

Letter of Information

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MCMASTER UNIVERSITY - MASTER OF ARTS, GEOGRAPHY



conservation
through
reconciliation
partnership



Project title:

Decolonizing Ontario's Provincial parks: Building relationships and aligning with First Nations conservation initiatives in the Mnidoo Gamii region (Georgian Bay)

Inviting contributions from First Nations leadership and conservation organizations

You are invited to be part of a 1-2 hour long interview where I hope to meet with First Nations leadership, lands managers, and conservation staff in the Mnidoo Gamii to learn about the conservation initiatives happening in the region, and how Ontario Parks can better align with and support Indigenous governance in traditional territories.

This interview can be either in-person at a convenient location to you, or virtually via Zoom. During the interview I will ask questions about your experience with, and thoughts on:

- Conservation perspectives and approaches
- What Ontario Parks could do to align with First Nations conservation priorities
- Relationship building opportunities between First Nations and Ontario Parks

Everyone involved in interviews will also be invited to review their contributions, provide feedback on results, and develop recommendations.

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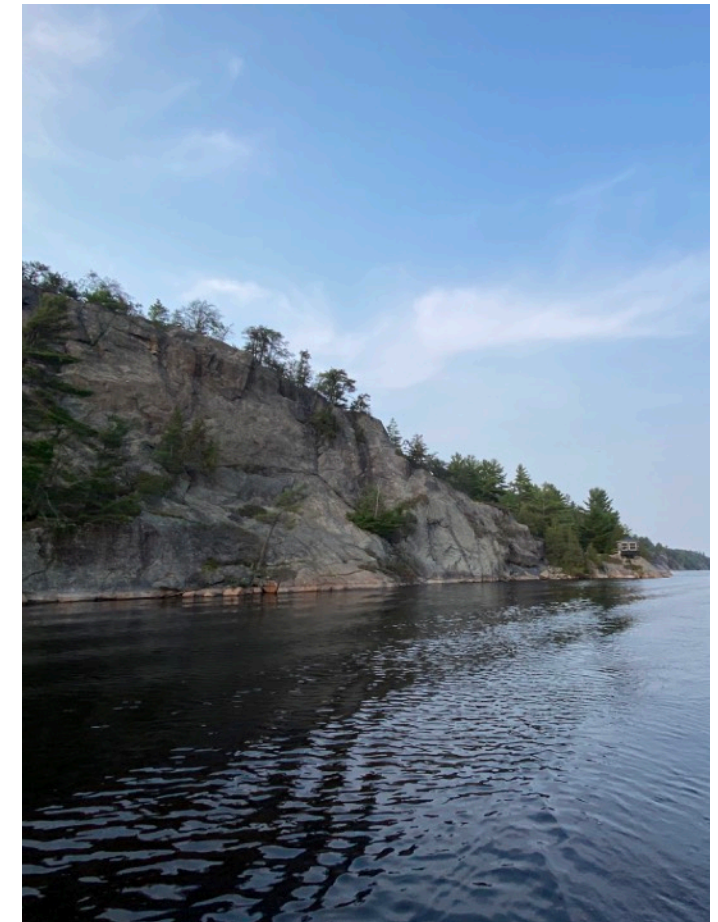
Are there any risks?

There are no foreseeable risks in contributing to this project beyond what you may encounter in daily life. However, if at any time you feel uncomfortable, you want to skip a question or stop the interview, just let me know. There are no consequences to withdrawing a response, or to withdrawing from the project after the interview. Everyone involved in interviews will also have the opportunity to review their transcript, so you can update or remove any of your responses during these times to be sure you are comfortable with how your statements are being used.

COVID-19 remains a potential risk to participating in in-person interviews. Please refer to the COVID-19 Letter of Information for more detail on what would be done to keep you safe, and what options there are to participate safely.

What are the benefits?

I hope that what is learned through this project will help us to understand how Ontario Parks can better engage First Nations governments in the management of Crown-protected areas that overlap with traditional territories. It is critical that First Nations have more input over decisions made on the protection and conservation of their homelands, as well as how relationships between Ontario Parks and First Nations can grow. Stronger relationships could result in better coordination of regional environmental protection, application of Indigenous conservation methods, expanded employment opportunities, and improved cultural awareness of park visitors and staff.



