Mushkegowuk First Nations and Landuse Planning

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Who is Mushkegowuk Council?

In 1984, the Chiefs and Councils of Western James Bay and Hudson Bay formally joined to create a non-profit regional entity to represent their unified interests and concerns.

The Mushkegowuk Council is the political voice of the region advancing the interest of First Nation peoples of the region through their Constitutional Process in the areas of Health, Resource Development, Environmental Protection, Social Services, Education, Employment and Training, Protection of Treaty and Aboriginal Rights of the people.
Mushkegowuk Council currently consists of 7 member communities:

- Attawapiskat
- Kashechewan
- Fort Albany
- Moose Cree
- Taykwa Tagamou
- Chapleau Cree
- Missanabie Cree

The individual Chiefs of the 7 First Nations, the Grand Chief and Deputy Grand Chief form the governing body that oversees the Mushkegowuk Council.
Mushkegowuk traditional homelands are approximately 38% of Ontario.

The vast majority of the region is located in the Hudson and James Bay lowlands: a huge tract of muskeg with no year-round land-based transportation and inhabited only by First Nation peoples.
Lands & Resources Department

- L&R provides strategic and policy advice to the Grand Chief, and to the Chiefs and Councils of Mushkegowuk First Nations, as needed, in regards to the conservation, protection, management and development of the natural resources within the Mushkegowuk traditional territory.

- The major areas of focus are:
  - Mid-Canada Line Radar Site Cleanup
  - Mining Development & the ‘Ring of Fire’
  - Forestry Development
  - Research
  - Landuse Planning
What is Land Use Planning?

- Land use planning is the process of making choices about the future of the land.

- These choices will help to answer some important questions:
  - What will distinct areas be used for?
  - Where will land be protected for traditional uses?
  - Where will the Mushkegowuk collectively agree that roads will go?
  - Where will the Mushkegowuk collectively agree that forestry or mining will be allowed?

- Land use planning needs to be based on the First Nations knowledge of the land and on any other information that will help Mushkegowuk make wise choices for the future.
Why are we engaged in Land Use Planning?


- The line splits the Mushkegowuk Territory in half.

Therefore we will be producing a Landuse Plan for the ENTIRE Mushkegowuk Territory.
Regional Land Use Planning Team

- All Mushkegowuk First Nations, including Weenusk First Nation will be represented on Regional Planning Team.

- We are working together in partnership with the OMNR to prepare a Terms of Reference document that will guide the development of a Regional Land Use Plan for the entire Mushkegowuk Territory.

- This approach will enable all the Mushkegowuk First Nations to work toward the development of a unified Regional Land Use Plan for the entire Mushkegowuk Territory.
Regional Land Use Planning Team

- Weenusk LUP Coordinator
- Attawapiskat LUP Coordinator
- Kashechewan LUP Coordinator
- Fort Albany LUP Coordinator
- Moose Cree LUP Coordinator
- Taykwa Tagamou LUP Coordinator
- Chapleau Cree LUP Coordinator
- Missanabie Cree LUP Coordinator
- LUP Manager
- Regional Landuse Planner
- Mushkegowuk Regional Elder
- Ontario Reps

Other Technical Resources as required: GIS, MERC, Legal, MOE, MAA etc.

Chairperson
Administration
It is vital in support of an effective Land Use Plan to use Traditional Knowledge as the foundation.

- Each community is at a different stage of information gathering for their local land use plan.

- In order for data to be assembled together for a regional plan there must be data standards followed for both the gathering of data and entering it into the GIS.
Mushkegowuk Data Standards

We have created standard policies/procedures for:

1. Methods of gathering information
2. Codes used to represent information
3. GIS Shapefile naming standards
4. GIS Shapefile attribute standards
5. Data Sharing and distribution policies
6. How to Guides
Information Gathering

Traditional Mushkegowuk Knowledge is gathered through an interview process with Elders and harvesters using a standardized questionnaire, marking physical locations on topographic maps.

Oral traditions, legends and stories are captured on voice recorders.
How are we using GIS?

Traditional Knowledge is being entered into local GIS

- Baseline data Collection
- Resource Development Protocol
- Species at Risk

FUTURE:
- Water Monitoring and Protection
- Technical Services
- Wildlife Management
- Compliance
- Energy Potential
  etc.
Training

- Delivery of classroom training to First Nation LUP Coordinators & assistants
- Hands-on GPS training for data collected on field visits and excursions.
- Interviewing Skills and Procedures for collecting Traditional Knowledge

On-Going
- Online and telephone support
- Visits to First Nations for one-on-one specialized training
What are we doing with the gathered data?

- Pulling First Nation data together Regionally
- Looking for trends
- Identification of areas for Protection, Conservation, General Use / Development
Analysis of data to define areas of protection

Wildlife Habitat

Traditional Use

Cultural Significance

Areas of Protection
Analysis of existing data to define areas of Potential Economic Development

- Mining
- Forestry
- Tourism

Areas of Potential Economic Development
Future Data Needs?

Into the future we will need to acquire data and expertise to look at other possible impacts:

Physical: Climate Change, Geology, Fire, Soil

Biological: Wildlife Conservation & Management, Eco-Zones / Eco-Regions

Social/Cultural: Archeology, Values at Risk, Tourism Impact Assessments

HARDWARE: Backup, Storage and Dissemination of Data

VPN (Virtual Private Network)

Timmins Server

dataflow

8 FN Communities

Weenusk
Attawapiskat
Kashechewan
Fort Albany
Moose Cree
Taykwa Tagamou
Missanabie Cree
Chapleau Cree

Chapleau
Secure Storage and Backup

Data from the interview process is entered into computers in each community by our trained land use coordinators.

Common digital land base data is maintained for community access on servers in the Timmins office.

Community data is stored on the same servers for:

- data maintenance,
- backups and security,
- and for Regional Land Use Planning.
SOFTWARE:

- We are now in a transition

- Until recently: ArcGIS Basic

- **March 2012** – Signed ESRI License Agreement for use of software in 8 First Nation Communities and Mushkegowuk Council

- Will be migrating to ArcServer and ArcGIS Advanced using replicated Geodatabases for Traditional Knowledge
Challenges?

- Funding
- Hardware / Software Licensing costs
- The size of Mushkegowuk Territory
  - to bring everyone together consistently for planning meetings
  - to securely store, share and preserve data
  - Bandwidth (Satellite, FibreOptic, DSL)
- Regional staff Capacity
- Personnel
- Retaining staff
- Training new staff
Questions?