



2023

Kischi Sipi Namao Committee
Annual Report



Profile



Lake Sturgeon have a social and historical significance in Manitoba and a strong cultural significance to Indigenous peoples in the province. Over the past 100 years, a combination of intensive commercial fishing and habitat disruption has had serious effects on Manitoba sturgeon populations.

The Kischi Sipi Namao Committee (KSNC) was established in 2013 as a partnership committed to protecting and enhancing Lake Sturgeon populations in the lower Nelson River. Committee efforts focus on the Lower Nelson River from Kelsey Generating station to Hudson Bay, including the Hayes River system (Hayes, Gods and Echoing rivers).

Membership includes representatives from Fox Lake

Cree Nation, Shamattawa First Nation, Tataskweyak Cree Nation, War Lake First Nation, York Factory First Nation, as well as Manitoba Hydro and Keeyask Hydropower Limited Partnership. Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development participates in the committee as a non-voting member.

In 2013, Manitoba Hydro committed to a 20 year funding arrangement that will allow the committee to undertake a variety of core activities. Funding for the KSNC is allocated from Keeyask and the existing stations on the Nelson River. The community led, collaborative structure of the KSNC will ensure the incorporation of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK) into the important work of protecting and enhancing Lake Sturgeon populations.

Committee Executives



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Committee
Chair



Darcy Wastesticoot,
York Factory First Nation

"During my childhood, Mom and Dad taught the lessons of life, Cree views and traditions, and how to survive off what the land and water has to offer."

