

CHAPTER 2. HUMAN HISTORY — PEOPLE AND THE PENINSULA



The Bruce Peninsula is part of the traditional territory of the Saugeen Ojibway Nations, the collective name of the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation (Cape Croker) and Chippewas of Saugeen Unceded First Nation (Chippewa Hill). Up until the mid-1800s, the territory controlled by these First Nations included the entire peninsula as well as much of what is today Grey and Bruce County and adjacent areas.

Archeological evidence suggests that the Odawa occupied the peninsula about 2,500 years ago; however, the oral tradition from Nawash and Saugeen suggests that their ancestors were here as early as 7,500 years ago or earlier. The Saugeen Ojibway are a part of the Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibway, Odawa and Pottawatomi, which, in turn, is part of the Anishnabek nations that historically occupied and controlled the Great Lakes region.

There is evidence that the peninsula has long been a spiritual destination for Aboriginal people from across the Great Lakes region. In particular, it is believed that many travelled to what is today Hope Bay, but to the Ojibway is Nochemoweniing, or Place of Healing.

In 1836, Sir Francis Bond Head pushed for a treaty with the Saugeen Ojibway for lands south of the peninsula in exchange for proper housing, assistance to become “civilized” and protection of the peninsula “forever.” Eighteen years later in 1854, the Saugeen Ojibway were coerced into signing another treaty, this time for the peninsula. In 1994, the Saugeen Ojibway launched a land claim for part of their traditional territory, claiming breach of trust by the Crown in failing to meet its obligations to protect Aboriginal lands. The claim seeks the return of lands still held by the Crown and financial compensation for other lands. The claim has yet to be resolved.

By the late 1800s, European settlement had begun in earnest on the peninsula, which early settlers referred to as the “Indian” or “Saugeen Peninsula.” At the time of the 1854 treaty, the Peninsula was still deeply forested with rich fisher-



Visitors have long been drawn to the natural beauty, interesting species and habitats and spectacular scenery of the Northern Bruce.

ies in Georgian Bay and Lake Huron as well as in inland lakes and rivers. It took only roughly a decade, however, for the big pines to be logged out. With the construction of the first sawmill in Tobermory in 1881, the pace of logging continued to increase and by the turn of the century most of the valuable timber was gone. What followed were a series of intense fires, fuelled by the slash and waste that had been left behind by the rapid logging and agricultural land clearances of the previous decades. By the mid-1920s, almost all of the forests of the peninsula had been cut over or burnt down.

More trouble was to come for the area when the lamprey eel entered Lake Huron and Georgian Bay in 1932 through the just-finished Welland Canal, severely damaging a fishery already weakened by over-fishing of more valuable species like lake trout.

As a result, the human population of the peninsula began a steady decline in the 1900s, a trend that wasn’t reversed until the 1970s. Thin, dry soils made agriculture difficult in many parts of the peninsula and other resources had been severely depleted, leading many to leave the peninsula to settle elsewhere.

However, the beauty of the peninsula attracted visitors from the growing cities of Southern Ontario and the Great Lakes States and the first cottages began appearing in its coves and along its shorelines in the 1920s. After the Second World War, the pace of cottage development increased and today seasonal residents outnumber permanent residents on the peninsula.

Recreation and tourism are now the major economic activities for the Northern Peninsula region, fuelled by the spectacular scenery of the Escarpment cliffs, the clear waters of Georgian Bay and Lake Huron, fascinating flora and fauna, mysterious caves and well preserved shipwrecks. Many also travel through to reach the Chi-Cheemaun ferry service. The first Tobermory-Manitoulin ferry, the Kaga-wong, could carry only eight vehicles. Today, the Chi-Cheemaun carries on average 260,000 passengers a year.



Nature-based tourism is an important industry on the Northern Bruce with thousands of visitors exploring the national park and other areas each year.



The treacherous waters around the Peninsula have led to many shipwrecks and a fascinating maritime history. Fathom Five National Marine Park located off the tip of the Northern Bruce Peninsula, helps to protect this legacy. Above: Cove Island lighthouse.

One of the key attractions for Peninsula visitors is Bruce Peninsula National Park. Established through an agreement between the federal and provincial governments in 1987 and encompassing the former Cyprus Lake Provincial Park and other provincial lands, the park attracts an average of 74,000 overnight campers and roughly 35,000 day users each year. Camper nights at the park grew steadily through the 1990s, increasing 38% between 1992 and 2000. It is estimated that as many as 900 people a day visit the park's No. 1 attraction – the Grotto – in peak season.

