

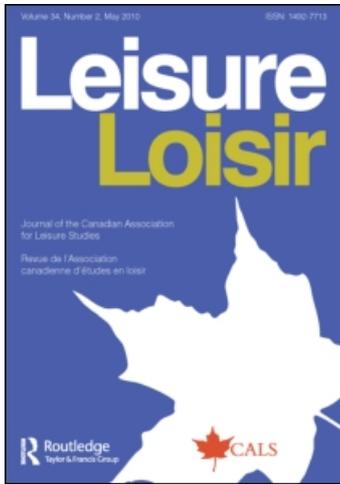
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### The proposed Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site Project: management and protection of indigenous world heritage sites in a Canadian context

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## The proposed Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site Project: management and protection of indigenous world heritage sites in a Canadian context

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The proposed Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site Project (PPAWHSP), located in the boreal forest of Northern Canada, incorporates the traditional lands of First Nations and protected areas in Ontario and Manitoba. The traditional lands of the Saulteaux/Anishinabek when combined with the protected areas represent a region of natural and wilderness values covering over 43,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The creation of the PPAWHSP, for all intents and purposes, would establish a transboundary protected area linking protected areas in Ontario and Manitoba with traditional territories of First Nations, foster community-based approaches to protected areas management and promote tourism development in the region. This article provides a description of the site, then discusses how this particular proposed world heritage site (WHS) can learn from existing WHSs in Canada and elsewhere, which are managed partially or wholly with indigenous partners. Special emphasis will also be placed on discussing the issues of effective indigenous involvement in governance and ensuring local economic benefit to indigenous groups in WHS.

**Keywords:** world heritage site; park management; protection; First Nations

Le projet proposé du Pimachiowin Aki Patrimoine Mondial (PAPM), situé dans la forêt boréale du Grand Nord canadien, pourrait regrouper les terres traditionnelles des Premières nations et des aires protégées en Ontario et au Manitoba. Les terres traditionnelles des Saulteaux/Anishinabek lorsqu'elles sont regroupées avec les aires protégées provinciales représentent une région de valeurs naturelles et culturelles recouvrant plus de 43,000 km<sup>2</sup>. La création du PAPM pourrait établir une aire protégée transfrontière reliant les aires protégées de l'Ontario et le Manitoba avec les territoires traditionnels des Premières Nations, encouragées et favoriser les approches fondées sur la cogestion des aires protégées, et promouvoir un développement touristique régional. Cet article fournit une description du site proposé, examine ensuite comment ce site particulier de patrimoine mondial se compare à d'autres sites cogérés avec partenaires autochtones de patrimoine mondial au Canada et ailleurs. Un accent particulier est mis sur la question de participation efficace des peuples autochtones en matière de gouvernance et le développement des avantages économiques pour les groupes autochtones des sites du patrimoine mondial.

**Mot-clés:** site du patrimoine mondial; la gestion des parcs; protection; Premières nations

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## Introduction

The proposed Pimachiowin Aki (the land that gives life) World Heritage Site Project (PPAWHSP), located in the boreal forest of Northern Canada, incorporates the traditional lands of First Nations in Ontario (Pikangikum) and Manitoba (Poplar River, Pauingassi, Little Grand Rapids) and such protected areas as Atikaki Provincial Park in Manitoba, Woodland Caribou Provincial Park (WCPP) in Ontario and the Bloodvein Canadian Heritage River in Ontario and Manitoba, for all intents and purposes, would establish a trans-boundary protected area (TPA) linking protected areas in Ontario and Manitoba with traditional territories of First Nations, foster community-based approaches to protected areas management and promote tourism development in the region. This article describes the current processes involved in world heritage site (WHS) designation in Canada, while also providing guidance to the actors involved in the PPAWHSP. Special emphasis is placed on the issues of effective indigenous involvement in governance and ensuring local economic benefit to indigenous groups in WHS. The conclusion re-examines the potential opportunities and challenges for First Nations and additional partners involved in the PPAWHSP, and considers future issues for the PPAWHSP as it seeks to acquire full WHS designation. Future research strategies and directions for the PPAWHSP are also discussed.

With over 145 signatories and 878 properties, 679 cultural, 174 natural and 25 mixed sites, the *Convention for the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage*, adopted by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference in 1972, is considered one of humanity's "most successful pieces of international cooperation" (UNESCO, no date). Originally, the designation of WHSs was enacted to protect monuments, groups of buildings and properties with historical, cultural, archaeological and/or anthropological values. Properties of outstanding physical, biological and geological formations, threatened habitats and areas of high biological diversity were recognized through the natural category added to WHS designation 20 years later. Revisions to the operational guidelines in the late twentieth century provided opportunities to designate certain properties as mixed properties and cultural landscapes. These various designations, though, were not without drawbacks (i.e. the failure to recognize traditional rights), especially for indigenous people. Criticism regarding the involvement of indigenous peoples in WHS (i.e. Machu Pichu, Peru; Tongariro National Park, New Zealand; and Uluru National Park, Australia) prompted further modifications to the Convention in the 1990s. These modifications acknowledged indigenous rights and traditional management mechanisms. In 2000, an advisory body to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) called the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) was established (Layton & Titchen, 1995; Titchen, 1996). According to its mandate, the UNPFII will

- "provide expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the Council, as well as to programmes, funds and agencies of the United Nations, [ . . . ]
- raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues within the UN system
- prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues" (UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2006b).

The UNPFII is comprised of 16 independent experts serving a 3-year term. Eight of the members are nominated by governments and eight are nominated directly by indigenous organizations from various socio-cultural regions (Africa; Asia; Central and South

America and the Caribbean; the Arctic; Central and Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia; North America; and the Pacific) established to represent the world's indigenous peoples (UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2006a, 2006b).

