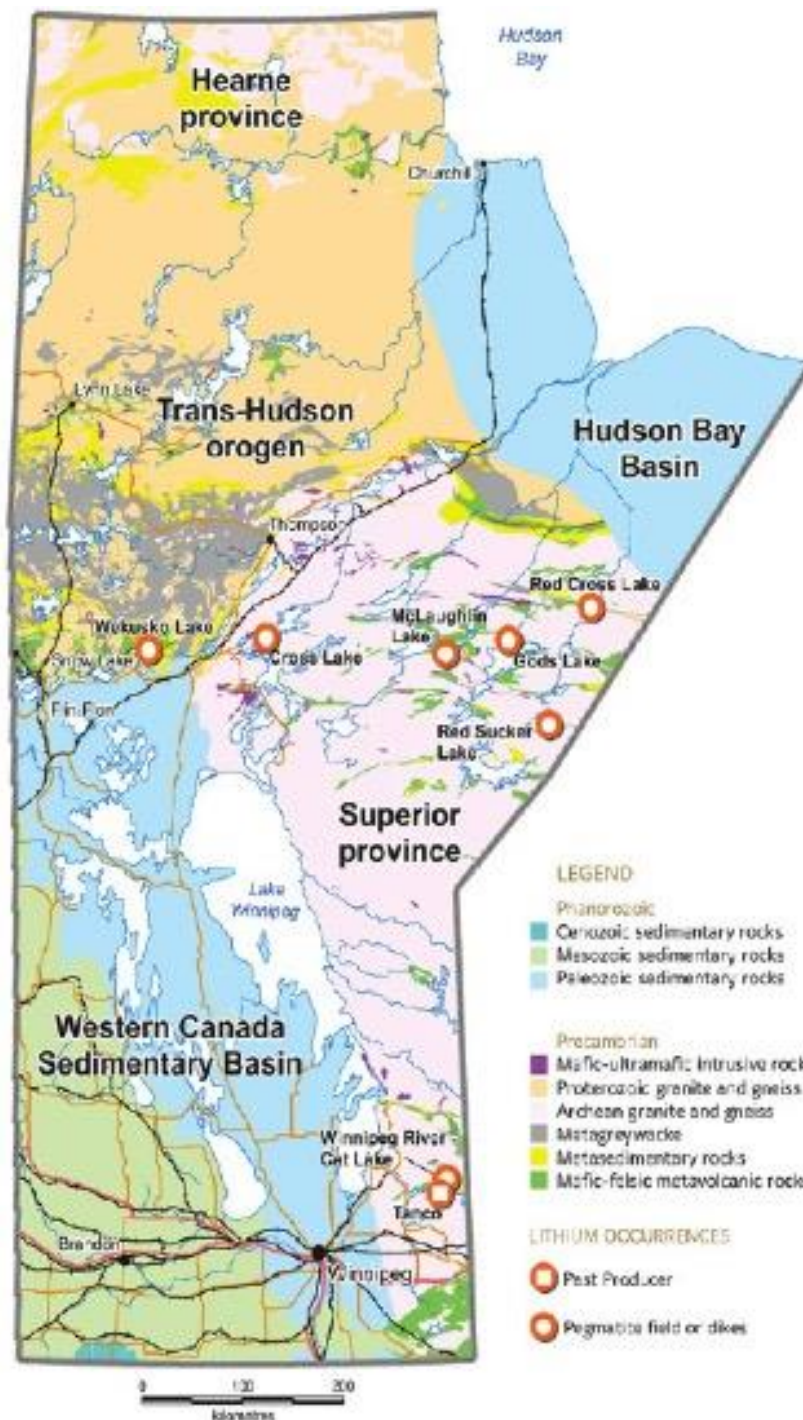
This mineral-rich greenstone area, in the Hayes Watershed now falls into Manitoba against the crown’s initial direction (Thompson, Thapa and Whiteway, 2019). This change of border

effectively changed the applicable rules for this area. If Manitoba had not shifted the border, Yamana Gold Inc., which is upstream from God's Lake in the Hayes Watershed, would be under the moratorium of Ontario's Far North Act. The Far North Act applies only to Ontario for Indigenous communities to determine their land use plans without industry-imposed external development. However, being in Manitoba, Yamana Gold Inc. was allowed to explore for gold at Monument Bay, despite the WNO planning process warranting a moratorium on the development and First Nations protesting their intrusion. Mining is a non-sustainable activity, with negative environmental impacts, that conflicts with Indigenous communities' sustainability.

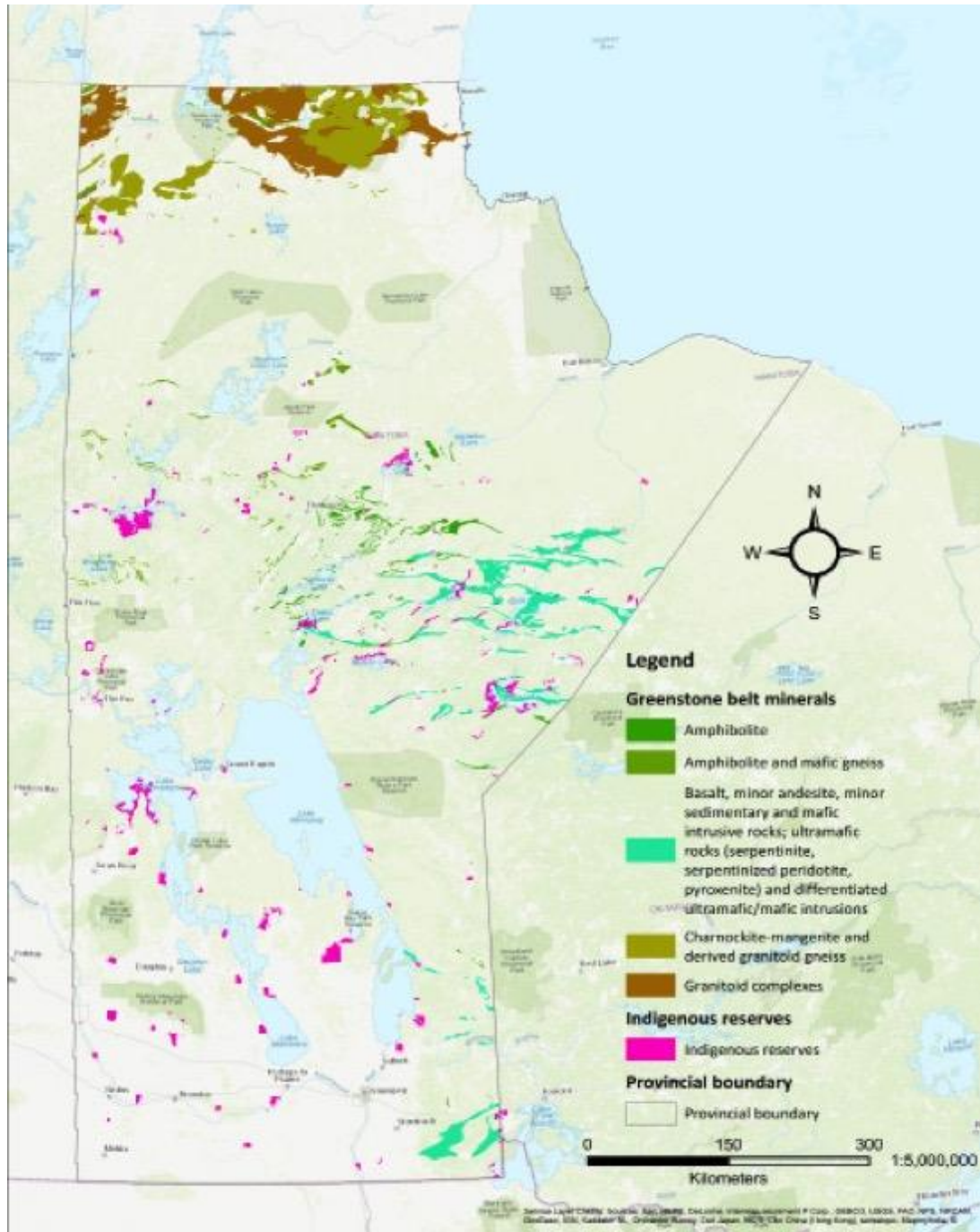
God's Lake region has many sizeable Archean-age greenstone belts known for their abundant gold and lithium deposits. Greenstone belts are a volcanic and sedimentary mixed rock type. Greenstone belts frequently contains precious and semi-precious minerals, including gold, copper, silver, zinc, lithium, granitoids and gneiss.

