SHARING PERSPECTIVES

Developing a Land, Water, & Other Natural Resources Inventory

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Land, Water, and Other Natural Resources Inventory was a collaborative effort spearheaded by the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region (WMR). A not-for-profit partner, the Municipal Natural Assets Initiative, was enlisted to help with development of the inventory. While initially intended to be a background study to inform the WMR's regional planning efforts, the initiative evolved to incorporate Indigenous perspectives and took on a different form than was originally intended. This involved collaboration that built upon existing relationships from the Collaborative Leadership Initiative (CLI).

1.1 ABOUT THE INVENTORY

The inventory identifies various land, water, and natural resources throughout the region with an aim of restoring, protecting, and enhancing these natural features. It consists of an online mapping application and database which provides an overview of the various types of natural features and land cover types that exist within the region. These include Agricultural lands, Forests, Grasslands, Shrub, Water, and Wetland. The inventory also assesses the condition of these features.

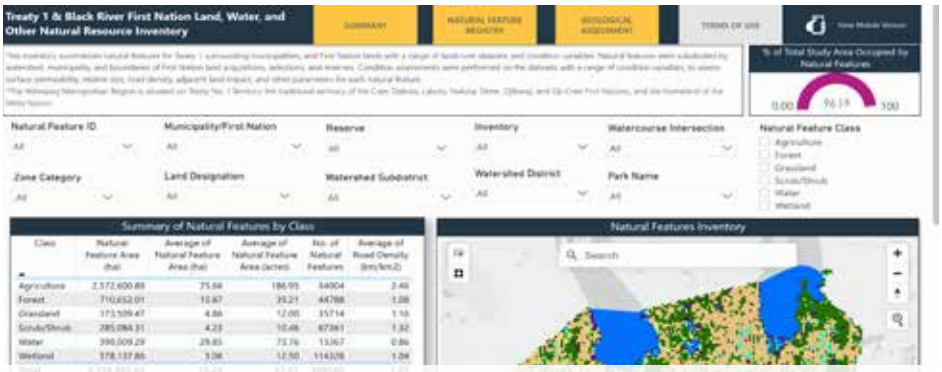

Figure 1: Homepage of the Land, Water, and Other Natural Resources Inventory web app.

> **" Manitoba's Capital Region is located on Treaty 1 Territory, the ancestral lands of the Ininew, Anishinaabe, Anisininew, Dene, Dakota, Lakota and Nakota, and is the Homeland of the Red River Métis."**
>
> **Winnipeg Metropolitan Region 2024**

As a partnership between the WMR and Indigenous partners, the inventory places significant focus on Indigenous perspectives. The inventory incorporates all Treaty 1 lands. These are the traditional lands of the Ininew, Anishinaabe, Anisininew, Dene, Dakota, Lakota and Nakota, First Nations, and also includes the Homeland of the Red River Métis.

2.0 BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The Winnipeg Metropolitan Region, now formally known as the Capital Planning Region, was initially tasked by the Province of Manitoba with developing the

first regional plan for the Capital Region in 2019. This mandate, set out in legislation, tasked the Region with developing "a long-term plan to coordinate land use, service delivery, economic development and infrastructure" (Winnipeg Metropolitan Region, 2020, p. 3).

This mandate was further updated in 2021 with the introduction of *Bill 37* by the Government of Manitoba. Bill 37 included amendments to *The Planning Act* which formally established the Capital Planning Region and gave it a specific mandate to "enhance economic and social development by improving and coordinating sustainable land use and development in the region." One of the ways the region is expected to achieve these goals is through the adoption of a regional plan. In 2019, when the Province established the initial mandate, the Region set out on developing a regional plan.

2.1 DEVELOPING A REGIONAL PLAN

As part of developing a regional plan, the WMR had to better understand the planning context. This involved developing background studies on various planning matters such as servicing, population growth, transportation, emergency services, waste, and recreation (Winnipeg Metropolitan Region, 2022, p. 25). One such document, *Our Future: An Action Plan for Winnipeg's Metropolitan Region*, highlighted various opportunities for collaboration between Indigenous partners and the Region, as well as for its member municipalities (Winnipeg Metropolitan Region, 2016). Additionally, in building out its regional context, the WMR aimed to better understand the characteristics of the natural assets that existed within the region. The need to establish this context resulted in initial work on a Natural Assets Inventory in collaboration with MNAI.