The terms "First Nation" and "indigenous peoples" are used throughout this article primarily because this is the preferred term used by national and international organizations (i.e. UN, UNESCO). Indeed, the declaration on the *Rights of Indigenous Peoples* by the United Nations in 2007 refers specifically to groups of people defined by the criteria of ancestral territory, collective cultural configuration and historical location in relation to other groups of people who may have resided in the same country for a few hundred years (Brantenberg, Hansen, & Minde, 1993; United Nations, 2007). The term Assembly of First Nations is now the designation of the national organization representing indigenous peoples (i.e. the Indians) in Canada. It is also a term used by indigenous communities in Canada. However, for some scholars like Tuhiwai Smith (2005) and Taiaiake (2005) the terms indigenous and even First Nations are foreign connotations, reference points with no real bearing on any real meaning, except within a Euro-political context. We recognize these limitations and do when possible refer to the First Nations cited in this study under their own definitions. For example, the four signatory First Nations in the PPAWHSP: Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nations are both Sauleteaux/Anishinabek, whereas Poplar River and Pikangikum are Anishnabek.

This article and descriptive case study has the overarching goal of supporting the ongoing efforts of the PPAWHSP with the specific objectives of (1) drawing together strands of existing literature on indigenous WHSs to understand more clearly the functions and contributions of WHS to community-based approaches to protected area management; (2) examining how tourism is developed and promoted in indigenous WHS; and (3) providing conceptual guidance to PPAWHSP and other similar WHSs in Canada and internationally, which have reached the tentative list, but have not as of yet become full WHS. The following section of this article presents a detailed overview of the PPAWHSP and the various protected area designations and management approaches that currently exist therein. Next is a literature review examining indigenous WHS (hereafter IWHS) and lessons that can be learned regarding indigenous collaboration in governance issues and the ability of WHS status to stimulate local economic development. In the discussion and conclusion, we examine the potential contributions and challenges associated with the PPAWHSP and similar IWHS elsewhere at various phases of WHS designation. Last, we propose the implementation of a community-based research partnership between First Nations and academic partners that would complement the current and ongoing community consultations, research, mapping and community-based land-use planning processes.

### **World heritage sites in Canada**

The Nahanni National Park Reserve located in the Northwest Territories (NWT) was one of the very first WHS established in the world in 1978. The "St. Elias Complex" (Kluane/Wrangell–St. Elias/Glacier Bay/Tatshenshini–Alsek Transboundary Area) (1979) and Wood Buffalo National Park (1983) WHSs soon followed. There are now 14 WHSs in Canada, only one of which is located in Ontario (Rideau Canal). Six (i.e. "St. Elias complex"; SGAang Gwaay, British Columbia; Nahanni National Park Reserve, NWT; Wood Buffalo National Park, Alberta and NWT; and Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, Alberta) of the 14 Canadian WHSs specifically recognize "the continuing living relationship between [Indigenous] people and the natural environment, including the latter's social,

religious and symbolic value” (Pocock, 2003, p. 264) and incorporate, where possible, indigenous rights into their management strategies. Much like indigenous rights elsewhere, the recognition of indigenous people and their rights in Canadian WHSs was not without a struggle, as we will demonstrate later (Figure 1).

Since 2004, Canada has added nine sites under the tentative WHS designation. Of these nine, five involve indigenous peoples in some form or other (see Table 1). PPAWHSP is a trans-provincial protected area incorporating the traditional lands of First Nations in Ontario (Pikangikum) and Manitoba (Poplar River, Pauingassi, Little Grand Rapids), the Atikaki and Woodland Caribou provincial parks in Manitoba and Ontario respectively and the Bloodvein Canadian Heritage River in Ontario and Manitoba is one of these. The area that PPAWHSP is “seeking to have declared contains 40,000 square kilometres of vast boreal forest, rivers, lakes and wetlands spread across the Canadian shield and straddling the Manitoba-Ontario border” (Canadian Broadcast Corporation [CBC], 2009).

This site is considered unique under WHS designation because unlike other areas in the Canadian boreal forest, anthropogenic modifications (i.e. forestry, mining) in this region are minimal. In addition, the “site is also internationally significant because of the planned integration of traditional and western ecological knowledge for land management and protection” (Canadian Parks Council, 2008, p. 68). In December 2006, the partnership

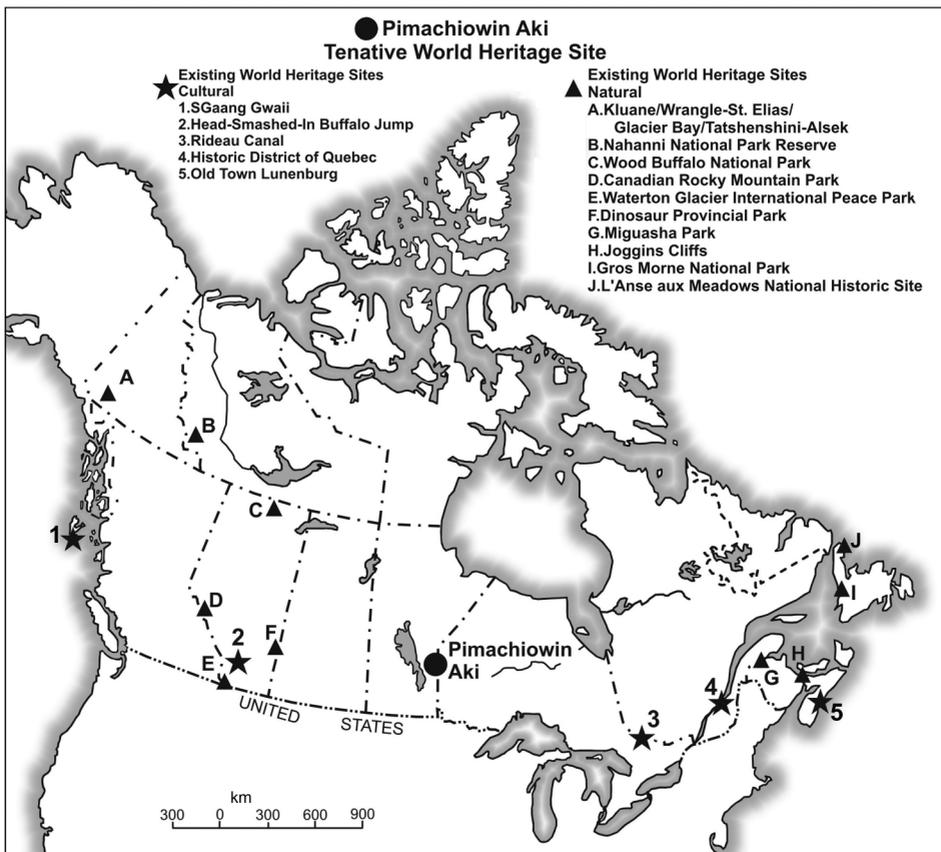


Figure 1. World heritage sites in Canada.