The Archean Eon commenced about 4 billion years ago, when the Earth's crust formed, making these rocks ancient. In the Archean period (4 billion to 2.5 billion years ago), the Earth's crust cooled enough that rocks and continental plates formed, and life began on earth. These ancient mountains and rocks in the God's Lake region are Archean grandfather rocks that witnessed the birth of life on this planet and are the substance of Ininiw stories. These grandfather rocks are considered sacred, as is water. Island arcs created some rocks and the oceanic crust plateau formed others (Thompson, Whiteway, and Harper, 2020). The name, greenstone belt, which are coloured green on geological maps, is due to chlorite and actinolite chemicals, turning the rocks that color. Maps 4.9 and 4.10 depict the areas of mineral potential in the God's Lake region showing many lithium belts and many greenstone belts.

Map 4.9: Location of lithium-bearing pegmatite and brines. Source: Manitoba Land Initiative (<https://www.manitoba.ca/iem/geo/lithium/index.html>).



Map 4.10: The greenstone belt minerals of Manitoba. Source: Manitoba Land Initiative.



The Land Use Planning Act Regulation 81/2011, with major implications for many First Nations, was passed, without First Nation consultation, stating: “the best and only use” of

greenstone belts is mining and that “Greenstone belts...must be identified and protected from conflicting surface land uses that could interfere with access to the resources” (Manitoba Government, 2011, 38 cited in Thompson, Whiteway and Harper, 2020). The government failed to meet the standard of consultation expected after the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) Calls to Action. Manitoba’s Land Use Planning Act Regulation 81/2011 passing, without First Nation consultation, was particularly duplicitous as First Nations were engaged in the WNO planning initiative during this time. During the WNO process, First Nation had asked a moratorium on mining and other development for Lake Winnipeg's east-side. However, this legislation creates a situation where First Nations cannot plan greenstone in their territory (Manitoba Government, 2016).

4.6 Conclusions

In conclusion, water from an Indigenous perspective, and more specifically, from my individual perspective as a GLFN member, water permeates all aspects of the Medicine Wheel. As Indigenous people, water is represented in the spiritual, physical, emotional (ecosystem), and mental (social) realms of life. Being lake people in GLFN, myself and the GLFN members are surrounded by God’s Lake's water, which permeates every aspect of our lives. My lived experience and the traditional land-use and occupancy study of GLFN over our territory is a testament to the importance of water for the GLFN Ininiw. As Indigenous Peoples, we have Manitou-given rights to water that are “affirmed and recognized” by modern society as Aboriginal, Treaty, and Constitutional rights.

God’s Lake water quality and conservation would benefit immensely from Indigenous people governance over the area’s land and water as they have a sacred trust to steward their

territory. A community-led approach is supported by a review of 29 case studies in Asia and Latin America that show better outcomes for Indigenous peoples and community-led conservation efforts for biodiversity, forest carbon, and managing wildfires than government-led conservation programs (Tauli-Corpuz, Alcorn, & Molnar, 2018). The better environmental outcomes when Indigenous peoples' steward and manage their territory is attributed to Indigenous traditional knowledge and Indigenous worldview (Jojoba, 2013; McGregor, 2013; Tauli-Corpuz et al., 2018).

Chapter 5 : Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This discussion chapter will review the findings related to GLFN relationship and governance of water. The Medicine Wheel findings on the spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental aspects provide much insight into the need for GLFN to govern water. I go to each of these aspects according to the conceptual model of learning.

5.1.1 The conceptual framework of learning

Applying the conceptual framework process, following an Elder's teaching on how we learn and process information, and how we function as human beings, I obtained an in-depth, wholistic analysis of GLFN water governance. My learning journey provided me insight to discuss after fully processing the information. My Indigenous learning process occurred through the heart (emotion), mind (think), body (act) to arrive at spirit (experience) through a wholistic approach (Wanbdi Wakita, personal communication).

Following this order of the learning process, I explored my emotions (heart) about the GLFN water problems, feeling anger about the injustice of being underserved and the inadequacy of our water system. As I think (mind) and contemplate this water injustice, I am left wondering why? Why are substandard water systems in GLFN causing water quality and quantity concerns? The water problem is complex, stemming from colonization, and so thoughtful action is required.

The action (body) I took is to enter a Ph.D. program at the University of Manitoba to study the problem and the proposed solution of Indigenous governance over water. In my journey through this Ph.D. program and writing this dissertation, my thinking was transformed. After analyzing the collective experience (spirit) of an Ininiw, locked inside a colonial nation. I had to “uncloak” the colonial system education to see our relationship to water and water governance

through Indigenous eyes. This view through the Medicine Wheel shows my learning journey to assess the water issue holistically.

5.2 Spiritual: Ininiw spiritual significance of water

The Ininiw are part of Creation, and natural law dictates that the earth, and the land, water, and lifeforms, are the part of Creation that assists and enables us to survive and thrive. We are part of Creation and intimately related to Aski as Manitou created everything with four spirits -- water, earth (mineral/soil), fire, and air. We share these same four spirits with all of Aski. In our worldview, the Ininiw originate from the spirit world, and possess a spirit during our physical existence here on earth. Indeed, the earth's spiritual nature is a central tenet of Ininiw culture (Wilson, 2019).

All of Creation was established so that humans may make a sustainable living from Aski's resources by our effort and sweat (Wilson, 2019). Such knowledge gives rise to feelings of gratefulness, humility, and the need to have a spiritual sense of our existence. Through our relationship with Manitou (Creator) and Creation itself, the Creator gave us the responsibility to take care of Aski. In our Ininiw language, Aski encompasses everything that is on the earth, including water. The Ininiw have different names for the many living things on earth, but the word, Aski, summarizes all these. The word Aski invokes an emotion of being a part of a greater whole.

When I think of my place in Aski's greater whole, I think about the GLFN Ininiw and our position in Canada's society. The colonial nation, the Dominion of Canada, placed Indigenous Peoples as wards in their constitution known as the British North America Act, 1867. However, the Ininiw have always known that we are sovereign people of our territory because when we are born on Aski, we possess from Manitou (Creator) the right to govern ourselves and determine our own destinies and responsibilities to steward Aski.

Regarding GLFN Ininiw people, how do we reconcile these two extremely different governance regimes? The dependency system created by settlers to this continent, those hundreds of years ago, is not viable nor sustainable for First Nations. The cycle of dependency must be disrupted to enable Indigenous people to realize their inherent responsibility regarding water governance in their communities and territories. One may reasonably conclude that when the colonial society placed the Indigenous people, the Ininiw, in a position of being “wards of the state,” then natural law was broken. Restoration of the Ininiw people's sovereignty is needed within their “piece of earth” and the right to govern over the water and Aski within their traditional territory. The creator gave Ininiw an inherent right and responsibility for water, which needs to be recognized. Governance by GLFN Ininiw of GLFN territory would be in line with the natural order of things or natural law.

One may wonder what actions can be taken by the Ininiw to restore their governance power over the water in their traditional territory. The indisputable facts, which my maps, legends, historical accounts, and Elders words give abundant evidence of, are: the GLFN Ininiw are still in our traditional territory and will continue to occupy our ancestral lands. The GLFN Ininiw outnumber all other people within our territory historically and to this day and into the future. The GLFN Ininiw still actively pursue traditional activities, including hunting, fishing, trapping, and traveling over our lands. By doing so, the GLFN Ininiw continue to give life to our Aboriginal and treaty rights, maintaining a presence on the land through land selections, engaging in new forms of land utilization, as well as traditional activities and travel. The GLFN Ininiw declare our existence and rights through legal, formal, and informal means.

In a spiritual sense, God's Lake has always been the source of life for the GLFN Ininiw people. As indicated in this dissertation, archaeological evidence shows the ancestors of the

present-day Ininiw people occupied God's Lake for at least two thousand years. Thus, God's Lake territory is the birthplace of the Ininiw over thousands of years and many generations of our people. Over this long history, the Creator placed us here to govern our territory sustainably, which we did. Life is sacred, and so is the land and water in the God's Lake region.