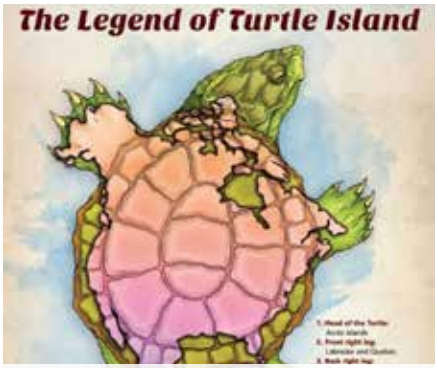

Figure 2: Image on inventory landing page..

2.2 CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING WITH INDIGENOUS PARTNERS

Planning together with Indigenous partners requires an understanding of the harms colonial western societies inflicted upon them. This helps to better understand the context in which Indigenous partners operate, and allow professional planners to ensure their work advances reconciliation. Below, and continuing on page 3, are a sample of relevant historical considerations when planning with Indigenous partners. These considerations have been adapted from Bear. et. al. (2023)

The Doctrine of Discovery states that the Supreme Being gave the earth to Christians and that Indigenous peoples were incapable of holding lands.

Doctrine of Discovery - 1493

Established the recognition of First Nation rights in Canada and laid the foundation of the treaty making process.

Royal Proclamation - 1763

Promoted an understanding of co-existence through peace and friendship, the sharing of resources and respect for different structures of governance.

Treaty of Niagara - 1764

2.3 COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE (CLI)

Established in 2017, the CLI consists of the Chiefs of the Southern Chiefs Organization (SCO) and the Mayors and Reeves of the WMR municipalities (Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources, n.d.). The work of the CLI led to the creation of a reconciliation framework, the signing of a historic intergovernmental agreement, and provided a forum for co-governance (Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources, n.d.). The Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) helped create the CLI and facilitate discussions between leaders.

