



The Attawapiskat River

*One of North America's Last Great Rivers
is on the Cusp of Major Change*

May 9, 2013

By CPAWS Wildlands League

NOTE: WE'VE HAD REQUESTS FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR ATTAWAPISKAT MAP. THIS PRESENTATION IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE FURTHER DETAIL AND BACKGROUND ON OUR CUMULATIVE DISTURBANCE IN THE ATTAWAPISKAT RIVER WATERSHED MAP.

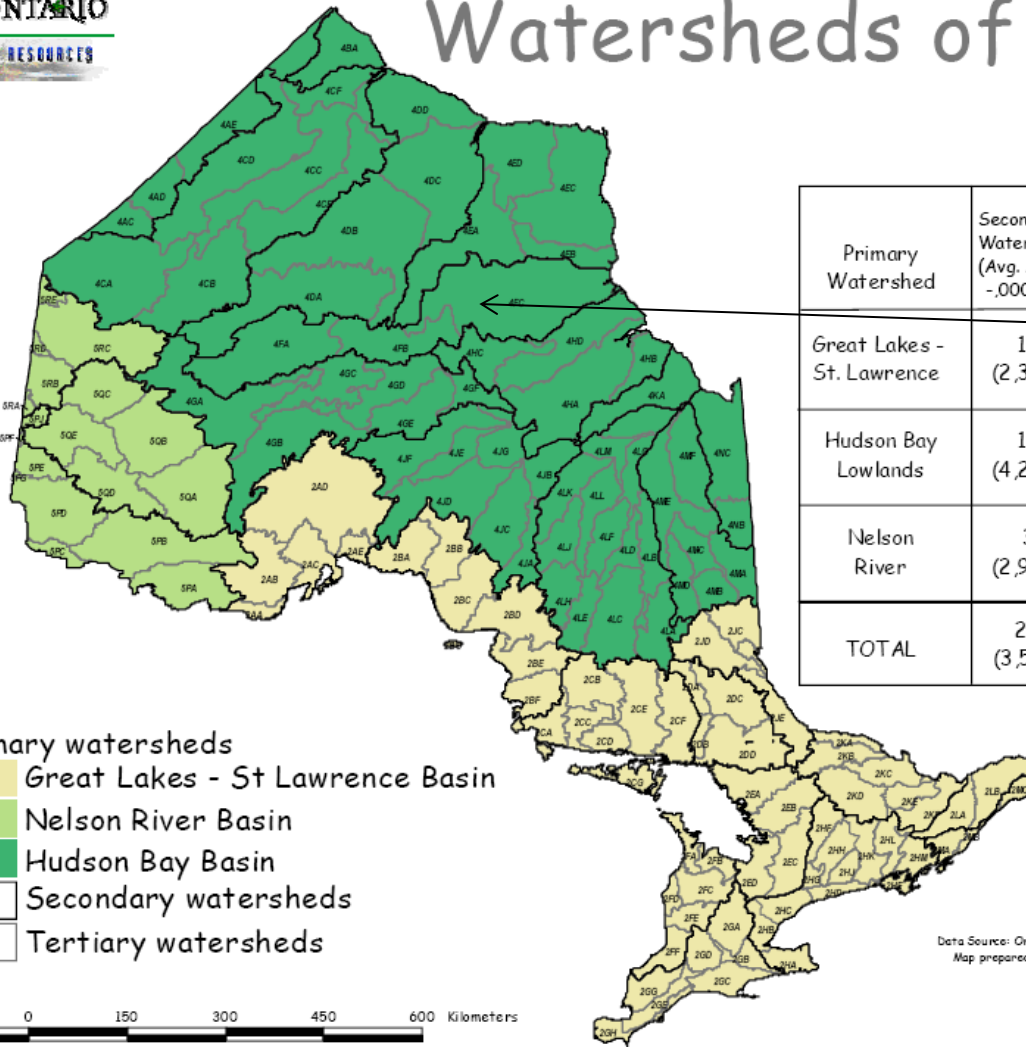
www.wildadnsleague.org

Who we are: Wildlands League

- a charity; a not-for-profit organization
- work in the public interest
- solutions group; we work with provincial and federal governments, First Nations, industry, concerned citizens, communities, media, scientists etc.
- John's blog *Noopemig*
<http://noopemig.blogspot.com/>



Watersheds of Ontario



Primary Watershed	Secondary Watershed (Avg. Area -000 ha)	Tertiary Watershed (Avg. Area -000 ha)	TOTAL AREA (000 ha)
Great Lakes - St. Lawrence	12 (2,324)	67 (416)	27,888
Hudson Bay Lowlands	13 (4,207)	59 (981)	58,898
Nelson River	3 (2,905)	18 (611)	11,623
TOTAL	28 (3,514)	144 (683)	98,409

The Attawapiskat River watershed.