Truly, the statement of Aski being sacred is consistent with what Ininiw Elders told me in a workshop documenting special and sacred sites in GLFN. I asked Elders which areas of the territory are special and sacred, and the Elders said all of the GLFN territory. Elders stressed that Aski must be protected as Aski enabled our ancestors to raise their children, including the present generation. These Ininiw elders clarified that although Aski is not always used for trapping or fishing, these areas and traplines are not abandoned but part of their sacred stewardship still. The land and water give life and enable our survival over the ages into the present and future, making Aski sacred. The life-giving force of water needs to be maintained and nourished. Ininiw governance over water can accomplish that.

5.3 Physical: the Ininiw physical environment includes traditional territory

God's Lake region is my home. According to the government, GLFN is defined by the reserve boundaries, but GLFN Ininiw, including myself, see that GLFN encompasses our ancestral territory. I have intimate knowledge of the God's Lake region and spent my early life hunting, fishing, trapping, guiding, and camping. I continue to go back to this day to spend time out on God's Lake. My time on God's Lake never felt like "recreation" as God's Lake was a way of life for me, something I have always known. These lifeways contrast to a recreational camping trip in the south, where I have no real ties to the land. The God's Lake region is full of memories. I have many stories that occurred in countless areas around God's Lake. Also, other people told me further stories about different occurrences in many areas of the region. When Ininiw people talk

about their home, I have observed they always have difficulty expressing in words and most often touch their heart to make the point. This land is the core of our identity and part of us, the Ininiw.

Peoples and nations require a land base and the Ininiw are no different. We have remained on our land base in our ancestral territory for thousands of years. The land gave the Ininiw life by providing the resources upon which to survive and thrive in a continuous cycle, which has peaks and valleys, as the saying goes about abundance and scarcity. Living off the land is not an easy life and can be, at times, harsh and unforgiving. Thus, living life in harmony with its seasons and cycles, particularly the water cycle, is essential. Water is the lifeblood that maintains the biodiversity and sustenance of the myriad of life that exists upon the land. The rivers, lakes, creeks, bogs, muskeg, and streams of the land are saturated with water.

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment is that the GLFN Ininiw people kept their ancestral territory's ecological integrity and natural state for thousands of years to this day. However, the plans for an all-season road and mineral exploration throughout the GLFN territory could disrupt the natural balance. Recognizing this imminent threat, some GLFN Ininiw are opposed to these developments. However, others are supportive, thinking this development, if done under GLFN governance, could help the Ininiw access services, infrastructure, and employment. That people are aware of the threats to the water and land is a positive sign, particularly as measures are being taken by the GLFN to prepare for these imminent threats by conducting land use and comprehensive community planning.

God's Lake is approximately 96 km long by 32 km wide or 1,151 square kilometers, making it the seventh-largest lake in Manitoba but the traditional territory of the Ininiw people of God's Lake goes beyond God's Lake shorelines. God's Lake watershed and the surrounding land area are covered in pristine water where a person can dip their cup and drink, which are not

fluctuated by dams or water structures. All other large watersheds have dams and control structures that unnaturally fluctuate water levels across Manitoba. Only the Hayes River Watershed, which God's Lake is part of, has natural fluctuations. The result of fluctuation negatively impacts the water quality, as well as the volume. Outside the Hayes River watershed, dams and water control structure play havoc with the natural balance, with negative environmental impacts. For example, during the 2017 Canoe Quest from God's Lake, as we got closer to the Norway House area, we were no longer able to drink the water due to damming impacts for hydroelectric development.

Regarding the physical state of God's Lake water remains pristine, without contamination from any industrial activity. This natural watershed is the greatest resource for the Ininiw people of God's Lake, and their health and lives are inextricably linked to its natural state that requires GLFN's governance over water. Thus, traditional GLFN governance is considered paramount to the cultural survival of the Ininiw and environmental integrity. The natural state of God's Lake is tied, to this day, to the survival of the GLFN Ininiw people and their culture. Therefore, the Ininiw people need to assert their governance power over the water of their territory.

5.4 Emotional: the complexity of the relationship between the Ininiw with land and water

The relationships amongst lifeforms within God's Lake are complex, and the complexity increases as Ininiw people's survival is inextricably connected. The life of Ininiw in this region have always been very closely tied to God's Lake for our social, cultural, economic, political, and spiritual ways. To control their lives, Ininiw need to govern the water on which they depend. However, for GLFN to take full power to govern the water that influences their survival and societal development requires political, social, economic, legal, and other complex changes. God's Lake and its water continue to be important to the Ininiw people, and therefore, GLFN Ininiw must

regain their ability to govern over the water contained within its territory. The GLFN Ininiw must revive their traditional close relationship to the lake and water with the governance power over the water.

Canada and Manitoba's colonial governments say they own the land and water because we gave them up through the Adhesion to Treaty Five 1909. However, a growing chorus of Indigenous scholars, such as Palmater, Simpson, Craft, LaDuke, Ballard, and Venne, and other non-Indigenous scholars such as Krasowski, Thompson, and others, assert that the numbered treaties were not land surrender agreements but peace and friendship treaties. This dissension from Canada's position regarding the true spirit and intent of treaties supports my dissertation that my people, the Ininiw, have governance jurisdiction over water.

We, the Ininiw, continue to use our traditional territory for traditional pursuits and maintain our presence upon the landscape. We must also remember that when viewed in the context of thousands of years, the living memory, and use, habitation, and occupation in our traditional territory is only fleeting during any given generation and must not be considered in isolation. There is no question of our historic use and occupation of our traditional territory, from stories, maps, cultural sites, archeological studies, and legends. Furthermore, the GLFN Ininiw present-day use and occupation of our territory is well documented through my mapping research on traditional land use. The future has yet to be determined, but, as our GLFN Elders state, the GLFN Ininiw have not abandoned our territories and the water we rely upon.

The GLFN Ininiw relationship and responsibility to the land and water were never extinguished nor negotiated away in any agreement, including the Treaty. Nor have our Aboriginal and Treaty rights been legislated, which would make the courts enforce these. Our Adhesion to Treaty 5 1909 states we can continue our pursuits and avocations of hunting and fishing as we

always have, which requires Ininiw land governance. Today, our treaty's true spirit and intent need to be revived and reconsidered, particularly regarding GLFN jurisdiction over our lands and water.

5.5 Mental: the social and cultural considerations and the way forward

From a social and cultural consideration of our present circumstances in God's Lake, GLFN Ininiw were considered "less than" Europeans at the treaty's signing until today (TRC, 2015). This racism created genocidal policies toward my people, the Ininiw (TRC, 2015). The grave injustices have resulted in much suffering and loss of life during residential school and today with the murdered and missing women. Racism has resulted in First Nations being targeted for flooding causing displacement, and for industrial development and receiving less environmental services or infrastructures, such as for clean drinking water (Thompson, 2014). This racism is known as environmental injustice.

Racism and injustice typically have spawned an adversarial reaction to any proposed change, such as Ininiw governance over water. As implemented over hundreds of years, racism and injustice create conflict when Indigenous people ask the ruling government in Canada to change and acknowledge Aboriginal and treaty rights. The Creator gave Indigenous people these rights to govern over the land and water in their ancestral territory. However, how are Indigenous people to approach an attempt to change the system with the attitude of racism permeating colonial governance over lands and waters? I may well feel discouragement and apprehension, and maybe even anger, but such emotions, although valid, may not be productive.

Perhaps a better approach to the situation and the cause of asserting governance over water is with an attitude of hope and optimism. The Ininiw stewarded and other Indigenous people of North America, governed the water for thousands of years and kept the God's Lake pristine. The pristine water quality of God's Lake shows our strength and provides hope for the future. As well,

compared to past eras, the attitudes and willingness to listen to new ideas are more hopeful today. Albeit, the struggles of Indigenous people to progress towards environmental justice and civil liberty have been immense, with many casualties.

Our people have undergone hundreds of years of cultural genocide (TRC, 2015). Indigenous peoples have demonstrated tremendous resilience and determination to continue to exist as Peoples and live up to their responsibilities to upcoming generations by stewarding the environment. At the time of the writing of this dissertation, a dispute is occurring in Canada resulting from a developer's intent to build a pipeline over Aboriginal title land of the Wet'suwet'en people in British Columbia and the Crown's refusal to recognize the Aboriginal title of the Wet'suwet'en in their territory.