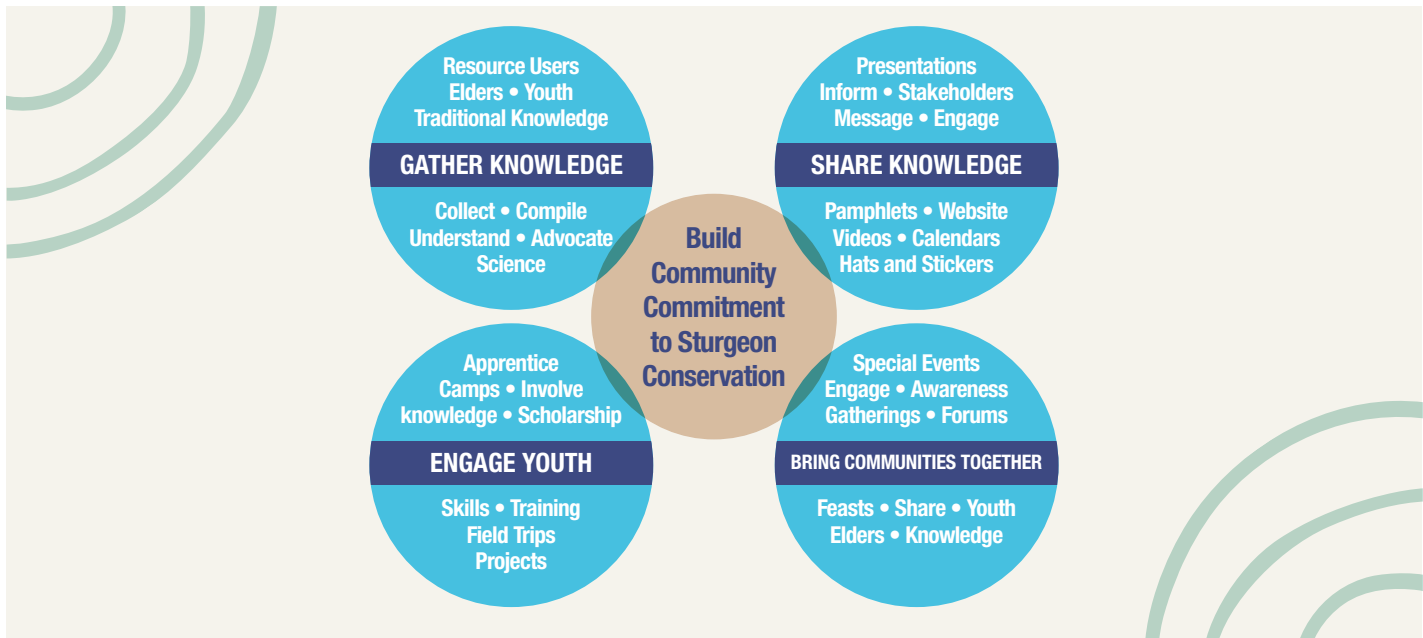
Committee
Vice Chair



Gilbert Beardy,
Tataskweyak Cree Nation

"KSNC is a voice for the sturgeon and the future."

Plan



THE LAKE STURGEON STEWARDSHIP PLAN

In June of 2016 the KSNC completed their Stewardship Plan. This was accomplished through a series of community and committee workshops, with the objective of plan development through committee consensus. In addition to being the first activity identified in the committee Terms of Reference, this document sets overall measures, objectives and strategies for protection and enhancement of Lake Sturgeon in the lower Nelson River for the immediate, medium and long term future. The objective of the plan is to provide guidance and set priorities for the Committee.

During these workshops and meetings the Committee collaborated to develop their purpose, vision, goals, and priorities.

Purpose

Provide a community-oriented, proactive approach in implementing stewardship activities. The collaborative structure of the KSNC ensures the incorporation of Traditional Knowledge (TK) into the important work of protecting and enhancing Lake Sturgeon populations.

Vision

The Committee worked together to create a vision statement they feel communicates their purpose:

“Wetatoskehmitowin, Namao Kakekeh”

“Working together to conserve sturgeon for future generations”

Goals

Short Term:

- Gather information and develop our message
- Share our message
- Increase functionality of the Committee

Medium Term:

- Bring communities together
- Engage youth

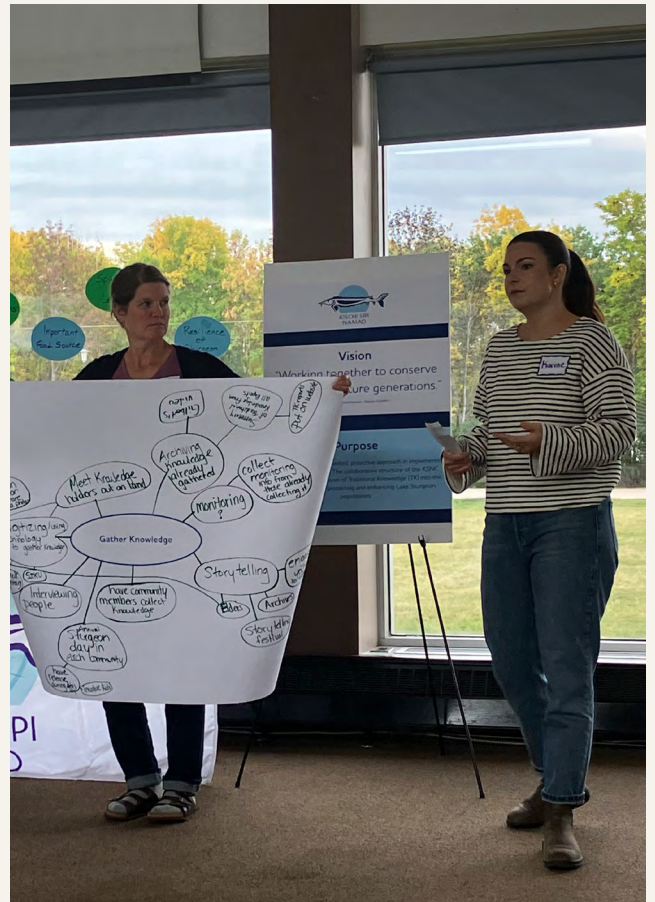
Long Term:

- Achieve community commitment to sturgeon conservation

Priorities

The following priorities were selected to lead the committee toward achieving their vision;

- **Increasing KSNC Functionality**
- **Gathering Information;** Community & Traditional Knowledge
- **Sharing Our Message;** Educating our communities
- **Bringing Communities Together;** Building cohesiveness
- **Engaging Youth;** Involving the sturgeon stewards of the future
- **Conserving and Enhancing the Lake Sturgeon Population**



"Sturgeon was not only food to the Cree. The women who were expecting or had a baby were encouraged to eat the sturgeon and drink sturgeon broth. That way they passed on the medicine to their babies through breast-feeding making them strong and healthy."