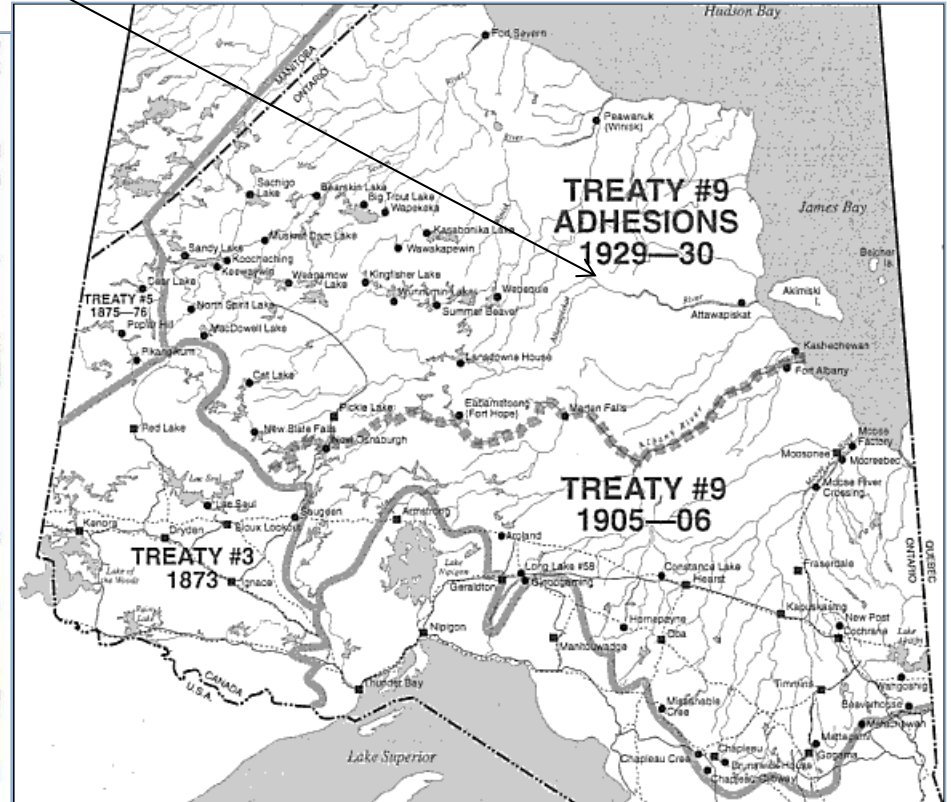
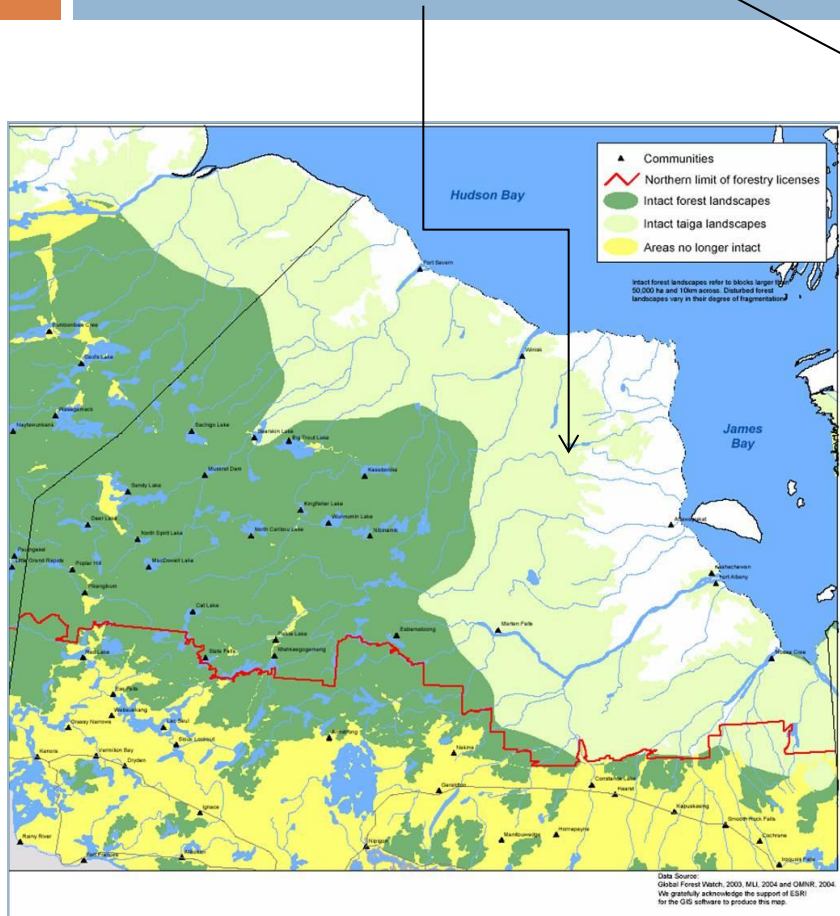
- Primary watersheds
- Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Basin
- Nelson River Basin
- Hudson Bay Basin
- Secondary watersheds
- Tertiary watersheds

Data Source: Ontario Hydro EDSS Digital Database
 Map prepared by the Lands & Waters Branch.
 June 13, 2000

Good resource:

<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/programs/3585e01.pdf>

The Attawapiskat River is located in the Boreal Region of Ontario in the territories of indigenous peoples of Treaty 9 Adhesions.