On a personal level, remembering who I am as an Ininiw person is hopeful. I went through great adversity most of my adult life in the face of many forms of discrimination and cultural genocide (TRC, 2015). However, I strongly identify as an Ininiw person now. I have hope and a feeling of strength knowing who I am and that I will never again be made to feel less than anyone or anything. I find hope in the growing chorus of Indigenous scholars and non-Indigenous scholars, calling into question the numbered treaties' surrender clauses in Canada. Also, my hope grows with the many court cases, including by the Supreme Court of Canada, decided in favour of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

I see hope for the recognition of Indigenous knowledge in law. I am aware of two laws incorporating Indigenous knowledge, namely: *Fisheries Act* and Bill C-69, *An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*. Generally, progress has been made in Canada to involve Indigenous people in the management of the resources of their

territories in Canada and to consider Indigenous knowledge and systems in management regimes (Council of Canadian Academies, 2019).

I went through the liberating process of “uncloaking” my colonial university education in writing this dissertation. I challenged the assumptions that underlie Canadian education about Indigenous people in Canada, that work against my people, the Ininiw. This reckoning caused me to shift my methods from a narrow European science-based approach, which would have limited the findings to observable facts and transcripts. Instead, I adopted an Indigenous research paradigm, applying the Medicine Wheel, considering the Indigenous learning process (Wilson, 2009). My transformative experience gives me cause for great hope.

As we look forward to the future, I think about the words of Senator Murray Sinclair. His quote at the beginning of the Introduction chapter reads, “*we shouldn’t think of ownership of land as the key, we should think of governance over land as the key and that takes it to a different kind of conversation.*” Perhaps that different kind of conversation is what is needed in the time forward to bring into balance the relationship between the colonial people of Canada and Indigenous people. I believe I have demonstrated in this dissertation how integral the land, resources, and water are to our existence in the past, present, and future in our culture, identity, heritage, and society.

Moving forward with reconciliation in Canada, decolonization has become a buzzword. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (2015) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) provide hope for the future. The Ininiw people's identity cannot be separated from the land and water on which their ancestors and they depend. This bond is dictated by natural law with the sovereign rights granted by Manitou (Creator) to exist and thrive from the lands provided to Ininiw on our “piece of earth.” Governance over the water of our

traditional territory and ancestral lands needs to be declared to the colonial governments of Canada and the people of Canada so that we may take care of ourselves and our future generations.

5.6 Conclusions

In this discussion, I took the Medicine Wheel's circular frame, as I did with the findings, to discuss the findings wholistically and explore further through the Indigenous learning process. The Crown colonial governments of Canada and Manitoba continue to assert that they own the land title. In the face of a growing chorus of academics and lawyers questioning the legitimacy of the Crown's assertion of Canada's title, GLFN Aboriginal title will refute the assertion of Crown title, one day.

As our people's Aboriginal and treaty rights to govern over the waters of our traditional territory and ancestral lands have never been surrendered, the GLFN Ininiw hold it still. As the Ininiw people, we are considered wards of the state, but our worldview of Manitou (Creator)-given rights is at odds with this derogatory designation. Manitou's natural laws provide for resources from where all humans may make a living from their own efforts and sweat. The legal, water and other systems in place in Canada need to be reconciled with natural law, and one component of that would be for the Ininiw people of God's Lake to assert their governance over the waters of their territory and ancestral lands. There is great hope for water governance and self-determination as Indigenous people rise up and assert their sovereignty over their lands, waters, and their lives.

Chapter 6 : Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

The GLFN never gave up the right to govern the waters of their ancestral lands and territory. No record exists anywhere of negotiations or agreements made with the Crown to transfer governance power over water from GLFN. Our oral history confirms that no transfer of governance occurred, but only a “handshake” where the Commissioner promised the people that the Queen would take care of them. As well, Elders and scholars refute that First Nations surrendered the land in the numbered treaties, on many grounds (Palmater, 2014; Krasowsky, 2019).

In this dissertation, I have asserted our cultural perspective on who we are as a People, the Ininiw of Manitou Sakahigan, or God’s Lake in the English language. We are a distinct people. We are not European, African, nor Asian and should not have to adopt these other ways. We are unique in that Manitou (Creator) granted us a piece of earth to live our way of life known as Pimajihowin in our language, or survival roughly translated in the English language. Our ancestors occupied and governed over aski in North America's boreal forest, known as Turtle Island, by the Indigenous peoples living here. Our ancestors’ lives had certainty that we came from a Spirit world to live on earth in a physical form. And that knowledge has been passed on to the present GLFN Ininiw.

In this dissertation, I explain that we possess a spirit, or Aschak in the Ininiw language, when we are born into this world. As a physical being, we are born sovereign with an inherent right to determine our own destiny. Long before the coming of the European settlers onto this continent, this was the way and the understanding of our ancestors. This culture and belief system enabled my ancestors and other families in GLFN to survive and thrive in a sometimes cruel and harsh environment. We survived knowing certain truths and natural laws that govern this world.

Cultural identity is a powerful thing, and my GLFN Ininiw provided deep insights in writing this dissertation.

6.2 Autoethnography and the Medicine Wheel

The literature states that autoethnography is both process and product. I apply “auto” to document my life’s journey, as a GLFN Ininiw, related to God’s Lake water. Then, regarding “ethno” I consider Ininiw cultural experience examined in the broader Indigenous context of water and environmental justice. Concerning “graphy”, I tell and analyze the stories, legends, and other accounts of GLFN and Indigenous people as well as policy related to water. Autoethnography provided me an outlet to look over the whole of my experience, and the ability to communicate this experience in both science and story. Any other method would have restricted my findings to the time period of my thesis. This wholistic and timeless approach is closer to Indigenous approaches to knowledge than the western rigid scientific method. Due to the complexity and myriad of relationships with water, a rigid scientific method would have difficulty approaching the many relationships between GLFN, Ininiw, Indigenous peoples, the different levels of governments, and the people of Canada and Manitoba and Aski.

According to our Ininiw culture and language, we refer to the earth as “Aski,” a term that encompasses “all things” on the earth such as the land, water, air, animals, birds, fish, trees, plants, and so on. As well, Aski considers their relationships with each other, including us. That wholistic worldview is difficult to analyze in science, particularly as each aspect has a spirit. Aski is everything on the earth, living and non-living, to which the Ininiw have a spiritual connection and worldview to all of existence. We look at Aski as a wholistic, interconnected web of living and non-living things governed by a physical and spiritual force. At times, I struggled to focus the discussion solely on the GLFN relationship with water due to this wholistic, interconnected view

of the world and universe.

In my initial examination and autoethnography study, one of my critical thoughts was that the process and product are still of a “scientific” and colonial system. However, as I continued to read further into this literature, I learned how adaptable, versatile, and variable the approach is that it “could mean different things to different people” (Chang, 2008, p. 46). As well, autoethnography takes many different forms. Autoethnography allowed me to design a method that communicated and documented Indigenous issues, such as the relationships between the GLFN and water, considering governance implications.

The ancestral or traditional territory of the GLFN encompasses all of God’s Lake and the immediate surrounding areas and lands. Being a lake environment, “water is our greatest resource” (GLFN Chief, personal communication, 2014) for travel, hunting, fishing, trapping, and all traditional pursuits and recreational activities now and into the future. Having lived my early years on God’s Lake, I can testify to its beauty and abundance in providing resources, including pristine water, not only for survival but also for a good life, *Minopimatisiwin*. The relationship to God’s Lake is so fundamental to *Ininiw* identity, providing the basis of our culture, sustenance, and existence throughout our history, present life, and future. The land, water, and people are inextricably connected.

In my participation in the Canoe Quest 2017, I saw and experienced firsthand the water’s importance for travel, survival, and healing. However, survival should not be the only goal but also a thriving existence. The Canoe Quest showed me the strength required to travel through the lake and river systems from God’s Lake and Norway House in Manitoba. Great strength and endurance were required of my ancestors to make this trip regularly. Our forbearers often undertook this trip - both men and women – from centuries past to the last generation. My late

father made this trip many times in his lifetime.