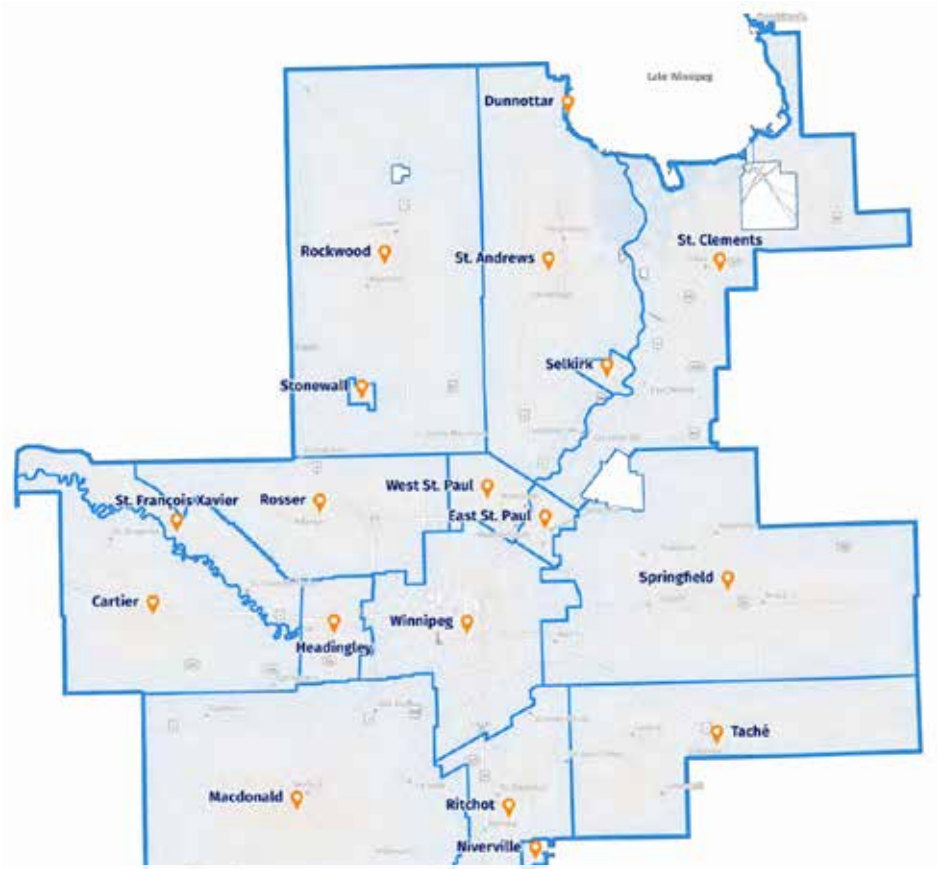

Figure 3: Member Municipalities of the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region.

3.0 FACTS OF THE CASE

When setting out on this undertaking, the region began working with the Municipal Natural Assets Initiative (MNAI, now Natural Assets Initiative, NAI), a not-for-profit which had completed similar work in the past, and pioneered the practice of Natural Asset Management (Bear et. al., 2023). The initial concept was to create a Natural Asset Inventory as part of the first component of assessment in Natural Asset Management (Bear et. al., 2023).

3.1 BEGINNING STAGES

MNAI had worked on many similar inventories prior to working with the WMR, but

Defines how the federal government interacts with First Nations. Gave the federal government responsibility for Indians and Lands reserved for Indians.

Indian Act - 1876

Allows First Nations to opt out of 34 sections of the Indian Act and control the management and control of reserve lands and resources.

First Nations Land Management Act - 1996

The spirit and intent was to co-exist in peace and harmony, share resources, respect First Nations governance, and not impose their ways on each other.

Treaty 1 - 1876

this was the first to incorporate Indigenous worldviews and perspectives (Bear et. al., 2023). Initial work was limited in scope to technical datasets of natural assets within the WMR (Bear et. al., 2023). Later, the Region identified this project as an opportunity to collaborate with Indigenous partners that would help provide a better understanding of the regional context from different perspectives. Given the involvement of the leaders of the WMR with the CLI, it was a natural fit to begin building upon existing relationships that had been established through the CLI on the development of this inventory. The WMR was also able to apply lessons learned from the CLI process.

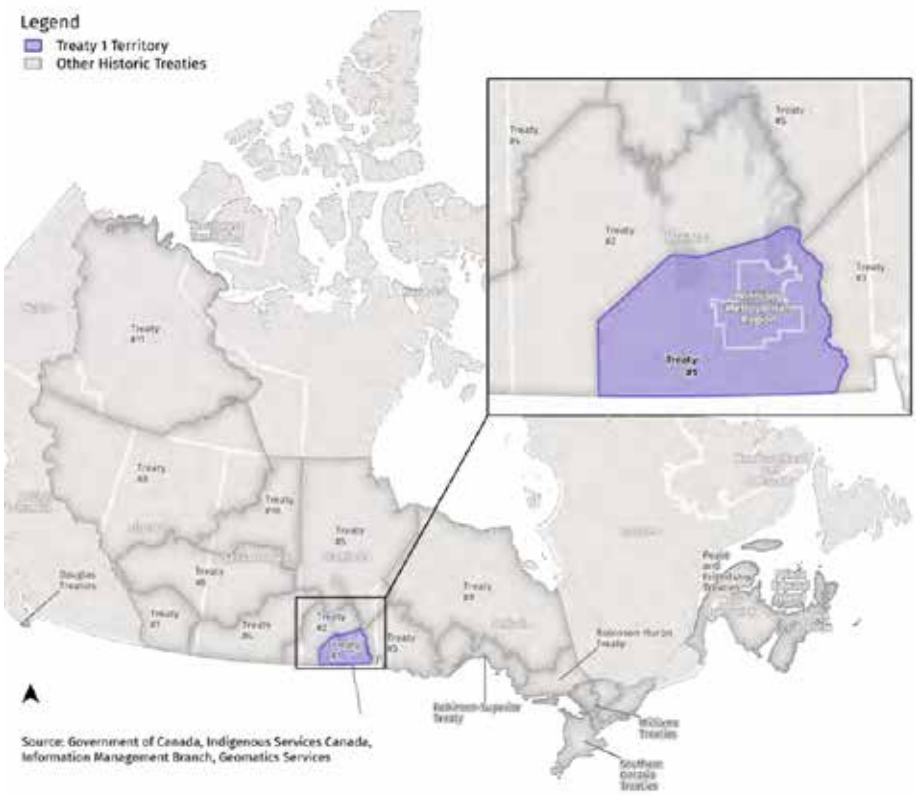

Figure 4: Treaty 1 Territory in relation to the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region