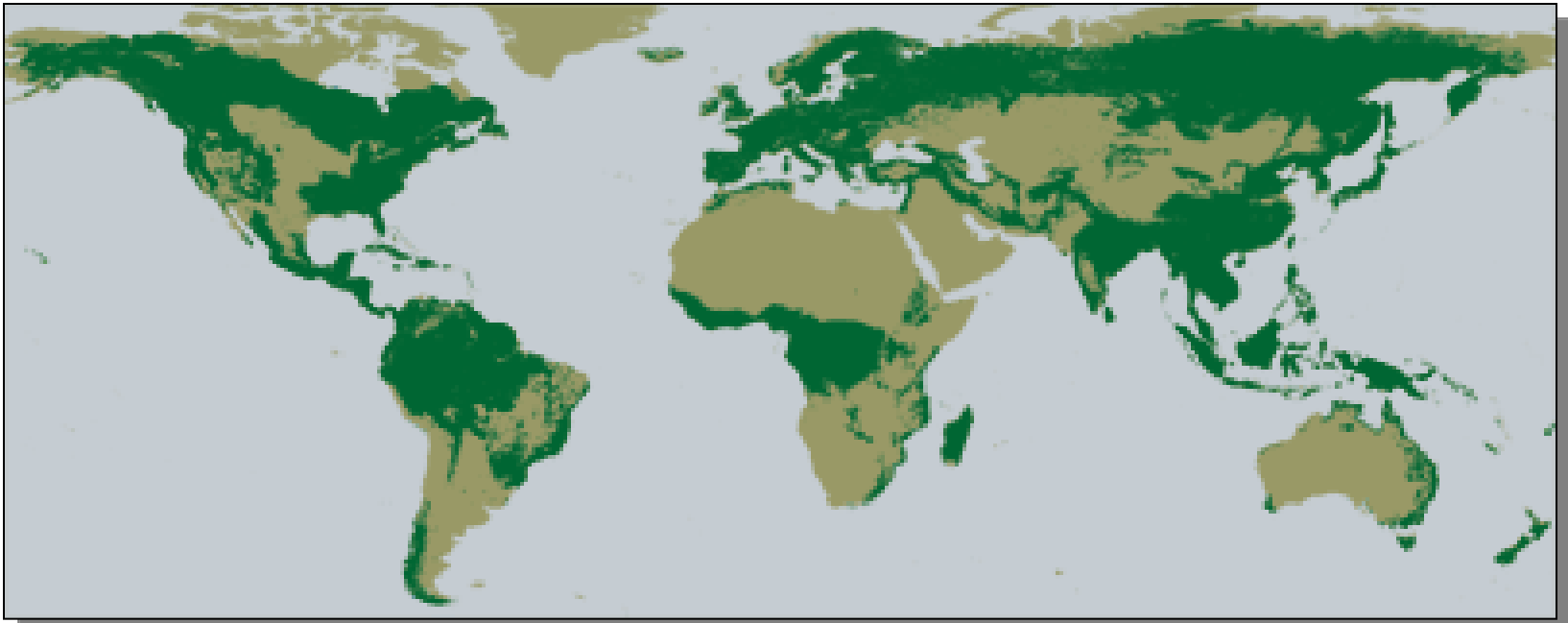




Just how important is the part of
Ontario to the planet?

The next slides tell a little known story...

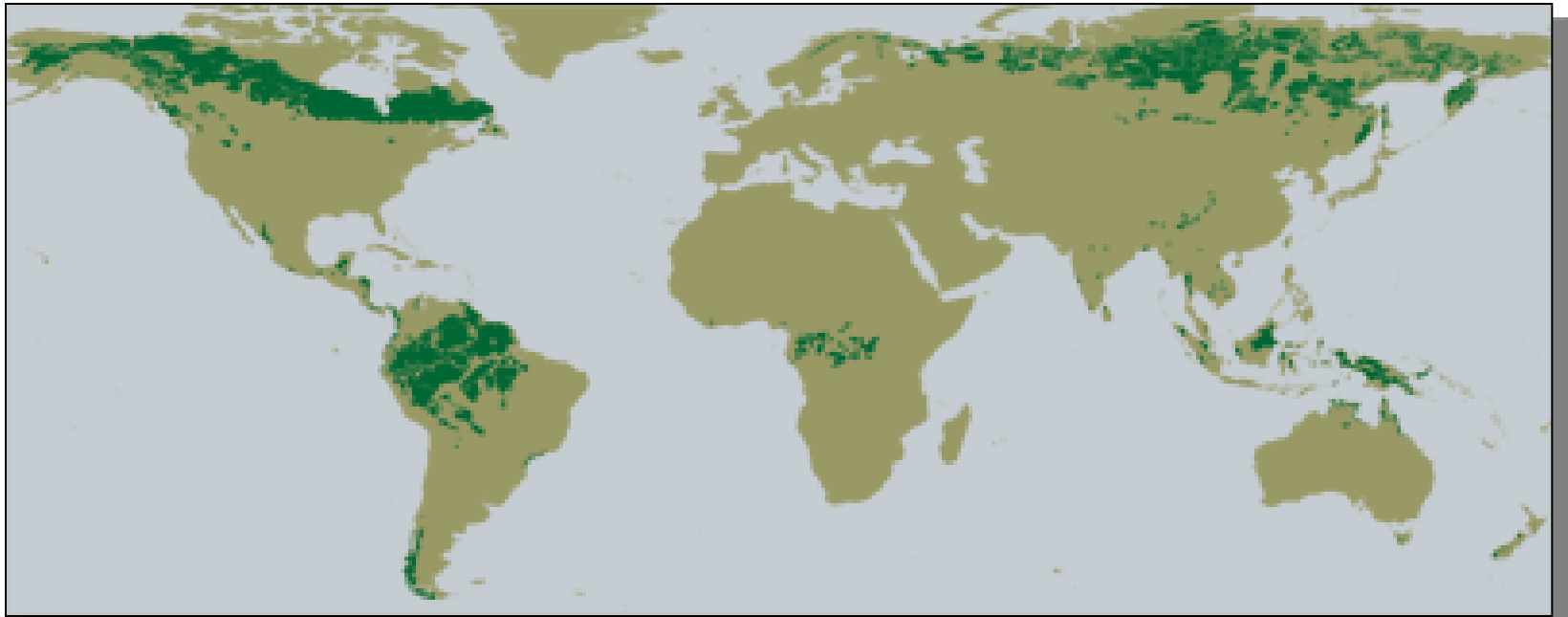
World Forests



World Resources Institute

Original Forest Cover(6000 years ago)