The establishment of the park sparked much debate and discussion among residents of the northern Bruce during the late 1980s. One result was that areas planned for inclusion in the former Lindsay Township were dropped from consideration. The final park boundaries encompass an area of approximately 156 square kilometres, but currently there are significant private land holdings within these boundaries (covering about one-fifth of the park's area). (All lands identified for inclusion in the park are to be acquired only on a willing-seller, willing-buyer basis, which means the park will not expropriate land and private landowners are not required to sell to Parks Canada.)



Overuse of popular areas is a major concern for park staff.

As a park established within a settled landscape, Bruce Peninsula National Park in many ways represents a series of ecological compromises, with straight line boundaries that do not reflect ecosystem or species population boundaries, a major highway running through the centre of the park, and pre-existing uses like snowmobile trails, that are not usually allowed within national parks.

As of 2003, 22% of land within the park boundary was privately owned, 37% was owned by Parks Canada and 32% was provincial land managed by Parks Canada under agreement with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Seven percent is inland waters (lakes and streams). (See map on page 15.)

Parks Canada

The result is that, almost 20 years after its establishment, Bruce Peninsula National Park is still a work in progress, but one that has been increasingly embraced by both local residents and visitors. A park survey of Bruce County residents found, for example, that 73% of respondents felt that the most important role of the park was protecting the natural environment. Sixty percent of the local residents surveyed had visited the park in the previous year. Meanwhile, it is estimated that close to 10 million people now live within a four-hour drive of the park and, of current visitors, close to half have visited more than once. The beauty of Bruce, it seems, is a powerful drawing card.

Figure 2.1 — First Nations Territories



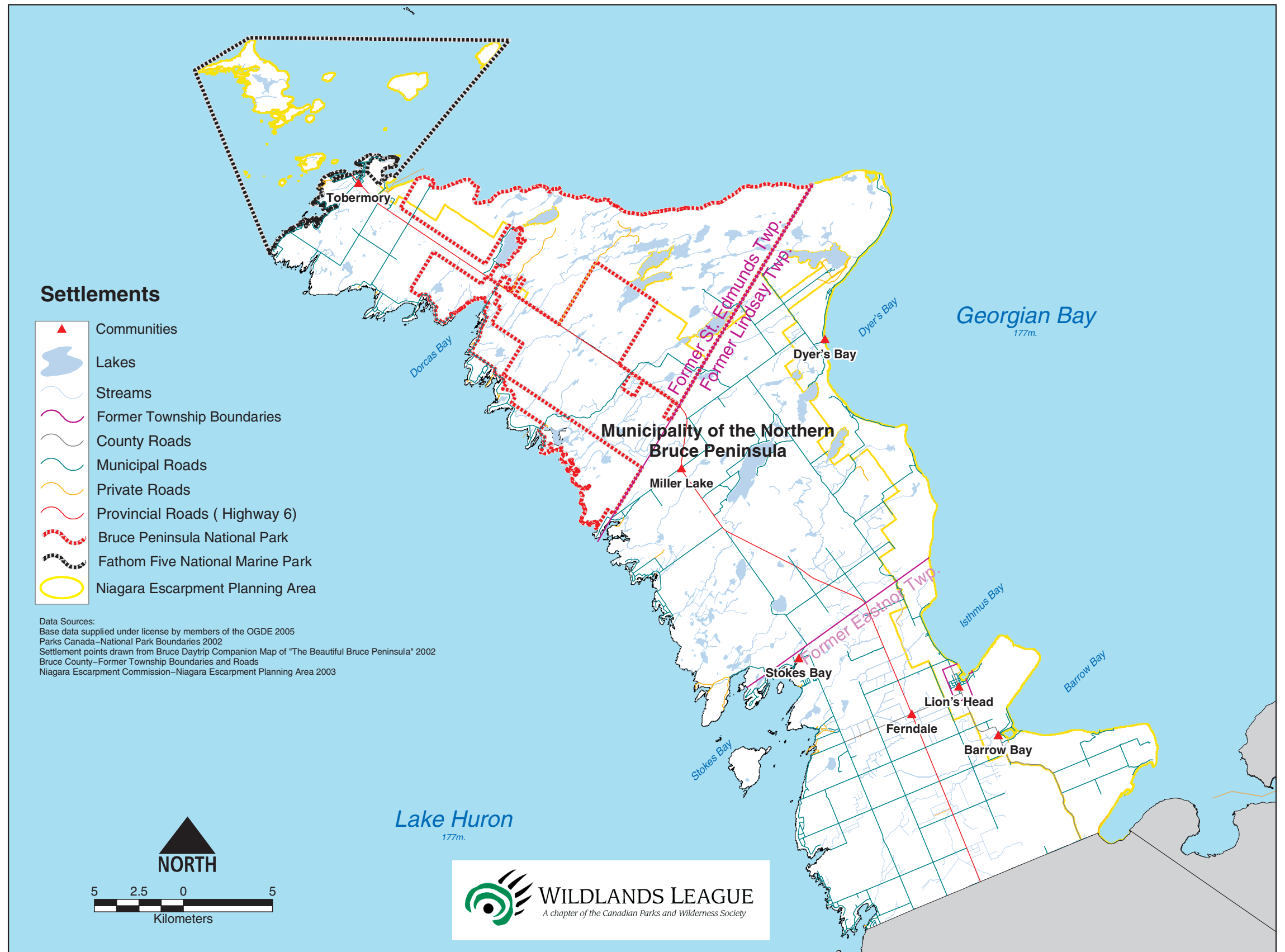
Figure 2.1 is based on the traditional knowledge of the elders of the Saugeen Ojibway Nations and current research. It shows the territory and treaty areas of the Saugeen Ojibway peoples, who have inhabited the Bruce Peninsula and areas to the south of it for thousands of years. Saugeen Neyashing translated means "homeland of the Saugeen Nations, this beautiful land partially surrounded by water." As well as current reserve lands, the Saugeen Ojibway Nations (composed of the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation and the Saugeen Ojibway Unceded First Nation) share a hunting ground known as Nitaage-kamiing, which is bounded on three sides by the national park. The First Nations collectively launched a land claim in 1994 for part of their traditional territories, claiming breach of trust by the Canadian government in meeting its obligation to protect Aboriginal lands. The claim seeks return of lands that remain unsold and financial compensation for the loss of use of the peninsula.