3.2 CREATING A WORKING GROUP

A working group was established to guide the project. Working with Indigenous partners in planning requires taking time to build trust and relationships. Initial meetings of the working group were conducted virtually because of restrictions in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in-person meetings would have been preferred to better establish and build upon these relationships.

"By continuing to work collaboratively, the WMR Project may reveal pathways for reconciliation."

Bear. et. al. 2023

WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

- The Southern Chiefs' Organization: Geoff Reimer
- Manitoba Métis Federation: Marci Riel, Jasmine Langhan, Allison Kolly
- United Nations: Robert Sanford
- Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources: Richard Farthing-Nicol
- WMR First Nations advisors: Jim Bear and Laren Bill
- WMR: Colleen Sklar and Natalie Lagassé

3.3 COLLABORATING ON THE INVENTORY

Initially, the project was intended to just map natural assets within the boundaries of the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region. However, in the early stages of the project, the decision was made to expand the scope beyond that of the WMR to include all Treaty 1 territory (Bear et. al., 2023).

This decision reflects the fact that natural features do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries, and better reflects the traditional territories of First Nations (Bear et. al., 2023). When mapping the inventory, Municipal boundaries were removed from the primary map to indicate continuity of

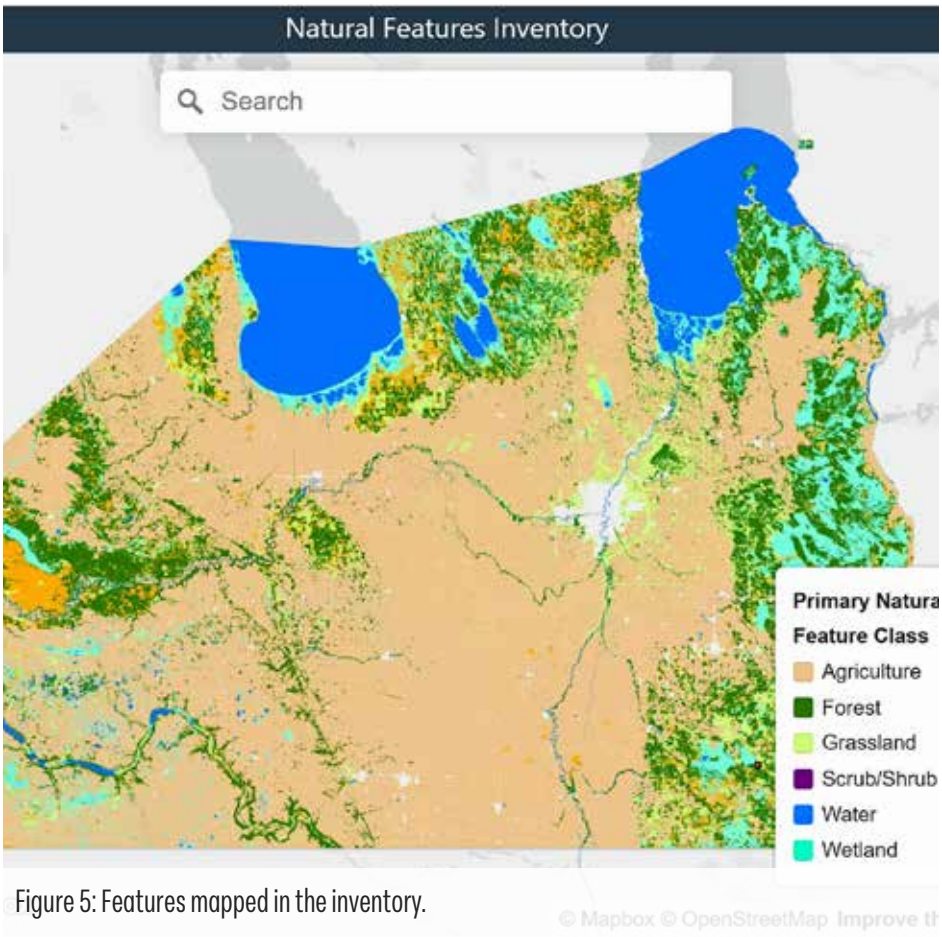

Figure 5: Features mapped in the inventory.