— Flora Beardy, York Factory First Nation

KSNC Information Collection

The KSNC facilitated compilation of information, Traditional Knowledge, stories, quotes and photos from each of the participating communities. This information is used for planning, communications, and publications by the KSNC such as presentations and brochures.

Gathering Information



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"Harvesting of sturgeon by our Elders was limited to what was needed immediately. Today KSNC is still promoting conservation of all sturgeon migrating through our area."

— Gilbert Beardy, Tataskweyak Cree Nation

Summary of Activities



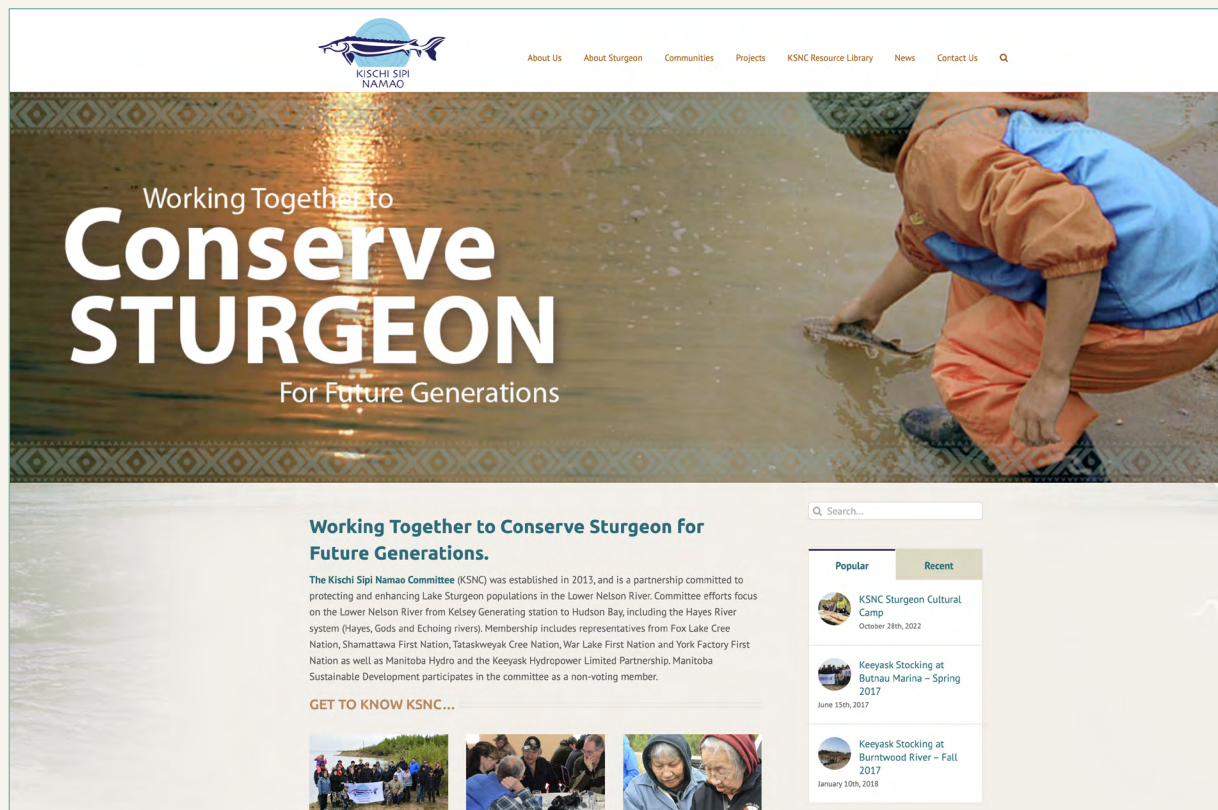
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Sharing Our Message