	Aboriginal Title claim area		The islands around the Peninsula were subject to various treaties but many small islands on the Lake Huron side were returned to the First Nations in 1980
	Treaty 45 1/2 (1836) area	<i>Ojibway Names</i>	
	Treaty 67 (1851) area	<i>Neyaashiinigaamiing = Cape Croker</i>	<i>Saukiing Neyashiing = now Bruce Peninsula</i>
	Treaty 72 (1854) area	<i>Kookookoo-Miinis = Hay Island now Owl Island</i>	<i>Nitaage-kamiing = Hunting Grounds</i>
	Treaty 82 (1857) area	<i>Paagwaumgwut / Paagwaumquit = Shallow Lake</i>	<i>Manidoomiinising / Odawa-miinising = Manitoulin Island</i>
	Treaty 93 (1861) area	<i>Saugdawong = Place of the River's Mouth now Southampton</i>	<i>Waaboozhoo-Miinis = Rabbit Island</i>
	First Nations' lands 2004	<i>Giigonke Piinsaugen = Fishing Islands</i>	<i>Notchi-mawaniing = Hunter's Point</i>
		<i>Chi-sintub'dik = Big boulder turning over now Tobermory</i>	<i>Naamewikwedong = Sturgeon Bay now Colpy's Bay</i>
		<i>Sintub'dik = Little Tub now Cape Hurd</i>	<i>Chi-wikwedong = Big Bay now Owen Sound Bay</i>
		<i>Chi-Mookmaunkiing = Land of the Big Knives now United States of America</i>	