Depending solely on trapping and land-based living slowly began to disappear due to outside economic and social forces, albeit this way of life did not disappear entirely. As a result, our people turn to new ways of utilizing the land, such as healing journeys like the Canoe Quest. Healing on the land and family camps are essential to our cultural integrity and provide wholistic healing. The lands of God's Lake and our traditional territory should never be viewed in isolation from us, the Ininiw. The land is part of our identity. The land is a big part of who Ininiw are both in the past, now, and in the future. The lands, waters, people, and our spirituality are a sacred whole.

During this dissertation writing, I struggled to reconcile my Indigenous thought process and traditional knowledge and teachings into the University of Manitoba's academic framework. The table of contents' linear and hierarchal construction shows how chapters are strictly dedicated to one issue. Thus, the thesis journey had to be divided into parts for categorization as either methods or literature or findings. These divisions are at odds with the circular and wholistic views and thought processes of the Indigenous mind.

I have attempted to reconcile this dissertation's science-based and formal framework by incorporating the Medicine Wheel's circular frame. The Medicine Wheel provided the theoretical framework, the conceptual framework, methods, and presentation format for the findings and discussion. With autoethnography, I was able to apply the medicine wheel framework to my findings. My experience of ethnography found this method compatible with Indigenous thought and culture. Ours is an oral culture, passing on our knowledge from generation to generation through practice and repeated instruction and oral direction. Autoethnographies' fluid approach with culture and perspectives in the method makes autoethnography compatible with Indigenous culture. Academia has not always accepted Indigenous knowledge or autoethnography. However,

autoethnography is gaining acceptance across academia disciplines, viewing its partisan, subjective, and evolving nature as positive rather than negative aspects (Chang, 2008; Ellis et al., 2011).

Throughout this dissertation, the circular frame of the Medicine Wheel is utilized in the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework. Things are explained using a circular frame with four quadrants of spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental, in that order starting from the east and going in a clockwise fashion. Then, the teaching of an Elder on Indigenous learning process, gave a systematic way to present and analyze my autoethnography - using heart, mind, body, and spirit. The circular frame explained the processes and the organization of ideas throughout the dissertation. While the circular frame was challenging to fit into the structured form required by a doctoral thesis, the flexible and accommodating nature of the autoethnography method enabled me to utilize the method to a certain extent in the findings, discussion, and conclusion sections.

6.3 Ininiw relationship to Manitou and water

One of the facts of the existence of our Ininiw people is we have been here on this continent for a very long time that surpasses the existence of Canada by thousands of years, which is the basis for Aboriginal rights. Canada's existence was born with the passage of the British North America Act in 1867, creating what was known as the Dominion of Canada at the time.

This landmass eventually became the nation of Canada, encompassing my people, the Ininiw. Prior to this event, the Ininiw were a sovereign People, living off this vast continent's land and waters. We would eventually settle in the lake known as Manitou (God's) Sakahigan (Lake) in our language, or God's Lake. As an example of European re-writing of history, we were made to believe that the God's Lake name originated with the missionaries, but our oral culture says

otherwise. Our Elders tell us that the name Manitou Sakahigan (pronounced Manto-sakahigan) existed long before the coming of the Europeans to God's Lake. This Elder shared his memory of a time when hardly any "white people" in God's Lake, only a few each year for Treaty.

His point was we are the ones that know this land (God's Lake) the best and named this land as Ininiw. He stressed that we are the only ones who lived here and have our cultural integrity intact. We outnumber other cultures in God's Lake to this day, and our people continue to use the land and waters for traditional pursuits and speak the language. Today, fishing in the form of angling and setting nets is done all summer and winter, the spring duck and goose hunt is an anticipated event every year, and the fall moose hunt is a significant time of year for GLFN Ininiw. Other traditional activities and ways of life are being revived continuously year after year, albeit in a modern world. That is the nature of any strong, thriving culture, including ours, even under the tremendous assault of cultural genocide over hundreds of years (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015).

God's Lake region has provided the Ininiw with the land and resources necessary for survival for thousands of years, as well as today and into the future. Prior to the coming of the European settlers, God's Lake's lands and waters provided the source of life for our people and Minopimatisiwin (the good life). From this state of harmony and peaceful co-existence with the land and Creation, how did we get to the state we are in today? Why do we struggle today to maintain a steady supply of quality drinking water and water for our everyday living? The answer is not a simple one but involves a long history with a colonial process and a complex web of relationships.

This dissertation argues that GLFN never relinquished its right to govern the lands and waters of its ancestral territory as granted by Manitou, the Creator. The Adhesion to Treaty Five the Ininiw

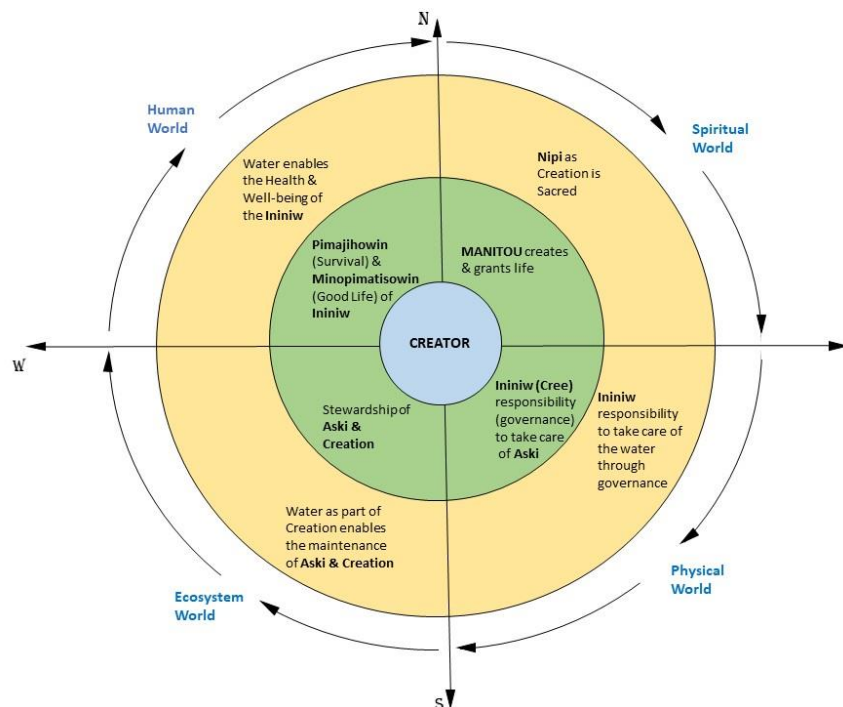
signed in 1909 was and continues to be unilaterally interpreted and enforced by Canada's nation (RCAP, 1996) as a land surrender document. My premise of the continued maintenance of governance over the land does not argue for land ownership, a foreign and non-existent concept in Ininiw culture. By natural law, as noted in this dissertation, the Manitou (Creator) placed the resources on this earth for the survival of the people. Natural law is a higher law than land ownership from the Ininiw perspective prior to, during, and after European contact. Natural law, therefore, refutes the land ownership claims of the Crown.

Ownership of land is a European concept imposed upon Ininiw ancestral lands. However, that is not to say that the Ininiw have no interest in the land, quite the contrary. The land is the source of life, the basis of our existence, our culture, language, heritage, and legacy. Ininiw occupied GLFN ancestral lands, and Ininiw *governed* over and continues to govern over GLFN ancestral lands. This governance is down through our occupation and stewardship of the land, Ininiw culture, way of life, and spiritual knowledge. Our spiritual knowledge confirms that as generation after generation of Ininiw are born in our ancestral lands, we, the Ininiw, are born sovereign. These rights and responsibilities are granted to us by Manitou (Creator). Each successive generation upon generation carries this sovereignty within their being and passes sovereignty on to our children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and future generations to come. GLFN sovereignty is the past reality, today's reality, and the reality of the time to come.

Ininiw governance power over water extends beyond a single resource claim to self-determination over the lives of Ininiw. Self-government must be the backdrop of any issue that concerns the Ininiw in their assertion of their governance power over water. The plan for governance power over water, requires GLFN have human, technical, and expert resource capacity, and governance development. Figure 6.1 shows the relationship Ininiw have with water,

including responsibilities and rights stemming from the Creator's natural law that extend into the spiritual, physical, ecosystem, and human worlds.