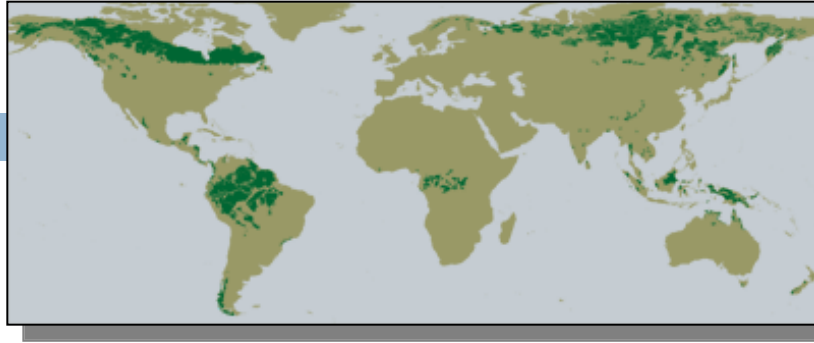
World Forests



World Resources Institute

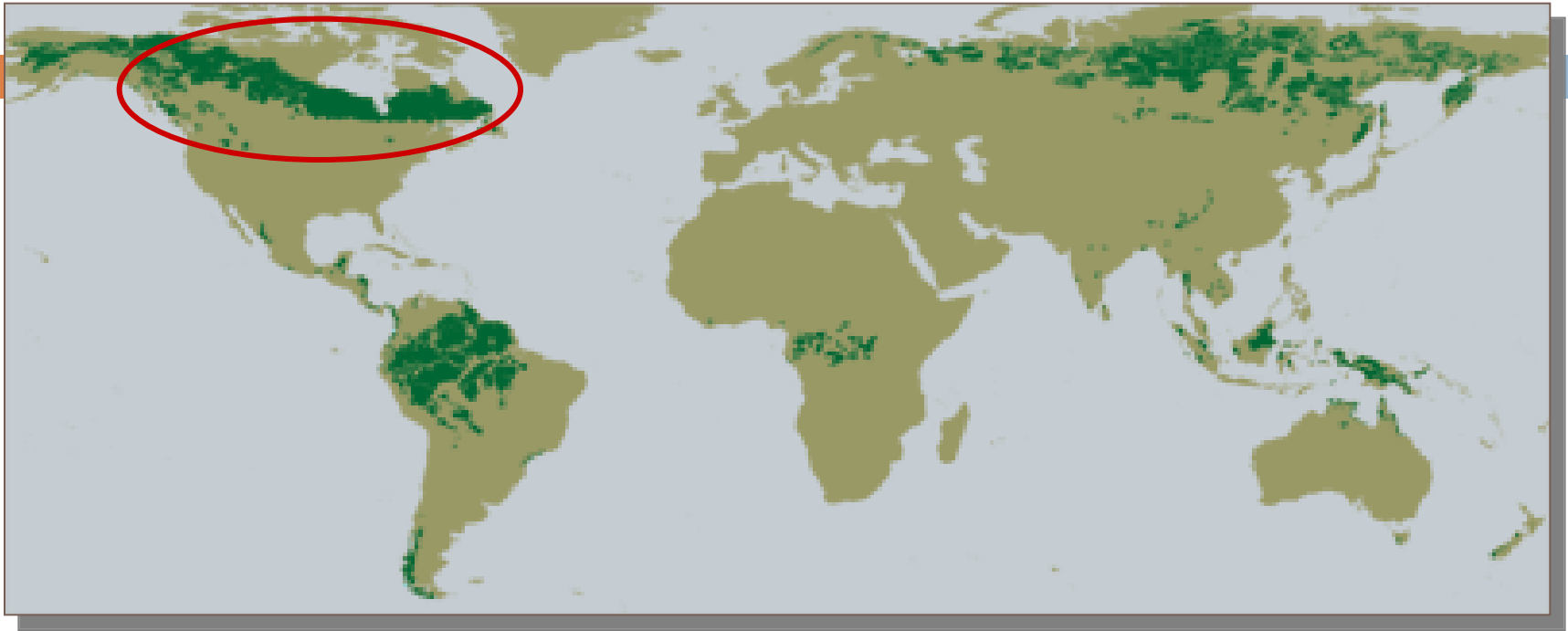
Remaining Frontier Forests

Remaining Frontier Forests



“frontier forests – large, ecologically intact, and relatively undisturbed natural forests – are likely to survive indefinitely without human assistance. Within these forests, natural ecological and evolutionary processes will continue to generate and maintain the biodiversity upon which we all rely. Frontier forests also contribute a large portion of the ecological services – such as watershed protection and climate stabilization – that make the planet habitable. And they are home to many of the world’s remaining indigenous peoples.” (<http://www.wri.org/publication/last-frontier-forests>)

Remaining Frontier Forests



World Resources Institute

You can see that Canada's boreal forest region is one of the last remaining intact forests left on the planet. The Attawapiskat is within it in Ontario.



WILDLANDS LEAGUE
A chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society

The Boreal Region stores more fresh water in its lakes and wetlands than any other terrestrial system on Earth.





and is made up of just as much water as
it is trees.



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Scientists tell us that 5 of the remaining 12 undammed and unregulated rivers left in North America (south of 55 degrees) are in the far north of Ontario.