Table 1. The five phases of world heritage site designation.

Phase	Description
(1) The tentative list	The first step a country must take is to make an “inventory” of its important natural and cultural heritage sites located within its boundaries. This “inventory” is known as the Tentative List, and provides a forecast of the properties that a State Party may decide to submit for inscription in the next 5–10 years and which may be updated at any time. It is an important step as the World Heritage Committee cannot consider a nomination for inscription on the World Heritage List unless the property has already been included on the State Party’s Tentative List
(2) Preparation of the nomination file and meeting selection criteria	By preparing a Tentative List and selecting sites from it, a State Party can plan when to present a nomination file. The World Heritage Centre offers advice and assistance to the State Party in preparing this file, which needs to be as exhaustive as possible, making sure the necessary documentation and maps are included. The nomination is submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review and to check it is complete. Once a nomination file is complete the World Heritage Centre sends it to the appropriate Advisory Bodies for evaluation
(3) Evaluation: The advisory bodies	A nominated property is independently evaluated by two advisory bodies mandated by the World Heritage Convention: the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN), which provide the World Heritage Committee with evaluations of the cultural and natural sites nominated. The third advisory body is the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), an intergovernmental organization which provides the Committee with expert advice on conservation of cultural sites, as well as on training activities
(4) World Heritage Committee decision	Once a site has been nominated and evaluated, it is up to the intergovernmental World Heritage Committee to make the final decision on its inscription. Once a year, the Committee meets to decide which sites will be inscribed on the World Heritage List. It can also defer its decision and request further information on sites from the State Parties
(5) The criteria for selection	To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least 1 out of 10 selection criteria. These criteria are explained in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention which, besides the text of the Convention, is the main working tool on World Heritage. The criteria are regularly revised by the Committee to reflect the evolution of the World Heritage concept itself. Until the end of 2004, world heritage sites were selected on the basis of six cultural and four natural criteria. With the adoption of the revised Operational Guidelines, only 1 set of 10 criteria exists

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/nominationprocess/>

established Pimachiowin Aki, a non-profit corporation mandated to guide and administer the WHS initiative beyond step one, and solicited the support from the various conservation agencies involved: Ontario Parks, Conservation Manitoba, Parks Canada and the International Institute for Sustainable Development in Winnipeg (Canadian Parks Council, 2008). A nomination document and a video for WHS designation is expected to be completed by 2011 (CBC, 2009) (see Table 1). Following the preparation of the nomination document, the PPAWHSP proposal will be evaluated by two advisory bodies, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN), as mandated by the World Heritage Convention (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2009b). Once a WHS has been nominated and evaluated, it is up to the intergovernmental World Heritage Committee to make the final decision on its inscription. This Committee which meets on an annual basis decides which nominated sites have the outstanding universal value to become a WHS inscribed on the World Heritage List (UNESCO, 2009b). This process, unless a deferral is requested, is conducted on an annual basis. For example, sites that will be considered for inscription in 2010 were submitted to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2009 (United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], no date).

The involvement of indigenous people is central to the establishment and/or the management of protected areas located in Northern Canada, especially as some types of protected areas, such as indigenous cultural landscapes, WHSs and TPAs, are more closely linked to the traditional landscape perspectives and an ethic of conservation based on sustainable development rather than wilderness preservation (Lemelin & Johnston, 2008; Sadler, 1989). Protected areas like the St. Elias Complex, the Arctic Refuge/Ivvauik/Vuntut National Parks/Oikiqtaruk (Herschel Island) Territorial Park – Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and PPAWHSP include transboundary approaches to protected area management. According to the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), TPAs like the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, the first TPA in the world, and the St. Elias Complex connect ecosystems across traditional, territorial, state, provincial and international borders and provide important opportunities for collaboration and co-management. These areas promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use “across politically divided ecosystems, while at the same time encouraging international collaboration in management, the sharing of experience and the sharing of information” (World Commission on Protected Areas, no date).

Another attraction of WHS designation for indigenous communities is the potential to generate economic benefit and increase tourism (Buckley, 2004). More specifically, WHSs are often perceived as a tourism brand expected to bring significant local, regional, national and international benefits. Proponents of this initiative have stated that “First Nations could experience new cultural tourism and ecotourism opportunities” (Canadian Parks Council, 2008), and if this WHS nomination is “successful, the region would join attractions like the Grand Canyon and the Great Barrier Reef as World Heritage sites” (CBC, 2009). However, some authors have critiqued the ability of WHS designation to act as economic catalysts, suggesting that many visitation figures in WHS are often based on “phantom numbers” with little, if any, relevancy to actual visitation patterns (McKercher & Ho, 2005). Nor do they take into account variability and complexity in global tourism patterns (McKercher & Ho, 2005). The issue of WHS and economic generation from tourism opportunities will be discussed at greater lengths in the section “Economic Benefits and Development” of the literature review focusing on economic development and benefits.

As discussed previously, a WHS designation would provide an opportunity to create a protected area based on the more culturally appropriate practices associated with TPAs and to further develop innovative ways to manage the area using both traditional

Anishinabek and western scientific knowledge (Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, 2008). In addition, the achievement of full WHS status could mobilize resources to facilitate local involvement in the management of the area, increase local employment and support the development of tourism.

This article and descriptive case study has the overarching goal of supporting the ongoing efforts of the PPAWHSP with the specific objectives of (1) drawing together strands of existing literature on indigenous WHSs to understand more clearly the functions and contributions of WHS to community-based approaches to protected area management; (2) examining how tourism is developed and promoted in indigenous WHS; and (3) providing conceptual guidance to PPAWHSP and other similar WHSs in Canada and internationally, which have reached the tentative list, but have not as of yet become full WHS. The following section of this article presents a detailed overview of the PPAWHSP and the various protected area designations and management approaches that currently exist therein. Next is a literature review examining IWHS and lessons that can be learned regarding indigenous collaboration in governance issues and the ability of WHS status to stimulate local economic development. In the discussion and conclusion, we examine the potential contributions and challenges associated with the PPAWHSP and similar IWHS elsewhere at various phases of WHS designation. Last, we propose the implementation of a community-based research partnership between First Nations and academic partners that would complement the current and ongoing community consultations, research, mapping and community-based land-use planning processes.

