

“Environmental Justice Issues: The Walpole Island Experience”

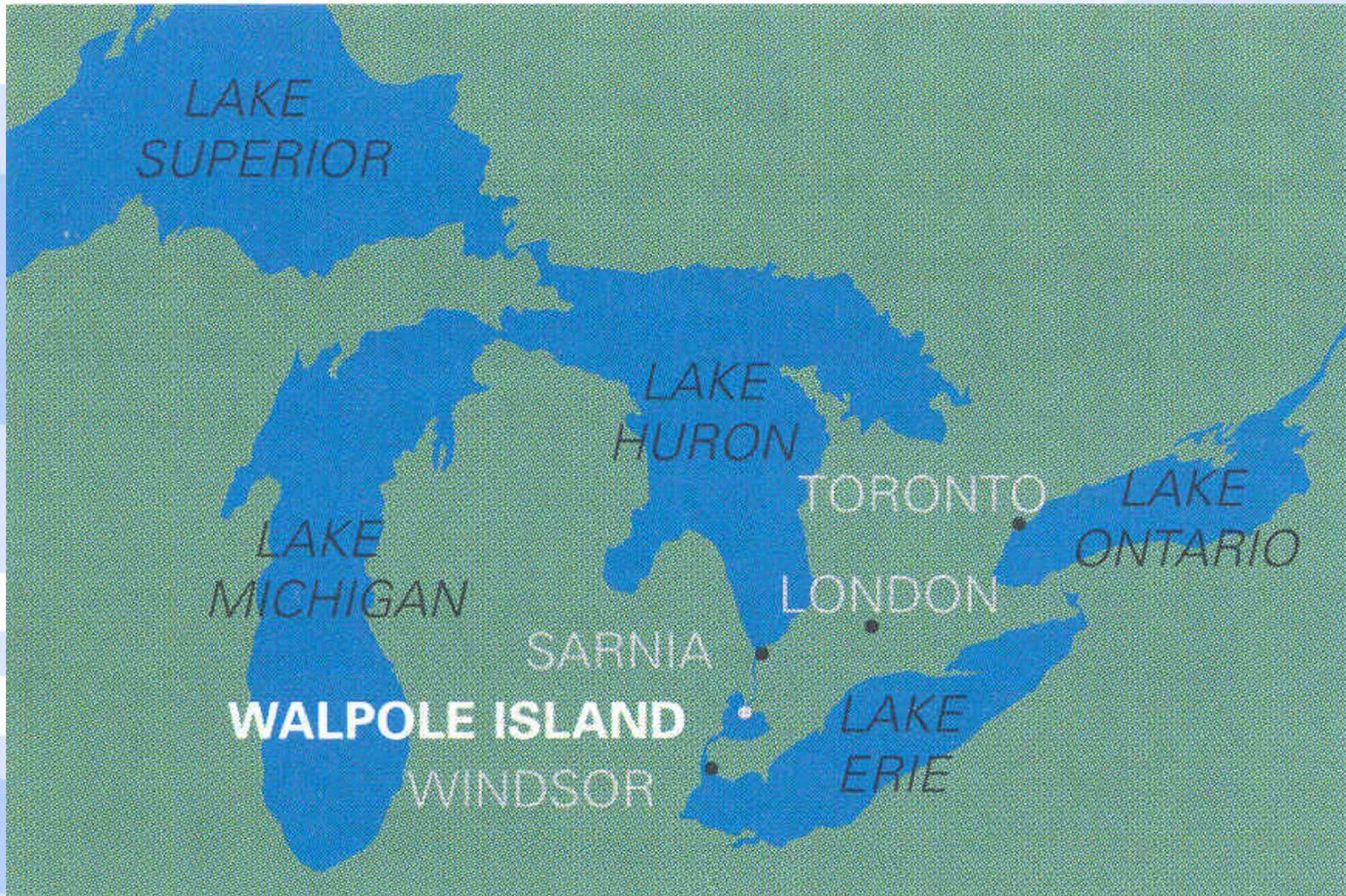
Joint Public Advisory Committee
September 25, 2007
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Where We're Located