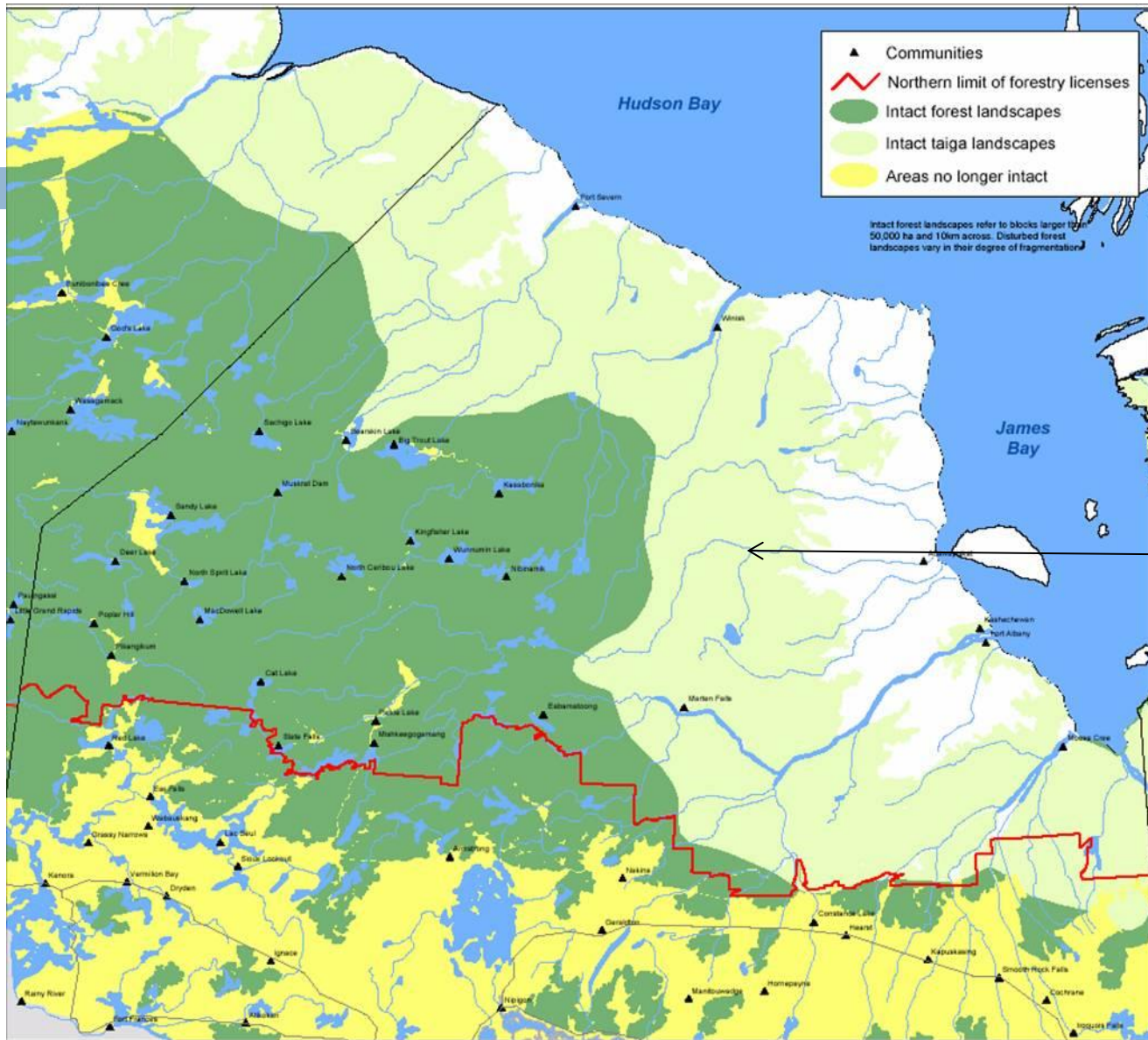


And the Attawapiskat is one of them.



The other four are the Ekwan, Severn, Winisk and Albany.





The Attawapiskat River watershed is largely intact and is located in what is called Ontario's Far North.

Data Source:
 Global Forest Watch, 2003, MLI, 2004 and OMNR, 2004.
 We gratefully acknowledge the support of ESRI
 for the GIS software to produce this map.





where local communities hunt, fish and trap. Communities say they need sustainable livelihoods.



It's home.



Important sanctuary for migratory birds

- ❑ Breeding grounds of 30% of all landbirds in CAN and USA
- ❑ 40% of waterfowl
- ❑ 1-3 billion landbirds breed in the boreal region
- ❑ Sparrows, warblers and thrushes account for more than half