Figure 6.1: The Ininiw relationship to Manitou, Water, Aboriginal rights and Self-government



6.4 The community water system and fiduciary duty

The God's Lake Reserve #296 are the lands reserved for the people of GLFN for their use under the *Indian Act*. These lands are Federal lands, not owned by the GLFN. As GLFN reserve is held in trust by Canada in Right of the Crown, Canada claims that the GLFN is a Nation without a landmass. The colonial process established a fiduciary relationship with the British Crown. Later, this fiduciary relationship was repatriated, under the Canadian Constitution, 1982, to Canada in Right of the Crown. This entails a Trust-Trustee relationship wherein Canada has to act in the best interests of the GLFN and provide for its needs. These needs include programs, infrastructure, and services.

Thus, Canada is responsible for providing safe, quality drinking water, and water supply and distribution to the people of the GLFN. Canada has not fulfilled its legal fiduciary obligation to the people, particularly before 2000, when GLFN had no running water to households. As I noted earlier, I carried water up to our house in the 1980s and into the 1990s. In the late 1990s, the first water pipe was laid to part of GLFN. In the early stages of the piped water installation, people were still carrying water up from the lake shoreline to their houses in many areas in GLFN. Over the next two decades, Canada funded the installation and establishment of a piped water and sewer system to the reserve's central areas that only serviced a few of the many GLFN homes. However, Canada funded a cheaper water delivery system to most homes on reserve, despite the high health risks and long-term costs. However, several households continue to use barrels.

Three piped water distribution areas exist in GLFN, namely: the mainland, west side, and Nazzie's Point. The Nazzie's Point system provides raw, untreated water only, safe only for washing and cleaning. The community's mainland and west side areas have water treatment plants with piped water to most but not all houses. Some houses have cisterns for water and sewer and a few with barrels only, and no running piped water or sewage.

As part of this dissertation's research, a request for water data was made from Health Canada for the years January 2011 to December 2017. This weekly data indicates that piped water for the mainland and west side equipped with water treatment plants have problems for total coliform and E. Coli. Water quality readings generally are acceptable at the water treatment plant but get contaminated by the truck-to-cistern system. Although testing of cisterns has not been consistent or numerous, high levels of exceedances have been recorded (Annable, 2016). God's Lake First Nation cisterns contamination had the worst contamination rates of forty First Nations tested (Annable, 2016). Cisterns result in both quality and quantity issues for water with high

bacterial contamination rates and insufficient water (Lebel & Reed, 2010; IAND, 2006). Both the quality and quantity issues pose serious health concerns, which require piped water infrastructure to replace cisterns.

The delivery of water to cisterns provides a temporary solution to provide potable water. However, cisterns require continuous water delivery and maintenance, which result in unacceptable contamination, water shortages, and cost (Mi, 2018). Cisterns are unsustainable and dangerous, requiring an immediate stop to applying cisterns to new builds and a plan to replace existing cisterns and barrels with pipes. To deliver safe drinking water to GLFN residents requires pipes to replace the truck-to-cistern delivery for drinking water. In this day and age, in Canada, one of the world's wealthiest countries with a high standard of living, GLFN residents should not suffer health risks because of a lack of piped water. A combination of piped and cistern water system in GLFN means that Canada is not living up to its fiduciary duty to provide a clean and reliable water system.

If the GLFN had governance power, including resources, over water, a piped water system with an effective water treatment plant would be built for its entire community. This would be the only way to deliver safe drinking water to all GLFN community members. I believe that a proper water system in the community would save the government money in the long run by preventing the health problems documented in this dissertation. When GLFN governs water and the water system, system reliability would be improved to meet the people's needs. The transfer of responsibility for safe drinking water to the community needs to go hand in hand with empowerment and resourcing to implement an effective system. Governance and empowerment, or self-government, are vital issues needed to address the water problems facing First Nations.

6.5 Articulating how we lost control and a possible future

One of the key questions of this dissertation is how Indigenous people lost control of their territories and their governance, and in this case, the GLFN over aski. The same colonial forces exerted upon the Indigenous people of Canada were the same forces exerted upon the GLFN. The time of contact between my ancestors at God's Lake would likely have intensified with the building of York Factory in 1684. After that and for the next 200 years is the period of initial contact, with people living in small family groups across the region.

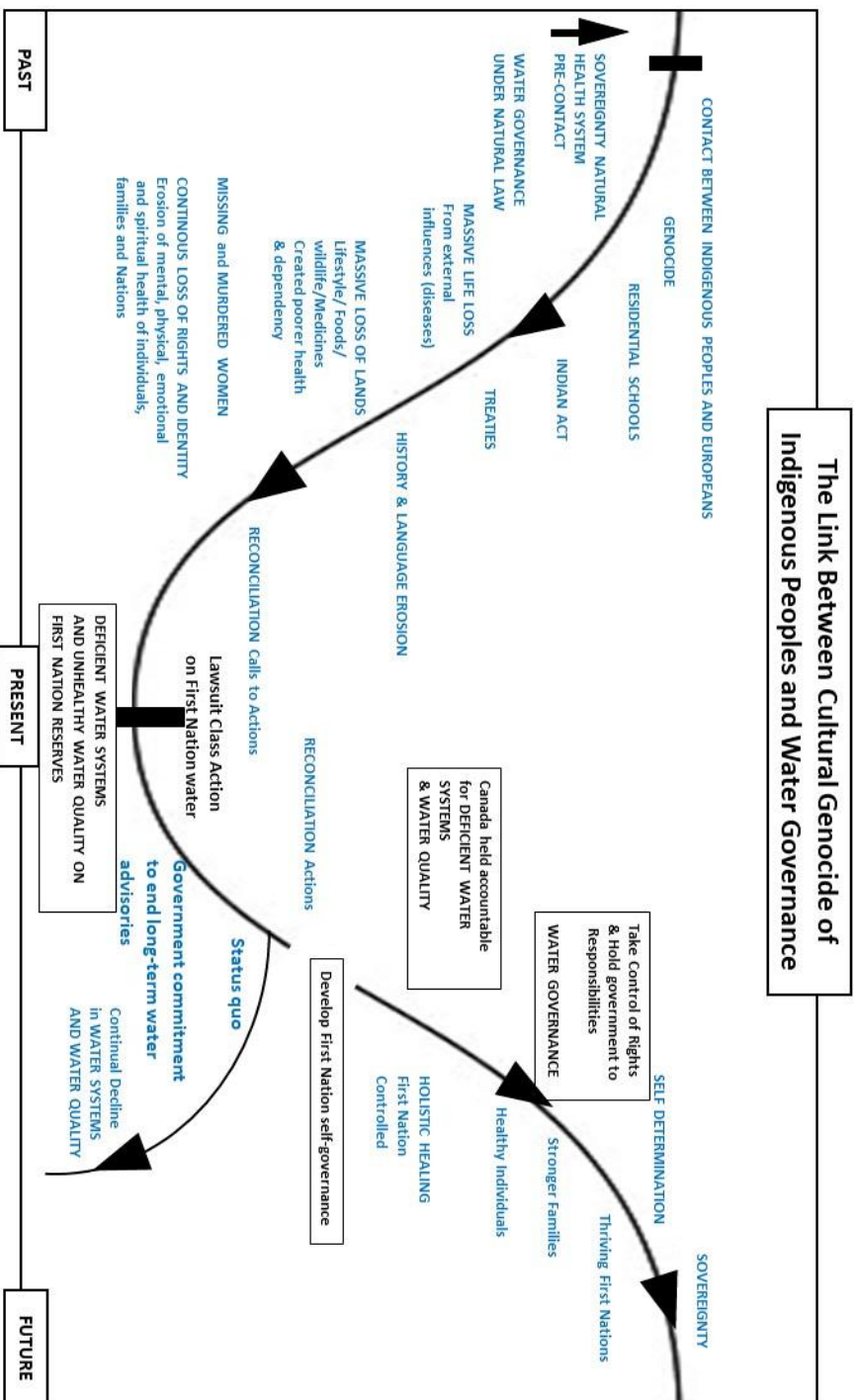
The Dominion of Canada was born in 1867 with the British North America (BNA) Act's drafting and the passage of Canada's first constitution. The constitution is the highest law in Canada. Indigenous people of Canada were then regulated and governed by a law known as the Indian Act, passed in 1876. However, many tribes would not sign treaties with the Crown until long after the BNA Act, 1867. For GLFN, our Adhesion to Treaty Five was not signed until August 6, 1909, even though the Indian Act prohibited "Indians" from signing contracts or entering into agreements under this Act. Soon after contact and the passage of the first constitution of the Dominion of Canada, the Crown applied a policy of assimilation, where children were apprehended to attend residential schools. This policy has since been recognized as a process of cultural genocide under the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015) and resulted in an apology from Canada's government to residential school survivors and their descendants. Despite recognizing historical wrongs through an apology, the colonial system continues unabated with systemic racism and continual erosion of Indigenous history and identity.