Walpole Island First Nation

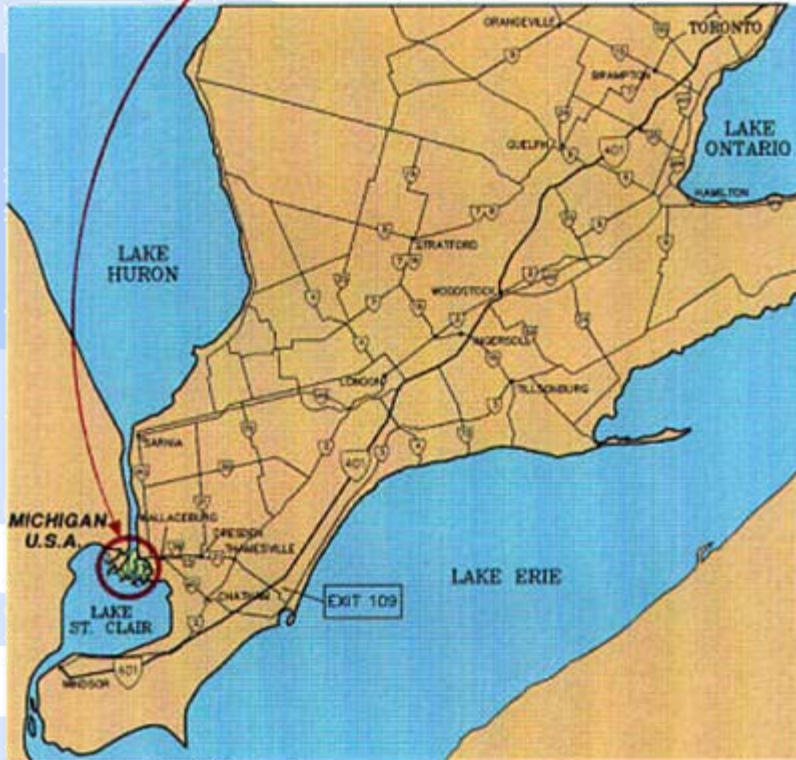
At the Heart of the Great Lakes



WALPOLE ISLAND FIRST NATION

BKEJWANONG TERRITORY

WALPOLE ISLAND



Walpole Island First Nation is nestled between Ontario and Michigan at the mouth of the St. Clair River. Occupied by Aboriginal people for thousands of years, it is today home to 2,500 Ojibwa, Potawatomi and Ottawa. Having a common heritage, we formed the Three Fires Confederacy – a political and cultural compact that has survived the test of time.

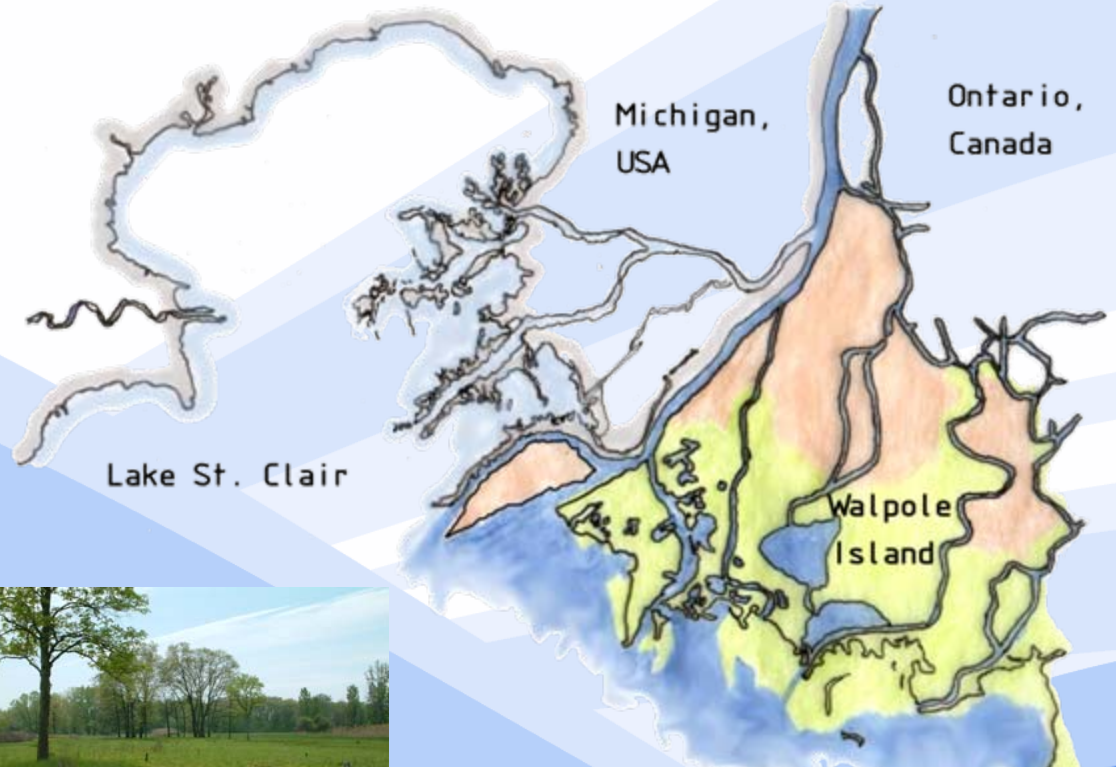
WALPOLE ISLAND FIRST NATION BKEJWANONG TERRITORY



Walpole Island is blessed with a unique ecosystem including 6,900 hectares of the richest and most diverse wetlands in the entire Great Lakes region. The reserve consists of five (5) principle islands with Walpole being the most prominent.