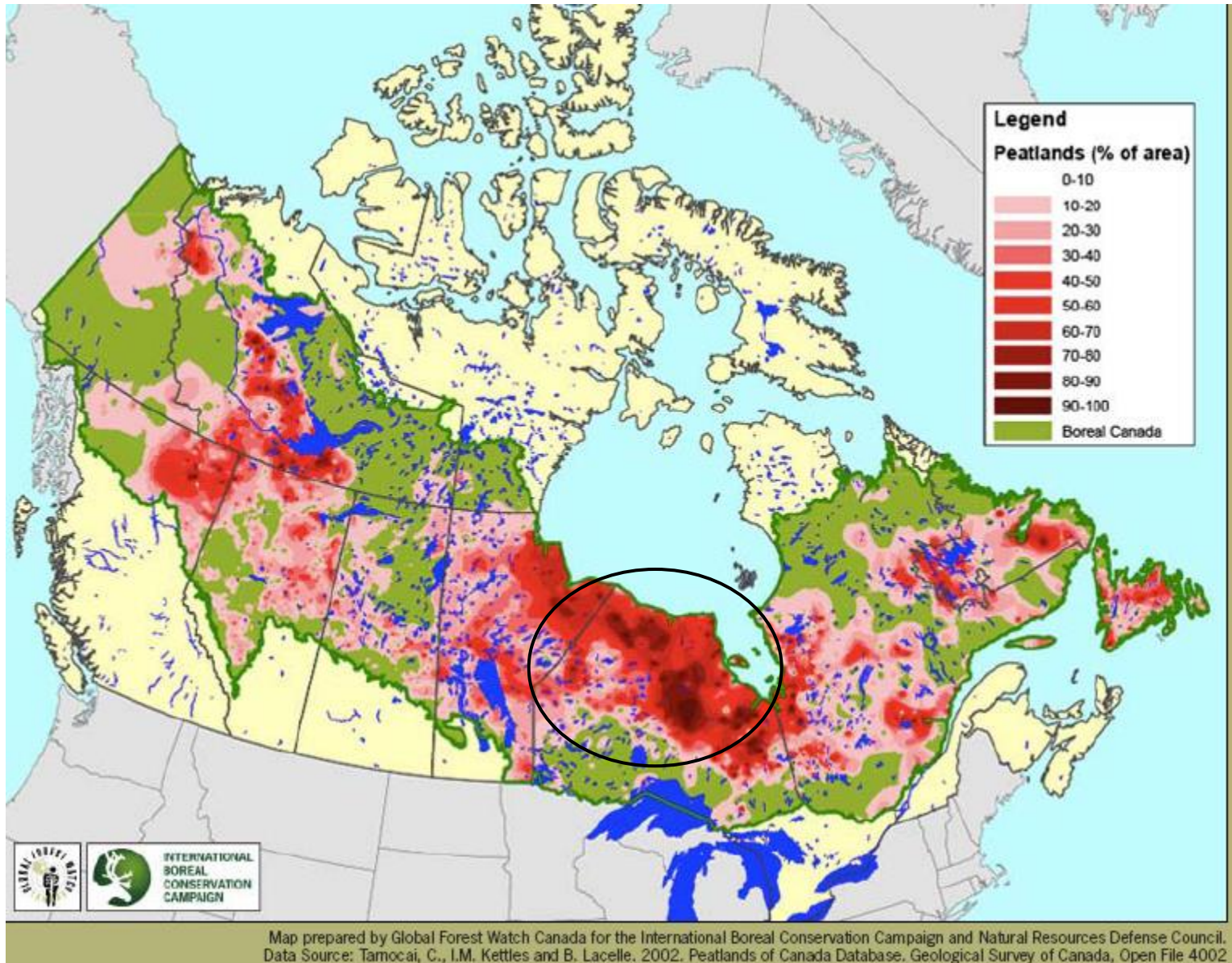




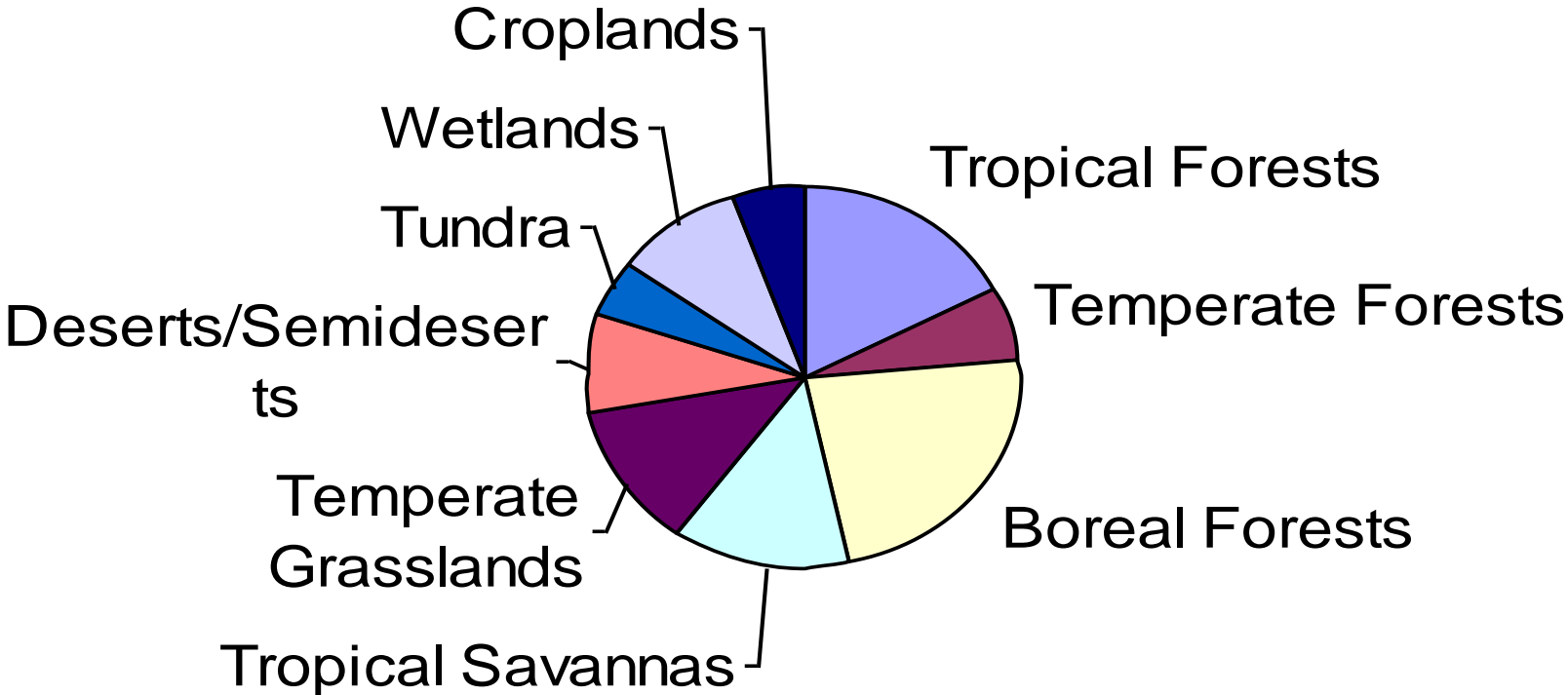
***provides
important
habitat for
wildlife**