### Site description

At nearly 40,000 km<sup>2</sup> in size, the PPAWHSP is a very large protected area that would incorporate both the traditional lands of the Little Grand Rapids, Pauingassi and Poplar River First Nations in Manitoba and the Pikangikum First Nation in Ontario (Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, 2008) and connect the Atikaki Provincial Park (398,130 ha) in Manitoba, Woodland Caribou Provincial Park (450,000 ha) in Ontario and the 300-km long Bloodvein Canadian Heritage River in Ontario/Manitoba. This section provides an overview of the traditional management areas and protected areas that would be integrated in PPAWHSP and examines tourism activity in the region.

As a first step towards designating their traditional lands as part of a WHS, in 2002, the remote and traditionally oriented First Nations communities of Pikangikum (approx. pop. 2400), Poplar River (approx. pop. 900), Pauingassi (approx. pop. 450) and Little Grand Rapids (approx. pop. 950) collectively signed the *Protected Areas and First Nation Stewardship Accord* (Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, 2008). "Through this agreement, they recognized that collective action was needed to create sustainable economic opportunities for their communities while still protecting and managing their traditional lands according to Anishinabek values and land management practices" (Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, 2008). Though each of these communities is located on reservations of less than 5000 acres, they claim much larger traditional territories for which they have developed or are developing traditional land-use plans. The Asatiwisipe Aki Lands Management Plan developed by the First Nation of Poplar River and the Pikangikum Land Use Strategy developed within the context of the Whitefeather Forest Land Use Strategy integrate stewardship customary activities and economic development from Anishinabek perspectives. The two other First Nations partners (Little Grand Rapids, Pauingassi) are currently engaged in developing community land-use plans for their traditional territories. There is also the potential for a fifth group, the Bloodvein First Nation in Manitoba (approx. pop.

984), to become a member of the PPAWHSP initiative in the future (Canadian Parks Council, 2008) (Figure 2).

The protected areas included in the PPAWHSP are the Poplar/Nanowin River Park Reserves, a portion of the Nopiming and the Atikaki and South Atikaki Provincial Parks in Manitoba, as well as Woodland Caribou Provincial Park and the Eagle-Snowshoe Conservation Reserve in Ontario (Canadian Parks Council, 2008). The Bloodvein Canadian Heritage River traverses both provinces and several of these protected areas. These parks and protected lands currently represent an area of natural, wilderness and cultural values covering over 8500 km<sup>2</sup>. For brevity, we limit our discussion to describing the three major protected areas located within the PPAWHSP.

Classified as a wilderness park in 1985 by the province of Manitoba, the purpose of the approximately 4000 km<sup>2</sup> Atikaki Provincial Wilderness Park was to preserve the three

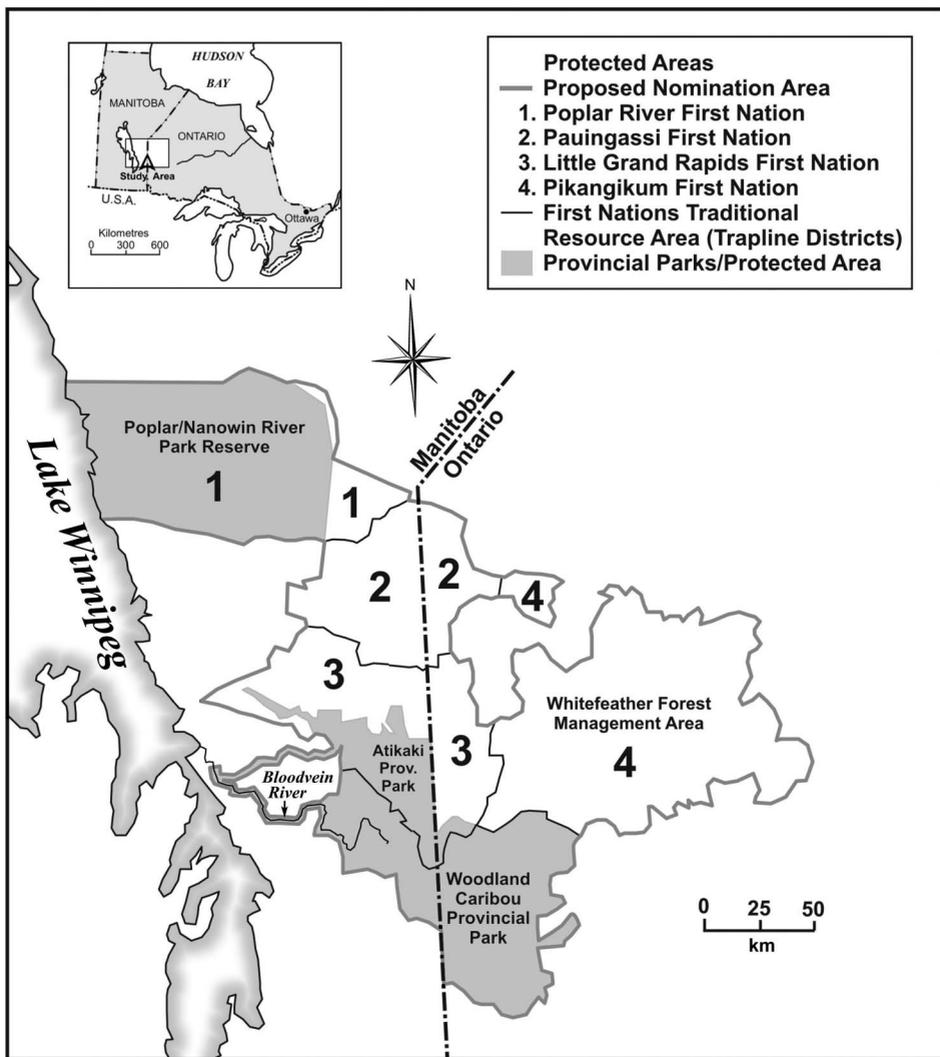


Figure 2. Traditional land use areas and protected areas within the proposed PPAWHSP.

river corridors and associated shorelines, including the Manitoba portion of the Bloodvein Canadian Heritage River and the Lac Seul Upland portion of the boreal forest (Manitoba Conservation, no date).