Walpole Island's Ecosystems

Walpole Island...
supports a rich mosaic of natural areas including some of the most biologically diverse areas in Canada.



Coastal waterways



Tallgrass Prairies



Wetlands



Oak Savannas



Carolinian forests

Waterways



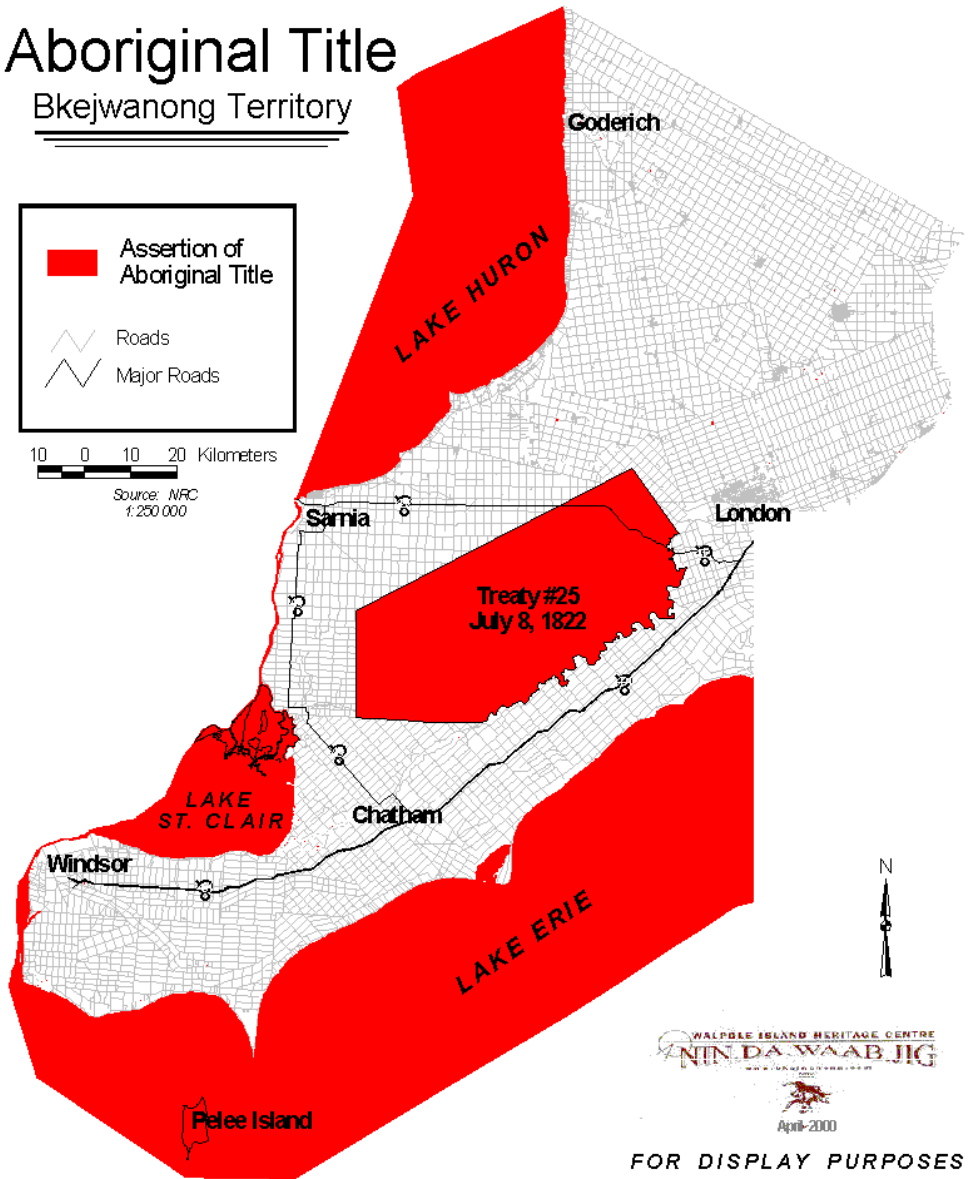
Aboriginal Title

Bkejwanong Territory



10 0 10 20 Kilometers

Source: NRC
1:250,000



WALPOLE ISLAND HERITAGE CENTRE
NIN DA WAAB JIG

April-2000

FOR DISPLAY PURPOSES

In recent years, the Canadian Courts have begun to recognize the significance of Aboriginal concerns about development which affects lands where we either have or claim Aboriginal title; or where our Aboriginal or Treaty Rights are affected.