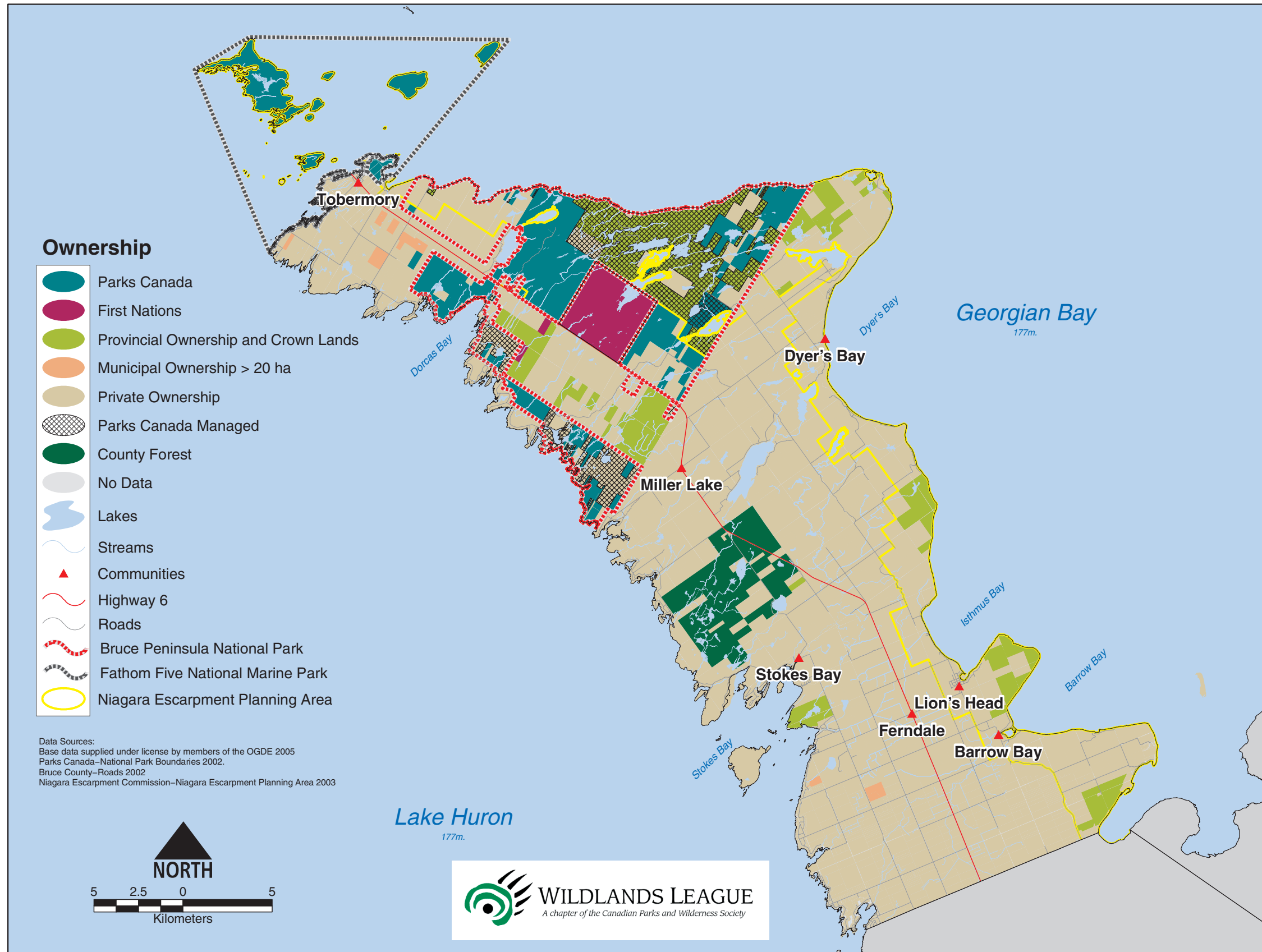
Illustrative map kindly provided by the Saugeen Ojibway Nations (Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation and Saugeen First Nation). Map drawn by Polly Keeshig-Tobias. Anishnabemowin names from Saugeen Ojibway First Nations elders.

Map 2.1 — Settlements of the Northern Bruce Peninsula

There are no major urban centres on the Bruce Peninsula, but rather a mixture of towns and hamlets. The Bruce County official plan sets out a goal of generally preserving the rural character of the county, while steering population growth to identified population centres. On the northern Bruce, these centres are Tobermory and Lion's Head. Overall, the population of Bruce County is slowly increasing, but income levels remain below the provincial average and the average age of residents is higher than the provincial median.



Map 2.2 — Land ownership of the Northern Bruce Peninsula



There is a complex mix of land ownership on the northern Bruce Peninsula, including within Bruce Peninsula National Park itself. Large public landholdings include lands owned by Parks Canada, provincial park lands, provincial crown lands, and county forests. Lands within the boundary of Bruce Peninsula National Park include lands owned by Parks Canada, provincial lands managed by Parks Canada, and private lands that are outside of Parks Canada's control. The intent is for Parks Canada to eventually acquire all lands within the boundary of Bruce Peninsula National Park, but this will be done only on a willing seller-willing buyer basis in the case of private lands.

As of 2003, 22.1% (34.5 km²) of the land within the BPNP boundary was under private ownership, 37% (57.7 km²) was owned by Parks Canada and 32% (50 km²) was managed by Parks Canada under agreement with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Seven percent was inland waters (lakes, rivers, etc.).