Designated as a wilderness park in 1983 by the province of Ontario, Woodland Caribou Provincial Park (hereafter Woodland Caribou) is also relatively large at over 4500 km<sup>2</sup>. Woodland Caribou is unique because there are over 150 breeding birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles and over 420 vascular plants recorded in the park (Brunton, 1996). Therefore, it is “ecologically more similar to the dry Boreal forest of central Manitoba and Saskatchewan than to the Boreal forest north of Lake Superior” (Brunton, 1996, pp. 188–189). Studies on the woodland caribou estimate the population to be around 120 animals, or 1 for every 3750 ha. These numbers are typical for woodland caribou which require a large amount of wilderness for habitat (Brunton, 1996).

The management plan for Woodland Caribou, completed in the late 1980s and just recently revised (see Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2006) designated over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the park as “zoned under wilderness and natural zones designations. The Bloodvein River occupies a further 7%, and four Access Zones (in which physical development is permissible) occupy 9% of the park at its peripheries” (Brunton, 1996, p. 190). Anthropogenic impacts in the area are relegated to traditional activities like hunting, fishing, trapping and some guiding by indigenous people. Canoeing and recreational activities are offered through the fly-in fishing, and hunting camps located “particularly in the central portion along the Bloodvein River” (Brunton, 1996, p. 187) are also offered to visitors.

Linking Atikaki and Woodland Caribou parks is the 300-km long Bloodvein River that starts near Red Lake in Ontario, flows through both parks and drains into Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba. The designation “*Miskwi Isip*” or “Blood River” was often used as the name for the river by the local indigenous people. The name “Bloodvein” possibly referring to the red granite veins in the river bed appears to have been first used by the Hudson Bay Company. The river remains to this day very popular with outdoor recreationists and canoeists (Canadian Heritage Rivers, no date). To preserve the cultural heritage of the river, the Government of Manitoba nominated the 200-km segment of the Bloodvein River to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) in 1984. Ontario followed suit 2 years later, nominating its own 106-km segment. Annual reports on the status of the river are provided every year, whereas more comprehensive reports are provided every 10 years (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2006).

Commercial tourism has existed in what is now known as Woodland Caribou Provincial Park since 1948 with local outfitters providing facility-based and wilderness backcountry experiences. The majority of guests utilizing facility-based tourism operations in the park are primarily interested in sport fishing and originate from the United States. These operations attract over 3100 visitors for a total of 17,980 rental nights. Registered backcountry visitors to WCPP in 2004 were primarily from the United States (80%) with an increasing number from Manitoba and Ontario (20%) (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2006). The preliminary park management plan for Woodland Caribou (2006) states that

Tourism industry trends appear to favour an aging population of travellers, increased concern for the environment, and greater interests in outdoor education. These trends suggest market growth potential for guided adventures opportunities and ecotourism. As well, trend analysis of visitors from overseas (Europe and Asia) indicates that there is a strong interest in natural and cultural heritage appreciation, particularly of First Nations (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2006, p. 8).

These limited studies suggest that the PPAWHSP is well-positioned to create international enthusiasm and attraction which should benefit local communities and promote the unique tourism experiences. However, there are numerous challenges to indigenous tourism development, which will be discussed in the section on economic benefits and development.

Now that we have provided an introduction to Canadian WHS and the WHS nomination process, as well as a more comprehensive overview of PPAWHSP, our discussion turns to an exploration of previous cases of indigenous involvement in WHS through a review of available literature.

### **Literature review**

This literature review was composed of an examination of published literature and sources available on the web. Limitations regarding the accuracy and veracity of the web-based information are recognized. Although there is ample literature on the designation of WHS in rural areas and with local communities, our focus specifically highlights indigenous involvement in WHS (hereafter referred to as IWHS) and the lessons that can be learned from these scenarios and applied during the formation of the PPAWHSP. This review pertains mostly to the literature relating to IWHS in Australia (Kakadu, Uluru), Canada (Kluane, Gwaii Haanas) and Canada/USA (Waterton-Glacier), and the results are divided into three main areas: (i) rights to traditional use; (ii) governance (i.e. the involvement in WHS nomination/designation and co-management arrangements); and (iii) economic benefits (i.e. employment, tourism). For the Little Grand Rapids, Pauingassi, Pikangikum and Poplar River First Nations involved in the PPAWHSP, these three areas will need initial and ongoing attention as the nomination process proceeds.

#### ***Rights to traditional use***

Several authors highlight the importance of maintaining traditional land uses in community-based approaches to protected area management as they shaped the landscape that is being protected in WHS (e.g. Buggery & Mitchell, 2002). However, for many WHSs, it was not until the late twentieth century that the right to conduct traditional activities (i.e. hunting and gathering) in WHSs (i.e. Kluane and Nahanni National Parks Reserves) was guaranteed. In Kluane, for example, all subsistence activities were suspended when it was first created in the 1940s and when it was later declared a WHS as part of the Kluane/Wrangell–St. Elias TPA in the early 1980s (Sneed, 1997). Traditional harvest rights were returned to the Tlingit and Southern Tutchone in 1992 after the Government of Canada and Council of Yukon Indians signed a land claims agreement (Sneed, 1997). In Canada, indigenous rights are entrenched in the constitution and are virtually assured for three groups: Indians, Inuit and Métis. How these rights are acknowledged by protected area agencies and incorporated within governance structures, as we will demonstrate next, is subject to various interpretations.

#### ***Governance***

Governance refers to the institutions, procedures and process by which state agencies are controlled. For wildlife and natural resources agencies “this includes the organizational procedures by which decisions are made and implemented in relation to the wishes of shareholders” (Lück, 2008, p. 194). Over the last two decades, significant improvements

in indigenous governance of protected areas have been made both internationally and in Canada; however, salient issues such as ownership, land access, management regimes and what constitute a traditional right remain. In the literature on IWHs, there tends to be two instances where issues tend to arise relating to governance: (1) during designation/nomination and (2) in co-management arrangements.