This colonial history of water and water systems is similar across many First Nations in Canada. This water story for Indigenous peoples from sovereign and pristine to colonial disruption is shown in Figure 6.1. At the time of this dissertation's writing, the water situation continues to

be dangerous for many First Nations, even in the face of the Prime Minister's promise to end boil-water advisories on reserves by March 2021 (Global News, September 28, 2019). In Manitoba, in 2020, a class-action lawsuit was launched, spearheaded by the Tataskwayak Cree Nation with a national scope (CBC News, July 17, 2020). Under colonial rule over Indigenous people, a continual decline in water systems and water quality for people living on reserves.

If Canada is serious about reconciliation and the principles of UNDRIP, then self-governance of First Nation reserves and aski must shift from its genocide policy towards Indigenous people to reconciliation (TRC, 2015). The linkages between genocide and the deficient water systems on First Nation reserves (Figure 6.2) demands policy changes. The issue of water governance could become the catalyst for the transformation of First Nations to wholistic healing, thriving First Nations with healthy individuals and families. Indigenous people hold the answers to their health and development, but these will never be realized without First Nation self-government and sovereignty.

Figure 6.2: The link between cultural genocide and water governance through past events, the present, and the future.



Adapted from: Assembly of First Nations, 1990.

6.6 Focus on water and governance

Looking at the big picture of GLFN governance and inherent rights over the lands and waters of its traditional territory requires consideration of:

1. The people of GLFN, for thousands of years, kept the land and water quality of water in a pristine state through sophisticated governance of land and water before colonialism.
2. By applying the ‘wards of the state’ status to Indigenous People to Canada's first Constitution in 1867 and the subsequent Treaty promises of the Adhesion to Treaty Five 1909, the deficient water system was the product of racist Canadian policies.
3. Cisterns and barrels for water storage must be discontinued and replaced due to the high health risk imposed and high service cost and maintained to be replaced by piping water and sewage to all areas of GLFN.
4. New laws in Canada must enshrine safe water and water quality on a high priority basis as an interim step to the governance over water and land by the GLFN.
5. Replace the circuit rider training program with Indigenous community-led governance supported by not-for-profit First Nation technical services run with the GLFN and other First Nations with a board of directors.
6. Male dominance in the current cistern installation/upkeep, water delivery, and water treatment systems are the opposite of the Indigenous system, which had women’s role in protecting and managing water. This gendered power dynamic to water disempowers women. This imbalance of power over water causes women to lose control over the ability to care for themselves and their families, as water is required to feed children and

the family, bathe children, provide drinking water for the family, and self-care. Restoring women's role in the caring, governance, and management of water is required.

7. Water needs to be under the health portfolio to show the central role of water in health.

Since health is at the centre of the Medicine Wheel, a wholistic health program is needed to connect water with health and provide more resources and capacity. Connecting water and health requires regular water testing, comprehensive water safety, and sustainability plans, and prevention of water-borne disease through vaccines in the meantime. A sustainable and safe water plan, to ensure the quality and quantity of drinking water, will save money by ensuring health instead of years of chronic and acute sicknesses. By aligning water with health, savings will accrue as safe water will reduce health expenses for chronic and acute care.

8. The spiritual understanding that water is life and the sacred nature of water needs to be the key, central guiding principles of a GLFN water governance regime. Ininiw have an intimate sacred experience with water every day or many times a day. Each day washing and drinking with water provides Ininiw a spiritual and health connection. The sacred nature of water must be recognized and implemented under a GLFN water governance regime.

6.7 A Possible GLFN Water Governance Model

The many arguments in this thesis for asserting sovereignty and self-government lead to what a water governance model for GLFN would look like. The assertion of governance powers over water requires a strategic plan and framework to deliver safe drinking water. As part of GLFN governance, clear objectives and targets must be set for action, considering in the plan the cyclical nature of the Medicine Wheel and Indigenous learning process cycle. The Indigenous

learning process cycle is similar to the “plan-do-check-act” management model for continuous improvement. However, the Medicine Wheel brings in the powerful forces of spirituality and emotion, as well as the physical and mental aspects of a typical plan. The objectives of a GLFN water governance model are to:

1. assert traditional governance jurisdiction over water;
2. deliver safe, treated piped water to every household in the community;
3. conserve, preserve and protect/utilize the Hayes watershed in the traditional territory;
4. entrench a water governance structure within the powers of the community; and
5. enable a wholistic beneficial relationship between the people, the land, and water.

A water governance model will include the following components:

1. Water Declaration and Water Ethic
2. Community Water System
3. Traditional Territory Water
4. Water Governance

This model would network with other First Nations on educational programming and technical services, as well as legal action. Each of the components of the water governance model are explained in the next section under 6.7.1 to 6.7.4.

6.7.1 Water Declaration and Water Ethic

The water declaration and water ethic are the basis for GLFN assertion of water governance over the GLFN traditional territory. The GLFN declaration over the water would notify Manitoba and Canada that governance needs to shift. Consistent with the Ininiw wholistic worldview of aski, the water ethic would consider natural law and traditional aski governance. A community-wide consultation process would develop the water ethic.

The declaration will be centred in the Ininiw Creator-given right to self-government that has never been extinguished in any nation-to-nation Treaty. However, the Adhesion to Treaty Five signed in 1909 between the Crown and the God’s Lake Band (GLFN) agreed to specific terms. This established a nation-to-nation relationship and a fiduciary duty on the Crown's part to

look after the interests of the GLFN. Since the signing of the treaty in 1909 with Canada, water and its value in God's Lake traditional territory were never discussed or disposed of. This fact opens at least two possibilities for revenue generation by the GLFN for its water governance regime back to 1909. A debt is owed to GLFN for water governance since signing the Adhesion to Treaty Five in 1909.

Under the GLFN water governance regime, a Water Council would be established to operate as the governing and decision-making body under a traditional Ininiw government Council beyond the Indian Act to assert water title over the traditional territory's waters. The Water Council would be responsible for initiating source water protection planning for the community utilizing the multi-barrier approach that is internationally recognized. The planning will encompass the community water system and the water encompassed by the traditional territory, and how both systems are governed. The source water protection plan will have continual monitoring and review components and capacity development for the community water system and the entire traditional territory through community people trained as water operators and water guardians with powers to enforce water laws.

6.7.2 Community Water System

The community water system will require special attention and will be subjected to an assessment process. The assessment will identify upgrades to bring the system up to standard. Every household will receive piped water for its water and sewer needs. All households utilizing cisterns for their water and sewer will be upgraded to piped water, and any outdated water piping and treatment infrastructure will be replaced or upgraded. Water personnel for the treatment facilities will receive formal training and will continue to receive upgraded training throughout their careers. The water system will be monitored continuously for operational issues and

problems rectified. Ongoing water sampling and water testing will be conducted on an ongoing basis within a local laboratory to enable the water system's self-sufficiency and governance.

