

How do you know what you know?

We're looking for
the answer.



Fish-WIKS

understanding how **Western and Indigenous Knowledge Systems** can improve the sustainability of Canadian fisheries

What is Fish-WIKS?

Fish-WIKS research looks at understanding western and indigenous knowledge systems and explores how the different processes by which knowledge is acquired, transmitted and used can be harnessed to enhance Canadian fisheries policy. Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the research aims to identify the commonalities and differences in indigenous knowledge systems across the Pacific, Arctic, Inland and Atlantic regions and in four distinct coastal communities in Canada (Tla-o-qui-aht, British Columbia; Naujaat, Nunavut; Nipissing, Ontario; and Eskasoni, Nova Scotia). The project also seeks to understand how indigenous and western knowledge systems can be used to improve the sustainability of Canadian fisheries.

Fish-WIKS Research Goals

- Examine how knowledge is valued, shared and used in both indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge systems
- Identify possible commonalities and differences
- Use the knowledge acquired to enhance decision-making affecting Canada's fishery resources for current and future generations

Focus on Nipissing Fish-WIKS Inland research site

"the Land, the People, the Future"

Nipissing First Nation is located on the north shore of Lake Nipissing between the Municipality of West Nipissing (Town of Sturgeon Falls), Ontario (to the west) and the City of North Bay, Ontario (to the east) and includes several small settlements: Garden Village, Duchesnay, Yellek, Beaucage, Beaucage Subdivision, Meadowside, Jocko Point Subdivision, and Veterans' Lane. With a total land base of over 21,000 hectares, the total registered population is 2,509. Historically, the Nipissing First Nation depended on the fishery for trade and self-sustainability and the fishery continues to be an important part of the community. Today, Nipissing First Nation participates in all conservation and fisheries management programs in association with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Anishinabek/ Ontario Fisheries Resource Centre. In 2005, the Nipissing First Nation passed its Fisheries Regulations which will see the community regulate its commercial fishery on Lake Nipissing.

The **Assembly of First Nations**, with headquarters in Ottawa, is the Fish-WIKS regional partner for the Inland Region working in collaboration with the Chiefs of Ontario. AFN is the national representative organization of the First Nations in Canada. There are over 630 First Nations communities in Canada. The AFN Secretariat is designed to present the views of the various First Nations through their leaders in areas such as: Aboriginal and Treaty Rights, Economic Development, Education, Languages and Literacy, Health, Housing, Social Development, Justice, Taxation, Land Claims, Environment and Fisheries.

Fish-WIKS contacts for the Inland Region

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The Fish-WIKS project started in 2012 and runs for five years to 2017.

Key activities

- Engage in community-identified priority setting
- Conduct, analyze and interpret desk-top and field research related to fisheries decision-making
- Build awareness at each participating community site of Fish-WIKS and its goal of enhancing fisheries sustainability
- Recommend opportunities to enhance fisheries governance and management through shared knowledge

Key Outcomes

- Building long-term partnerships and mutual capacity based on trust and respect
- Identifying and using the best model or mix of models from western and indigenous knowledge systems to influence fisheries-related decision-making within a regional and national context
- Training and mentoring of 18 undergraduate, Master's, doctoral and post-doctoral candidates with priority to indigenous students
- An expanding network of fisheries governance scholars and practitioners across Canada
- Shared policy-relevant knowledge using oral and written communication formats
- Enhanced fisheries sustainability through effective governance



“Looking at the interplay of traditional knowledge systems and western knowledge systems, the academic literature often prioritizes one form of knowledge over the other. Fish-WIKS is about valuing knowledge systems equally and identifying how they both can be used to manage fisheries sustainably.”

Dr. Lucia Fanning, *Fish-WIKS Principal Investigator*

To learn more about Fish-WIKS and to get involved, visit fishwiks.ca or contact your regional representative.

fishwiks.ca

Regional Partners

Assembly of First Nations
BC First Nations Fisheries Council
Government of Nunavut
Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources

Community Partners

Atlantic – Eskasoni, NS
Arctic – Naujaat, NU
Inland – Nipissing, ON
Pacific – Tla-o-qui-aht, BC

Academic Partners

Dalhousie University
University of Guelph
University of Toronto
Vancouver Island University

Fish-WIKS National Project Office

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