The exclusion of indigenous people in the nomination and designation of certain Canadian WHSs such as the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park in the 1930s and SGAang Gwaay WHS in the 1980s continues to foster resentment in some local First Nations. While the resentment has faded somewhat in SGAang Gwaay, this is perhaps because of recent tourism developments and the implementation of collaborative management strategies (Shackley, 1998a). What the Waterton-Glacier International WHS/TPA and SGAang Gwaay WHS illustrates is the need for local and regional inclusion during both the inception and designation processes of WHS. For the establishment of WHS

without community support distances local people from the need to protect the site, decreases ongoing use and knowledge of changes, and may lead to conflict. Essentially, the local community may perceive the intervention as another culture's regulatory regime being imposed on a local pattern of use. (Weninger, 2003, p.129)

Inclusion in WHS nomination and designation such as the involvement of the Poplar River First Nation in the early phase of the PPAWHSP could also lead to more equitable status, clarification of roles, greater inclusion in management, more effective co-management strategies and foster local feelings of ownership and stewardship (Lloyd, 1998). In this scenario, the equitable involvement and input of all of the First Nations groups involved in the nomination processes associated with the PPAWHSP might also be particularly important.

Though the need for co-management with indigenous people is nowadays nearly universally accepted in WHS, the creation of effective, representative and culturally appropriate forms of co-management, including how the term co-management is defined, is a challenging task. Co-management has been defined as the sharing of power and responsibility between government and local resource users (Berkes, George, & Preston, 1991) resulting from a political claim by local people to the right to share management power and responsibility with the state (McCay & Acheson, 1987). One of the most popular definitions employed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines co-management as a situation in which two or more social actors negotiate, define and guarantee amongst themselves a fair sharing of the management functions, entitlements and responsibilities for a given territory, area or set of natural resources (Borrini-Feyerabend, Farvar, Nguingui, & Ndongang, 2000). True co-management according to Stevens (1997) goes far beyond mere consultation. With co-management, the involvement of indigenous peoples in protected areas becomes a formal partnership, with conservation management authority shared between indigenous peoples and government agencies, national and international environmental non-governmental organizations. In fact, true co-management requires involvement in policy formulation, planning, management and evaluation (Stevens, 1997).

Stevens' (1997) interpretation of co-management is often the one that most First Nations would prefer when dealing with provincial and national protected area agencies (Dearden & Trotter, 2002). Within Canadian national parks (see, e.g. the joint-management strategies between Parks Canada and the Nuuchahnulth and Pacific Rim National Park, 1980; the Haida Nation and Gwaii Haanas National Park, 1993; the Vuntut Gwitchin and Vuntut National Park 1994) and within provincial parks of Ontario (Mississagi Delta

and Petroglyph Provincial Parks) and Manitoba (see Poplar/Nanowin Rivers Park Reserve), the management strategies employed are usually co-operative in nature (Dearden & Trotter, 2002; Lemelin, McIntyre, Koster, & Johnston, 2007; Spielmann & Unger, 2000). Co-operative management regimes do recognize the traditional rights of indigenous peoples and may even provide for some involvement in creating policies and participating in park management planning; however, final veto, creation of regulations and the enforcement of the park's act are relegated to the ministers of the agency or department (i.e. Parks Canada, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Manitoba Ministry of Conservation). Adding to the challenge of co-management are the numerous social actors (i.e. indigenous groups, government agencies, community organizations, conservation organizations) involved in the process of WHS designation.

From a Canadian perspective, the differences in what co-management strategies actually imply are also of great importance. With the exception of Gwaii Haanas where the term co-management is used, Parks Canada prefers to employ joint-management approaches. Ontario Parks likewise does not specifically recognize the co-management of protected areas with First Nations, preferring a case-by-case approach to collaborative management strategies (Spielmann & Unger, 2000). The inability of the provincial agency in Ontario to develop clear and concise definitions regarding collaborative management strategies resulted in the Council of Chiefs of Ontario withdrawing from the Lands for Life (the expansion of the protected area system in Ontario) process in 1998, "because the government was ignoring their concerns over 'land stewardship, jurisdiction, treaty and indigenous rights', and treating them as simply one more interest group" (Cartwright, 2003, p. 121). A similar attempt at creating a very large protected area, over 225,000 km<sup>2</sup> in Northern Ontario, known as Bill 191, the "Far North Act", is being met with some skepticism by a number of tribal councils, including the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (Treaty #9) (NAN). The reasons provided by NAN, including lack of consultation, jurisdictional recognition, land stewardship and traditional rights, are nearly identical to those concerns raised in the Lands for Life process.

Manitoba on the other hand has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Manitoba Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO – Cree consortium for northern Manitoba) regarding the "design, establishment and management of protected areas" in Manitoba" (Poplar River First Nation, 2004–2009).

The MOU is a vehicle for First Nation communities affected by protected areas establishment, and contains protocols for both the nomination of protected lands and consultation regarding areas under review for protected status. The activities anticipated by the MOU include First Nation involvement in: the identification, establishment and management of protected areas. Its protocols are clear about the continuation of traditional uses, including hunting, trapping, gathering and ceremonies. The First Nation Protected Areas MOU continues to be the basis for the interaction with First Nations in the process to establish protected areas in Manitoba (Poplar River First Nation, 2004–2009).

In Australia, the successes of co-management approaches employed in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and Kakadu National Park (Uluru–Kakadu) stems from a legal recognition of indigenous people as owners of the land (Stevens, 1997). Although differences between the parks exist, this recognition of title has allowed indigenous groups in these areas to negotiate leases with the government, ensure financial benefit and require a majority position in management. In Uluru, prior to recognition of Anangu ownership the area was managed in a top-down fashion (i.e. by the director of the Australian Nature Conservation Agency), but as ownership of the land changed this has shifted towards co-management arrangements (De Lacey & Lawson, 1997). As part of these shifts, a lease agreement was

negotiated (1978 and 1991), traditional use rights were recognized (1991) and a co-management board was established (De Lacey & Lawson, 1997). In instances where contracts are breached, the community has the legal right to terminate the lease (De Lacey & Lawson, 1997). The incorporation of Anangu knowledge with scientific knowledge is also used to make recommendations on issues such as fire management, rare species management and feral animal control (De Lacey & Lawson, 1997).