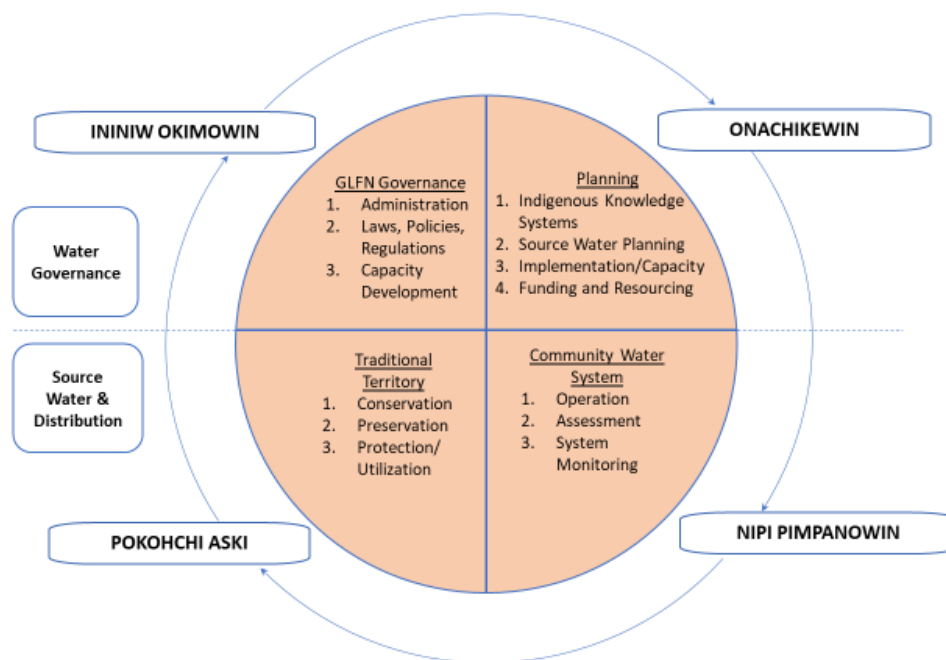
6.7.3 Traditional Territory Water

The traditional territory is the watershed. The traditional territory requires stringent protection of the community's water supply for all lifeforms, including the Ininiw partaking in traditional, recreational, and all activities. Water guardians will be responsible for enforcing water codes and collecting water samples from strategic locations throughout the territory. The water guardian program will be a key component of the source water protection plan, requiring personnel, funding, and all the resources and training to carry out its functions.

6.7.4 Water Governance

The water governance structure of the GLFN will need to be developed with the necessary legal, policy, and enforcement tools required for its functions. These functions will be set out in Indigenous laws, policies, and regulations, such as water codes and the source water protection plan incorporating Ininiw values and principles. The governance structure will be supported by an administration function solely dedicated to the Water Council's operation. As part of this process, continual capacity development and assessment and improvement will be built into the water governance structure. Figure 6.3 sets out the GLFN water governance model in a diagram.

Figure 6.3: Potential for water governance model under Self-government



6.8 Coming full circle into the future

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission cause me to look to the future with hope. The recognition of Canada of these two calls for action, and the push for recognition and respect by the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, also give me hope that GLFN governance will ensure the right to safe drinking water. For a sustainable and safe drinking water system, the GLFN requires a piped water and sewage supply with a source water protection plan and maintenance plan. However, reliable, safe drinking water may be a long way off in the distant future due to the amount of time and resources required to fulfill that vision.

Immediately, measures are needed to reduce risks from existing unsafe water systems. There is a need for increased funding for regular cleaning, monitoring, and repair of cisterns. To

deal with the existing problems emanating from unsafe water, regular monitoring of Ininiw for H. pylori to arrest the diseases bacterial infections cause, and routine vaccines for Hepatitis B.

In this dissertation's writing, I have had to reflect deeply on who I am, who my people are, our culture and heritage, and, most importantly, Ininiw sovereignty and our right to determine our destiny. Our ancestors were not rich in material things, but their spiritual life provided great wealth and well-being. Ininiw sought assistance in their living from the Spirit world, which was an integral part of their governance and worldview. Ininiw knew the Spirit world, and the spirituality was within them. Ininiw lived according to the natural order of the earth, adapting to natural forces and living according to the changing seasons. Ininiw utilized this knowledge to govern themselves for their survival and good life.

In today's world, Ininiw have been convinced by modern society that a good life is also an easy life or that it should be an easy life. However, the two are not the same. A good life is not necessarily a comfortable life, and my ancestors were living proof because their way of life was a hard one with many struggles. However, that is not to say that Ininiw did not live a good life. They were masters of their environment, the boreal forest, and had governance regimes that maintained the natural order of things for thousands of years.

This natural order of things includes water to sustain living things. Through our ancestors' lifeways, the water within our ancestral lands is now in its natural state. Pure water is a tremendous accomplishment. Conversely, Canada has permitted industrial activities that have contaminated many water bodies, making them undrinkable in only a few hundred years. This dissertation's writing arose from the fact that many First Nations in Canada do not have safe water for human consumption, and in some cases, their water is not fit for bathing or drinking.

I wondered what the exact situation is pertaining to water law for God's Lake in the Manitoba context. I sought an explanation of some of the laws that affect water within this province and GLFN. I learned about several constitutional documents, including the Natural Resources Transfer Act (NRTA). The agreement by which the Federal Crown transferred ownership of the natural resources to Manitoba within its province's boundaries. I also learned that amending the NRTA does not require a constitutional amendment (a near impossibility, Meech Lake and the Charlottetown Accords being examples) but only Manitoba's consent. However, regardless of whether Manitoba agrees, Aboriginal rights include the right to "govern" over our ancestral territory's waters.

I also learned that the Constitution Act, 1982, and the British North America Act, 1867 (now called the Constitution Act, 1867), are two separate documents and laws, which continue to be relevant and in force in Canada today. When Canada repatriated the constitution in 1982, the BNA Act 1867, also called the Constitution Act 1867, was not replaced. Thus, section 91(24) of the Constitution Act 1867 that gave jurisdiction and power over Indians and lands reserved for Indians continues to be in force to this day, effectively making us "wards of the state." This subjugation is a far cry from our ancestors' knowledge of being sovereign people, from the moment we were born, with an inherent right to determine our destiny. My unshakeable belief is that we continue to possess this sovereignty from when we were born into this world as Ininiw. However, Canada continues to assert that their laws are supreme and that GLFN Ininiw are subjects of the nation and its laws that pertain to water and our water systems.

What is the alternative between these two opposing views? Natural law requires Canada and Manitoba to cede governance over land and water to the Ininiw for the GLFN traditional territory. In this dissertation, I have argued and pointed to evidence that the Ininiw, as Indigenous

people, have inherent jurisdiction over the lands and waters of our ancestral lands. Canada's Right of the Crown to Indigenous territory is not absolute and increasingly is challenged. Indigenous interests in the land continue to be relevant, valid, and legitimate to our territory. To ensure sustainability for Indigenous use and all Creation, the Ininiw need to assert our sovereignty as granted to us by Manitou (Creator). It follows that in our relationship with the colonial governments of Canada, we accommodate the people of Canada and its governments until such time that natural law, our sovereignty, and self-government can be restored. This applies to how we implement water supply systems and source water management that should be viewed in the context of an evolving relationship.

In my dissertation, the onus of proof was placed on me to show GLFN sovereignty, but what if the tables were turned on Canada to prove Canada's sovereignty over GLFN territory? The challenge should be to Canada's non-Indigenous people to disprove that the ways and understandings of my ancestors' sovereignty are not valid. Could the non-Indigenous people of Canada disprove that my ancestors' ways and beliefs are not true and in existence within me today? Again, I have an unshakable belief that such disproof does not exist, nor can it be proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that the ways of my ancestors were not valid.

This dissertation started under the H2O CREATE program to examine the cause and seek solutions for contaminated drinking water in First Nations communities. I conclude that the failure of a colonial government to live up to its promises is the cause. In the Adhesion to Treaty 5, 1909, the Crown promised to take care of peoples' basic needs, which undoubtedly includes the supply of drinking water. A change in governance is needed for water to bring about safe drinking water. Indigenous people hold the answers to our well-being. Restoring our ancient beliefs of our self-governance as mandated by Manitou in natural law is the answer, albeit in a modern world. Ininiw

water relationship is tied to our Ininiw identity, culture, and ancestors. Our sovereignty and self-government are mandated by our responsibility placed on us by Manitou (Creator) to govern sustainably over the waters of our ancestral lands and to abide by natural law to use the water for our survival (Pimajihowin) responsibly. These assertions are not unreasonable. They are possible and achievable in the context of human will, and therein lies the hope of a prosperous water future for my people and, by extension, all Indigenous Peoples.

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