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Reciprocity & Honorarium

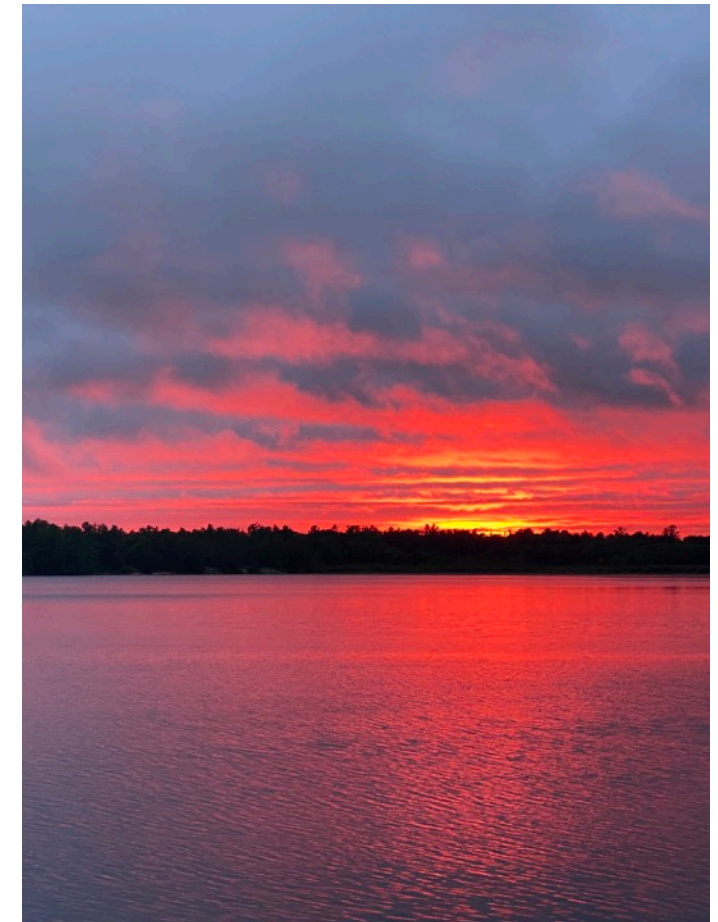
Everyone will receive a small gift for their participation. Anyone participating outside of their normal work duties or on personal time will also be compensated at \$50 per hour (e-transfer or Tim Hortons card). At the end of the project we also plan to host a public barbecue and celebration). All contributors and interested community members are invited. Sharing food and research results is another way we would like to say miigwech for your time, thoughts, and input in this project.

Who will know what you said or did in this project?

You will have the opportunity to indicate how/if you would like to be identified in this project. I will ask for your permission about audio or video recording the interview, as well as if we can share any recording with the Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership. Every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality and privacy as you indicate. However, we are often identifiable through the stories we tell. Since your community/organization is small, others may be able to identify you on the basis of references you make. Please keep this in mind in deciding what to talk about.

What if you change your mind about being involved in this project?

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You can withdraw from the interview for whatever reason, even after giving consent. **You have up until two months after the interview date** to let me know if you want some or all of what you shared withdrawn. If you decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal, any data you have provided will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise.



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How do I find out what was learned in this Project?

This project is expected to be completed by approximately August 2022. If you choose to be updated on this project, a summary of results will be sent to you before results are shared publicly. You will also be invited to a presentation (in-person or virtual, COVID-19 permitting) to discuss the findings and provide input on recommendations.

Regional Advisory Group

Samantha Noganosh - [Magnetawan First Nation](#), Department of Lands, Resources & Environment

Alanna Smolarz - [Magnetawan First Nation](#), Department of Lands, Resources & Environment

Sherrill Judge/Midwewekamigokwe - [Georgian Bay Biosphere, Mnidoo Gamii](#)

Greg Mason - [Georgian Bay Biosphere, Mnidoo Gamii](#)

Dr. Deborah McGregor - [York University, Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership](#)

Contact Information

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact us at:

Kraig Matthews (MA Student)

Email: matthk1@mcmaster.ca

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Dr. Gita Ljubicic (Supervisor)

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Phone: (289) 659-2074

Website: straightupnorth.ca/gita-ljubicic/

For more information and project updates, please visit:

<https://straightupnorth.ca/decolonizing-ontarios-provincial-parks/>



This project has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance (MREB #5661).

If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the project is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat, C/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support

E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca, Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142