The previous literature review points to the various co-management approaches that are currently being employed by various park agencies that are involved in some way in the PPAWHSP. How the various approaches to co-management employed by the various federal and provincial park agencies will interface with the management arrangements desired by local indigenous communities in the PPAWHSP remains to be seen.

### ***Economic benefits and development***

With statements such as “tourism magnets,” “a virtual guarantee for tourism increases” and an “international top tourism brand,” it is of little wonder why WHSs are often promoted by proponents as economic catalyst (Buckley, 2004). In certain instances, there is some evidence to support these statements. For example, in an extensive review of tourism numbers (international visitations only) for Australian WHSs researchers found that numbers are “likely” to increase; however, the increase is often not as large as was expected (Buckley, 2004). Some critics argue that WHS status does not result in any significant increases in visitation, whereas others suggest that increases have less to do with the WHS designation and more to do with the area’s distinctiveness and accessibility (McKercher & Ho, 2005).

More specific research pertaining to indigenous tourism by Williams and O’Neil (2007) and Notzke (2006) indicates that there are several challenges for the development and sustainability of indigenous tourism enterprises related to

- indigenous communities and entrepreneurial awareness of the business requirements needed to be competitive in both cultural and ecotourism marketplace (lack of understanding of tourist requirements and demands for services and experiences);
- lack of awareness of the available indigenous tourism products within Canada or in a particular region because of limited marketing capacity;
- lack of indigenous social capital and technical capacity to respond to inquiries from potential visitors in a professional and timely manner; and
- lack of partnerships and strategic alliances with “mainstream” travel industry partners or surrounding communities to develop products and promote them effectively.

Other challenges include the following:

- limited political and cultural will to undertake tourism developments;
- limited understanding of travel markets, product trends and benefits and costs of tourism development in relationship to the community;
- intra-band politics;
- limited understanding of methods of sharing culture and traditional activities in a tourism context; and
- limited ability to attract and train staff to competently deliver competitive products.

That said, equity generation in WHS designation can also be achieved in the form of employment opportunities and various “spin-off” benefits. In practice however, despite

provisions for the training and hiring of local and indigenous people, employment in protected areas and WHSs tend to be somewhat limited, though it is increasing (Cameron, 2003). For example, despite Kakadu's apparent success in the area of co-management and hiring policies (nearly 40% of part-time and seasonal employees are indigenous), there is a lack of indigenous involvement in the development and/or management of the tourism industry, resulting in an industry that may not represent the cultural values of the area as identified in the management plan (Wellings, 2007). SGAang Gwaay WHS on the other hand, is a tourism attraction employing some local indigenous operators.

In addition to revenue generated from tourism and employment opportunities, indigenous communities can encourage local entrepreneurship in developing income-generating businesses, such as hotels and restaurants. Visitation fees can also contribute a significant amount to local indigenous groups. In Kakadu, for example, a significant amount is gained through fees and annual lease payments (Wellings, 2007). In Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, the lease includes an annual rental worth \$150,000 in 1994 and 25% of entrance fees worth \$600,000 in 1994 (De Lacey & Lawson, 1997). However, it should also be noted that these scenarios do not represent normal practice in protected areas or WHSs, for revenues from visitors are rarely returned to communities but "are used instead to support conservation and visitor services" (Shackley, 1998b, p. 182). In Canada and Ontario, it is the park agencies responsible for the management of these areas which determine and control the administration of user-fees. This administrative control of user-fees by multiple partners could in this context create some problem in the PPAWHSP. Solutions as to who will control user-fees and how they will be shared with the partners should be outlined in the nomination document that is being prepared.

## Discussion

Recent literature from international environmental organizations, such as the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the WCPA and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), has been particularly forward in advocating for the rights and benefit of indigenous peoples (Beltran, 2000; WWF 1996). The IUCN and WCPA recognize, for example, that

- protected areas will survive only if they are seen to be of value, in the widest sense, to the nation as a whole and to local people in particular;
- the rights of indigenous and other traditional peoples inhabiting protected areas must be respected by promoting and allowing full participation in co-management of resources, and in a way that would not affect or undermine the objectives for the protected area as set out in its management plan;
- knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and other traditional peoples have much to contribute to the management of protected areas; and
- governments and protected area managers should incorporate customary and indigenous tenure and resource use, and control systems, as a means of enhancing biodiversity conservation (Beltrán, 2000, p. ix).

They also suggest that

- governments should design and implement economic and other incentive systems for conservation and sustainable use of indigenous and other traditional peoples' terrestrial, coastal/marine and freshwater domains contained in protected areas; and

- governments should ensure that indigenous and other traditional peoples benefit fully from the economic and employment opportunities associated with the existence of protected areas, e.g. from income generated by tourism, and by employment in protected area management (IUCN, 2000, p. 11).

These arguments are often associated with previously ignored considerations of social justice and local rights, and require that attention is given to the views of local and indigenous populations during the formation of parks and protected areas (Beltran, 2000; Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2004; Scherl, 2005).

Paying attention to the rights and benefit of local indigenous groups is particularly important in the formation of the PPAWHSP because the creation of parks and protected areas in Canada has, in the past, created concerns for First Nations. In Ontario, previous park creation processes have been openly contested by First Nations (Cartwright, 2003; Killam, 1993) and continue to be contested today with the opposition of Bill 191 and the Far North Act. How the potential establishment of an international protected area such as the PPAWHSP in the Far North will be perceived by the leadership of Treaty #9 and surrounding First Nations not involved in the PPAWHSP is unclear. This literature review suggests that through paying particular attention to a number of concerns related to the rights, involvement and economic benefits of local people, proponents of the PPAWHSP might increase support and ensure the ongoing success of nomination and designation processes.