Manitoba Lake Sturgeon Science Workshop

Manitoba Hydro and the University of Manitoba – Department of Biological Sciences hosted their fourth annual Sturgeon workshop at the University of Manitoba on February 24, 2023. Fox Lake Cree Nation and Manitoba Hydro committee members presented information about the KSNC including a video of the Sturgeon Cultural Camp. The theme of the workshop was “Reconnecting Partnerships in Lake Sturgeon Science and Conservation”. Presentations and discussion focused on new understandings and achievements in local Lake Sturgeon research and conservation, while highlighting the partnerships that facilitated the work. The workshop was well attended by Provincial and Federal regulators, Indigenous resource users, Sturgeon Boards, industry, and academia. It was a great opportunity to connect with others engaged in Lake Sturgeon research and conservation and to recognize shared interests and discuss future collaborations.





KSNC Website

The KSNC's comprehensive website is a source of information on Lake Sturgeon and committee activities and priorities, including descriptions and photos of meetings, stocking and other events and links to Lake Sturgeon resources.

Visit us at
www.KSNC.ca

"Sturgeon has a unique place in the lives of Tataskweyak and War Lake Members for spiritual and practical reasons. The Cree feel an inherent responsibility to care for sturgeon because it is seen as a special gift from the Creator"

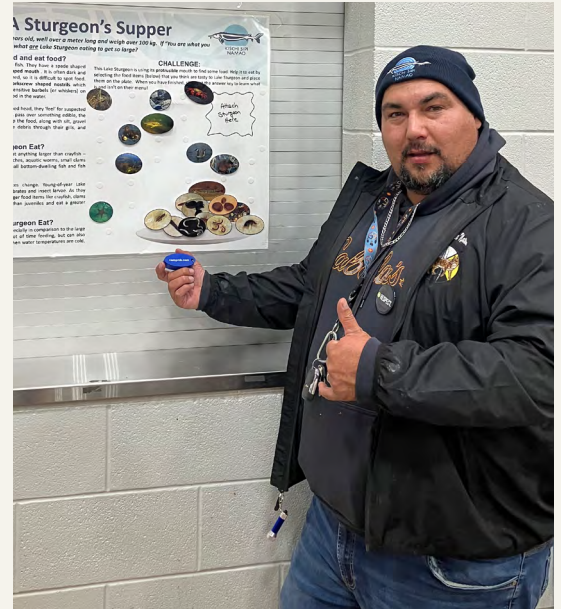
— Tataskweyak Cree Nation and War Lake First Nation

Summary of Activities

The KSNC continues to engage youth and encourage and facilitate the transfer of knowledge within families. The youth are the stewards of the future, and the long-lived Lake Sturgeon will need their help!

Fox Lake Cree Nation Community Engagement Info Session & Career Fair

The KSNC was represented at the Fox Lake Cree Nation Community Engagement Info Session & Career Fair held at the Gillam Rec Centre on November 2, 2023. KSNC shared their purpose of protecting and enhancing sturgeon populations in the Lower Nelson River from Kelsey Generating Station to Hudson Bay. The KSNC do this by educating and engaging their local communities as stated in their vision: "Working Together to Conserve Sturgeon for Future Generations". The scholarship was promoted, and students took applications. A fun filled day ended with closing remarks from the Fox Lake Chief, Town of Gillam Mayor, and the Gillam Operations and Maintenance Department Manager.