Tallgrass Prairies



466 hectares of tallgrass prairie habitat on Walpole Island

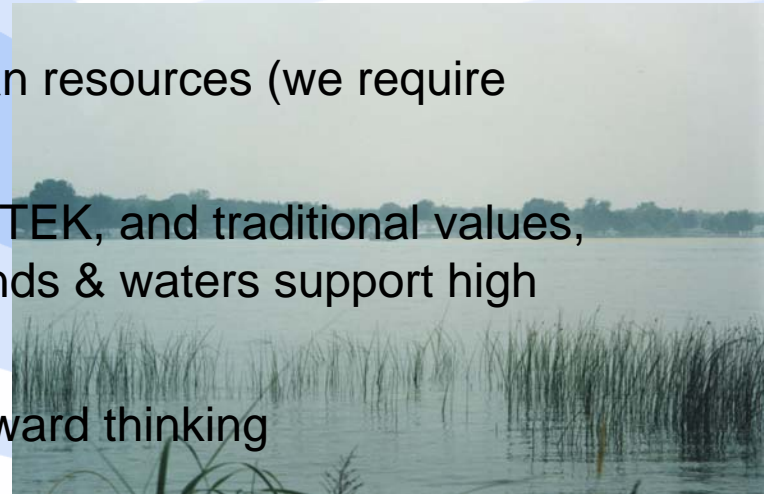
Building Knowledge

- Life Science Inventory study documented and assessed the terrestrial land features of the WIFN
- Air Monitoring Study 1988-1995
- Toxins Study – Great Lakes Institute
- Aquatic Communities Study
- Traditional Ecological Knowledge Study
- Fish Habitat Study
- Freshwater Mussel Study
- Habitat Stewardship Program – SAR Census
- Draft Walpole Island Ecosystem Recovery Strategy



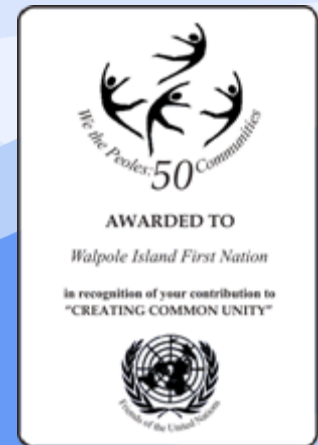
Challenges

- Growing population on Walpole Island - increasing pressures on natural habitats & species at risk lands
- Invasive species (old & new) – Phragmites, zebra mussels, emerald ash borer
- Pollution – air and water
- Recognition of our Rights & jurisdiction over our lands & waters by other governments
- Capacity needs – financial & human resources (we require biologists, foresters, etc.)
- Maintaining our culture, language, TEK, and traditional values, which are the main reasons our lands & waters support high biodiversity & species at risk
- Being innovative, creative, and forward thinking



Recognition

- 1980 – WIFN noted as an Environmentally Significant Area by the University of Waterloo
- 1980 – Carolinian Canada selects WIFN as a critical natural area site – only one of the 38 Carolinian sites to fulfill all ten criteria used in the selection process
- 1987 – World Wildlife Fund Canada recognizes WIFN’s prairies and oak savannas as the most diverse remnants remaining in Canada
- 1995 – Walpole Island First Nation received the “We the Peoples: 50 Communities Award” from the Friends of the United Nations for its exemplary record in environmental research and sustainable development



Carolinian Canada Recognition

- 2004 – Carolinian Canada presents WIFN with a “Conservation Award” for its contribution towards protecting the natural diversity & habitats of Ontario’s Carolinian Zone





Scales of Justice

First Nations

Governments & Third Parties

Conservation Programs
Protection of Forests, Wetlands,
and other Traditional Territories
Resource Renewal Programs

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GHG's
Water and Air Pollution
Loss of Forests,
Wetlands, Prairies

*Protection and sustainable
management of territories
and resources*

*Resource exploration
and environmental harms*

Protection offsets Exploitation

Survival of Territory, Resources, Culture, Economy