**Caribou-a species at risk
in Ontario and Canada**

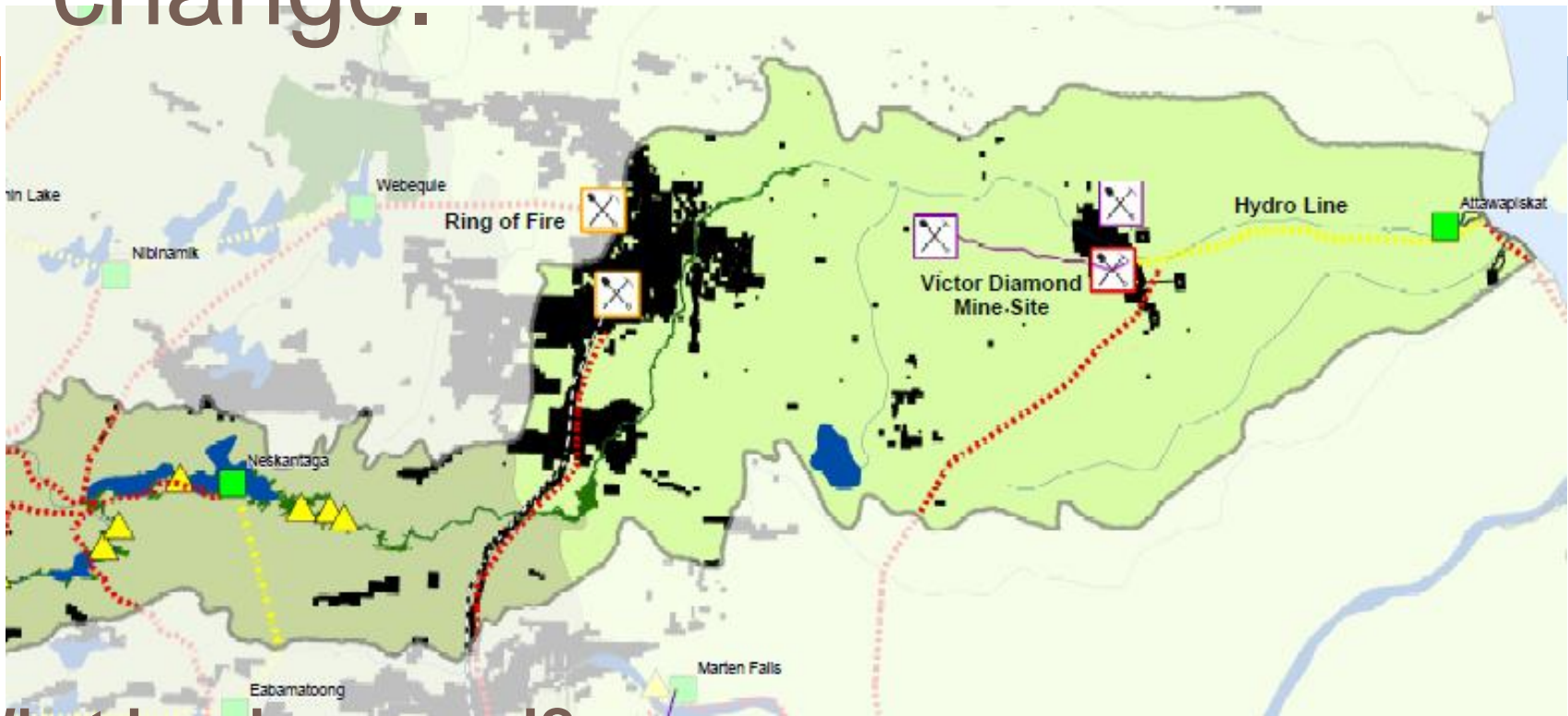
And very important in terms of carbon stored



Total Carbon Stored in Terrestrial Ecosystems



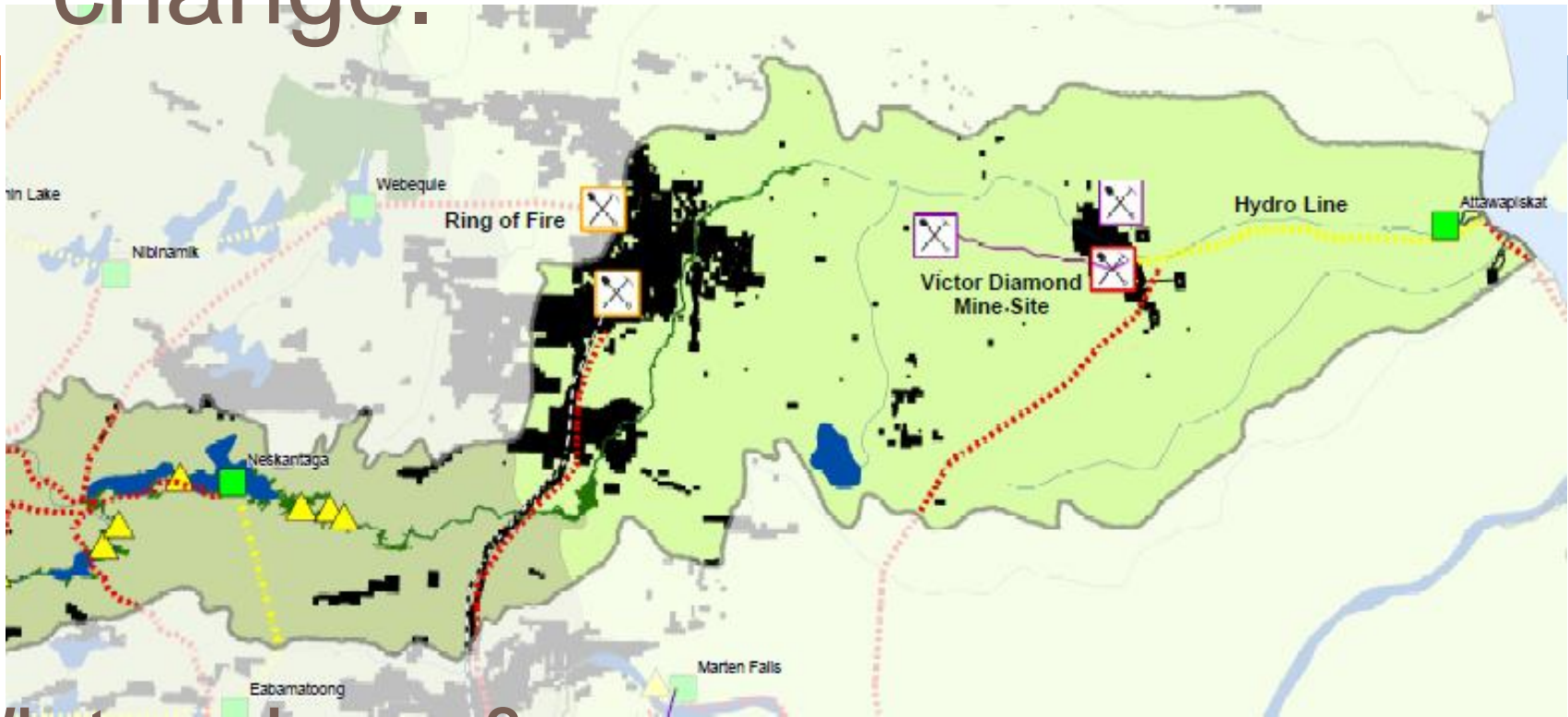
It's on the cusp of major change.