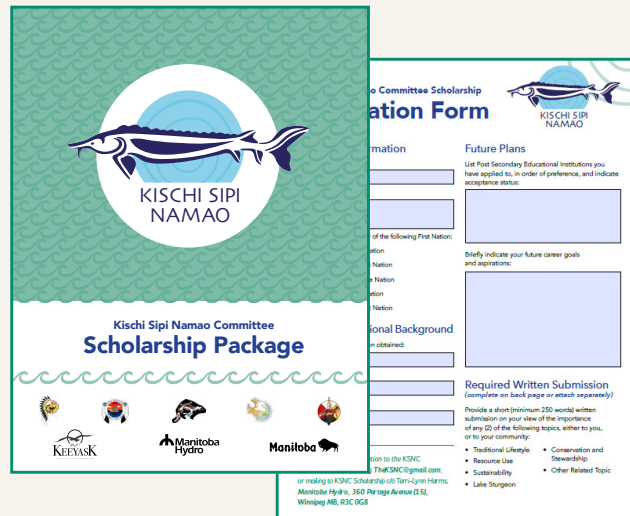


Sturgeon stockings by the Grand Rapids Fish Hatchery for the Keeyask Hydropower Limited Partnership:

- Split Lake – May 30, 2023
- Burntwood River – June 1, 2023

Scholarship Program

In 2017, the Committee established a post-secondary scholarship program available to students from each of the five participating First Nations. No scholarships were awarded for the 2022-2023 year but we continue to encourage students to apply for 2024.



The image shows a 'Kischi Sipi Namao Scholarship Package' form. The top section features the logo of a fish in a circle with the text 'KISCHI SIPI NAMAO'. Below this, it says 'Kischi Sipi Namao Committee Scholarship Package'. The form includes sections for 'Personal Information', 'Future Plans', 'Personal Background', and 'Required Written Submission'. It also lists logos for participating First Nations: KEEWASK, Manitoba Hydro, and Manitoba. At the bottom, it provides contact information for the KSNC.

Engaging Youth & Bringing Communities Together

Meetings

- January 27, 2023 – Thompson
- April 20, 2023 – Thompson

KSNC celebrated their 10th anniversary of the committee at a meeting in Thompson. Many memories and stories of past meetings, workshops and events were shared over cake during the meeting.
- June 22, 2023-Thompson
- September 12-14 - Workshop in Pinawa
- December 7, 2023 - Winnipeg



2023 Year

Future Initiatives

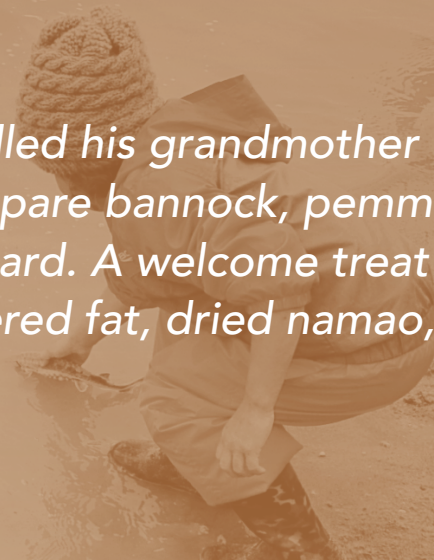


The KSNC will continue to pursue strategies and activities that contribute to their priorities and are consistent with the Stewardship Plan. Some of the strategies planned for the next year are:

- Continued Lake Sturgeon release events
- Partnership with the Thompson Boreal Discovery Centre to facilitate an aquarium program within KSNC communities, and increase programming opportunities for school children in the KSNC member communities
- Annual KSNC Calendar
- Getting sturgeon aquariums into communities
- Continued offering of the Post-Secondary Scholarship



Noah Massan (FLCN, 2012) recalled his grandmother using rendered namao fat to prepare bannock, pemmican, or any other food that required lard. A welcome treat was pemmican made from rendered fat, dried namao, and cranberries.



"Working
together,
sturgeon
forever."



"We must protect
sturgeon for
future
generations."

— Audrey Ouskan,
War Lake First Nation



KISCHI SIPI
NAMAQ

“Working together, sturgeon forever”



Available in accessible formats upon request.