natural features and systems such as rivers, wetlands, and forests (Bear et. al., 2023)

Working with Indigenous partners also led to other changes in the direction that the inventory would take. Indigenous perspectives were considered in all aspects, right down to what the name of the project would be. This resulted in the name changing from the Natural Assets Inventory to Land, Water, and Other Natural Resources, nomenclature which was subsequently used in other work by the WMR (Bear et. al., 2023).

Work on the inventory intended to not just identify and map the features, but to assess their condition as well. Initial data included indicators of the condition of features, ranking them as poor, fair, or good. However, this classification was removed as it did not align with Indigenous perspectives of the condition of the features and new indicators are to be developed (Bear et. al., 2023). From the perspective of Indigenous partners, these features may have had alternative uses which rendered their condition different than they would seem from a western Planning perspective.

The inventory is also intended to include community data. Community data may include areas of traditional land use, such as hunting and medicine harvesting, however there may be sensitivities in sharing this sort of data (Bear et. al., 2023). As a result, community data was not included in initial products that resulted from the inventory. More consultation with Indigenous partners would be required prior to making this sort of data publicly available in the inventory.

4.0 LESSONS LEARNED

Working on this initiative contributed to an understanding that, despite planning efforts being geographically limited by the borders of the member municipalities that make up the region, the potential impacts of their planning had ramifications for land, water, and natural resources far beyond the regions boundaries. The natural features within the region do not simply stop at municipal boundaries. The collaboration that began with the CLI opened up the door to understanding a broader context, both from the perspective of the lands and waters that exist within and surrounding the region, and from the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in planning.

These efforts helped to better define the context of planning on Treaty territory, and helped to include an Indigenous worldview in the background materials that would go on to inform a regional plan. In advancing reconciliation,

this represented the inclusion of an Indigenous perspective early on in the planning process. Rather than consulting with Indigenous peoples after the inventory or plan had already been created, the development of the inventory ensured Indigenous perspectives were included in earlier stages of the process and would go on to inform the development of policy.

The project also highlights how working with Indigenous partners requires time and effort to be put into relationship building and developing trust. Building relationships through the CLI and work on the inventory led to strong relationships between the WMR and Indigenous partners that persist to this day. This experience helped to build capacity within the WMR for partnering with Indigenous nations for future work, and laid the groundwork for incorporating Indigenous perspectives early in planning processes.

5.0
FINAL THOUGHTS

The experience of the WMR with the Land , Water, and other Natural Resources Inventory highlights a success story of planners working with Indigenous partners. Inclusion of Indigenous perspectives early in the planning process, and shifting perspectives to consider planning issues from an Indigenous worldview, represent elements of best practice for planners working with Indigenous partners. Work on the inventory showcases how collaboration can lead to changing directions with projects, and how this change in direction can produce better planning results. Building relationships like these between Planners and Indigenous partners is essential to reconciliation and building trust.

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FIGURES

1. The homepage of the Land, Water, and Other Natural Resources Inventory web app. Source: https://nri.winnipegmetroregion.ca/

2. Image from landing page. Source: https://nri.winnipegmetroregion.ca/

3. Member Municipalities of the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region. Source: https://data.winnipegmetroregion.ca/dataset/cb96d80d-5721-4a87-905c-5e7dd470da23/resource/31a6fd5c-3797-43ca-8810-335a2a6a3d24/download/plan20-50_first_reading.pdf

4. Treaty 1 Territory in relation to the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region. Source: https://data.winnipegmetroregion.ca/dataset/cb96d80d-5721-4a87-905c-5e7dd470da23/resource/31a6fd5c-3797-43ca-8810-335a2a6a3d24/download/plan20-50_first_reading.pdf

5. Features mapped in the inventory. Source: https://nri.winnipegmetroregion.ca/