Because of the UNESCO recognition of indigenous rights, traditional management mechanisms and customary law, “world heritage” is an attractive designation for protected areas with indigenous involvement. In this particular case, this is perhaps the strongest argument in the selection of WHSs over other forms of protected areas. According to the proponents of PPAWHSP, the PPAWHSP process has already provided a number of positive lessons including the following:

- “First Nations’ leadership and support has been critical to the establishment and evolution of the initiative, and has been the basis of positive and effective cooperation.
- First Nations’ articulation of values and their vision of a desired future state of their traditional territories have been a powerful influence in land use decision-making.
- The integration of traditional ecological knowledge and western scientific approaches provides significant benefits through enhancement of the knowledge used to inform land use planning.
- Effective communications are essential to ensure accurate information is available to generate support” (Canadian Parks Council, 2008, p. 69).

In addition, the approach of WHSs to the management and conservation of protected areas and traditional lands is more reflective of indigenous cultural or mixed landscapes and has in some cases provided for local economic stimulus through its tourism “brand.” However, this review has also identified several issues that will require future exploration and ongoing attention as the PPAWHSP proceeds. These are discussed next.

The strength of the PPAWHSP process to date has been the inclusion of partners like the Poplar River First Nation; however, discussions regarding how all parties will be involved in collaborative management strategies and benefit from employment and potential tourism opportunities are still in the early stages of negotiations and development. Yet, as the literature pertaining to IWHS indicates, these issues should not be discounted as governance

and co-management are of particular relevance in this context, especially as none of the agencies involved (Manitoba Parks, Parks Canada, Ontario Parks) have any examples of true co-managed protected areas with First Nations. Yet, both Manitoba Parks and Parks Canada have demonstrated a willingness to implement collaborative management systems, whereas Ontario lags in the area of collaborative management; the recent announcement to list the “Dedicated Protected Areas” identified through the Whitefeather Forest Land Use Strategy (Ontario Parks, 2009) as provincial parks, and the Far North Act, could provide an opportunity to re-examine governance structures in this region of the province. Furthermore, particular attention should be paid to the equitable involvement and input of all First Nations groups involved in the PPAWHSP both during nomination and in ongoing management structures.

Although some authors have argued for the value of WHS as a “tourism brand,” the ability of isolated, remote and relatively nondescript areas to generate tourism is questionable. Even in the case of more “progressive” WHSs where indigenous groups such as the Anangu in Australia have ownership, tourism has proved to be quite difficult to control and manage. Particularly considering the barriers to indigenous tourism development and the Government of Ontario’s assertion that “resource development on lands deemed to be protected will be restricted and only tourism and traditional Indigenous uses will be permitted” (Annis, Bigué, & Isaac, 2008), an increased focus on the development of community-based tourism is of particular relevance to the PPAWHSP. Also of concern here is the park agency model employed by Ontario Parks and Parks Canada, which ensures that revenues from fees of licenses are returned to the management agency responsible for the administration of protected areas (i.e. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources). How revenues will be generated and administered in this particular proposed WHS will need to be identified and agreed upon by all parties. It is also important that expectations among indigenous groups are not unrealistic regarding the level of economic benefit that will be gained from the PPAWHSP. Although some parks and protected areas support marketing and tourism initiatives in the region, there is very little monitoring or research conducted on the socio-economic returns from these protected areas in Northern Ontario. Though some First Nations may benefit somewhat from proximity to these protected areas, for example the Lac La Croix First Nation and Quetico Provincial Park, other groups like the Weenusk First Nation at Peawanuck have benefited very little from the establishment of Polar Bear Provincial Park (Lemelin et al., 2007; Spielmann & Unger, 2000).

In explorations of other IWHA, authors suggest that to achieve effective involvement in co-management and to increase local employment levels and indigenous involvement in tourism activities ongoing capacity building efforts are essential (Shackley, 1998a, 1998b). In the designation phase, effective capacity building efforts must happen at all levels (individual, organizational and institutional) and throughout the WHS designation if these protected areas are to generate equity and promote empowerment for local communities (Hough, 2006).

The proposed PPAWHSP is a consortium of different protected areas and traditional First Nation lands and involves a number of provincial and federal park agencies. Because of the broad number of stakeholders involved in this TPA, a number of salient questions arise regarding the potential of the PPAWHSP to ensure community involvement and to generate local employment from its WHS designation. For example, will the First Nations and the agencies responsible for the administration of various protected areas implement separate employment, training and co-management regimes? Or can some sort of co-ordinated effort be reached? These questions will also need to be explored prior to the nomination and creation of PPAWHSP.

## Conclusion

This article was written to increase our understanding of tentative WHS designation in Canada and to provide guidance to the PPAWHSP proponents. This is particularly important in the case of Ontario which only has one WHS, and Manitoba which has none. This omission is perhaps one of the reasons why Manitoba has been so eager to promote and fund the WHS designation (CBC, 2009). We believe it is fundamental that stakeholders be provided with the accurate and appropriate information regarding these sites, especially regarding the opportunities and challenges that they can create for local indigenous groups. In this particular case, the likelihood of obtaining another WHS in Ontario is offset by the significant cultural and natural values of the area, by the TPA approach employed and by the fact that Manitoba does not have any WHS. This article also examined how the PPAWHSP can learn from existing IWHS and TPA sites in Canada and elsewhere, which are managed partially or wholly by indigenous partners. Special emphasis was placed on ensuring effective involvement in governance and local economic benefits in IWHS and examining the potential opportunities and challenges associated with IWHS and the possible implications to this proposal of the Far North Act in Ontario.

In many aspects, the Far North Act provides a framework where, under the PPAWHSP, it could take the lead in demonstrating an exemplary First Nations-led northern Ontario conservation initiative, which might contribute to improved processes and outcomes for indigenous communities near protected areas in Northern Ontario and Manitoba. What would be of great use to the First Nations and all the partners involved in the current consultative phase required by the WHS designation is engagement with the academic community in a collaborative and participatory and action-oriented research project which would inform the design and development of appropriate and empowering co-management structures and processes, provide opportunities for the agencies and First Nations to define tourism opportunities, create strategies for recognizing traditional uses and traditional knowledge and support the development of capacity building initiatives and increase local economic opportunities.

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