What has happened?

- Lots of claims have been staked (see black above)
- One mine is built already (Victor Diamond Mine)
- More are being planned near Victor and new ones are being proposed in the Ring of Fire with roads.

It's on the cusp of major change.



What may happen?

- ❑ Many new mines built
- ❑ New roads and new transmission lines
- ❑ But without doing a proper regional EA first

But how much mining & roads & infrastructure can a watershed withstand?



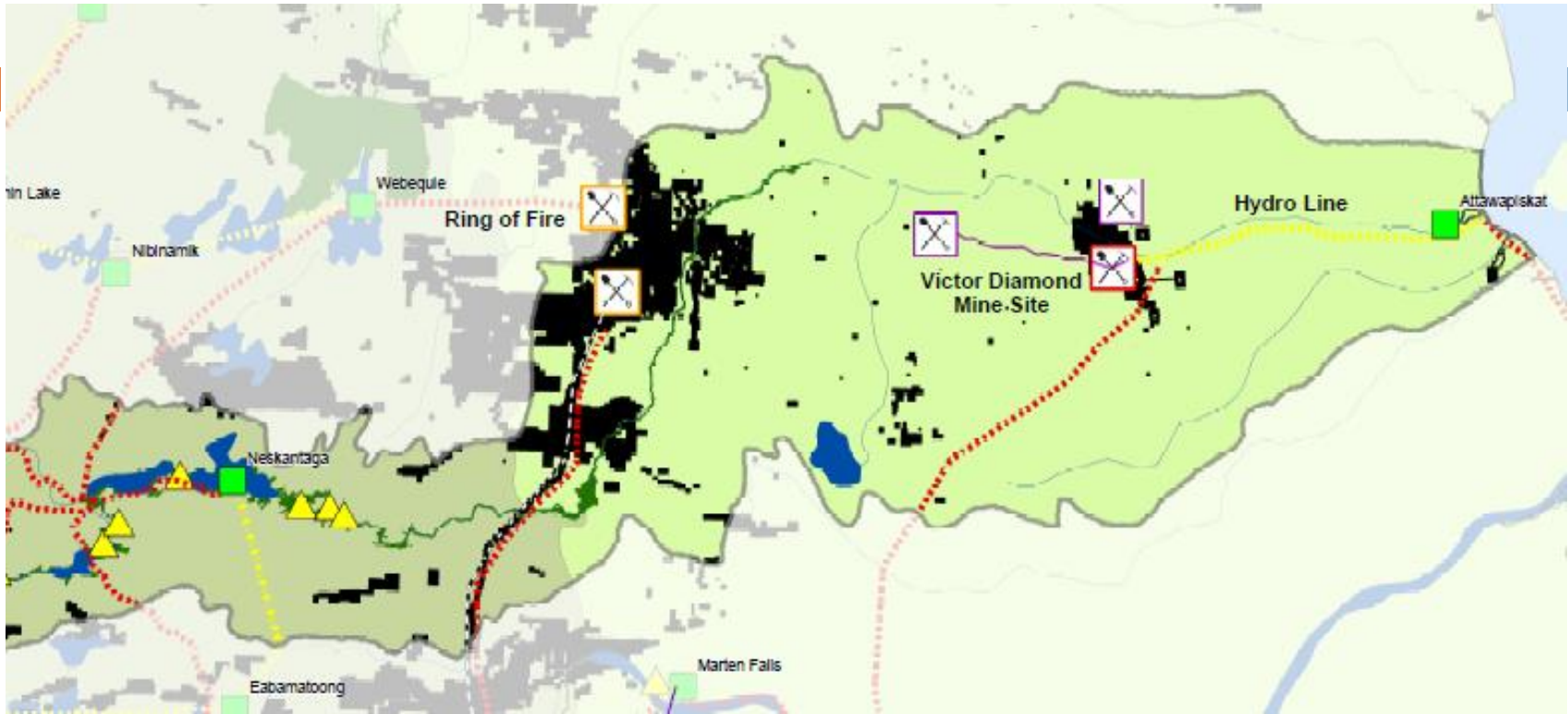
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Well scientist aren't sure. Shouldn't we all find out?



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Our latest map



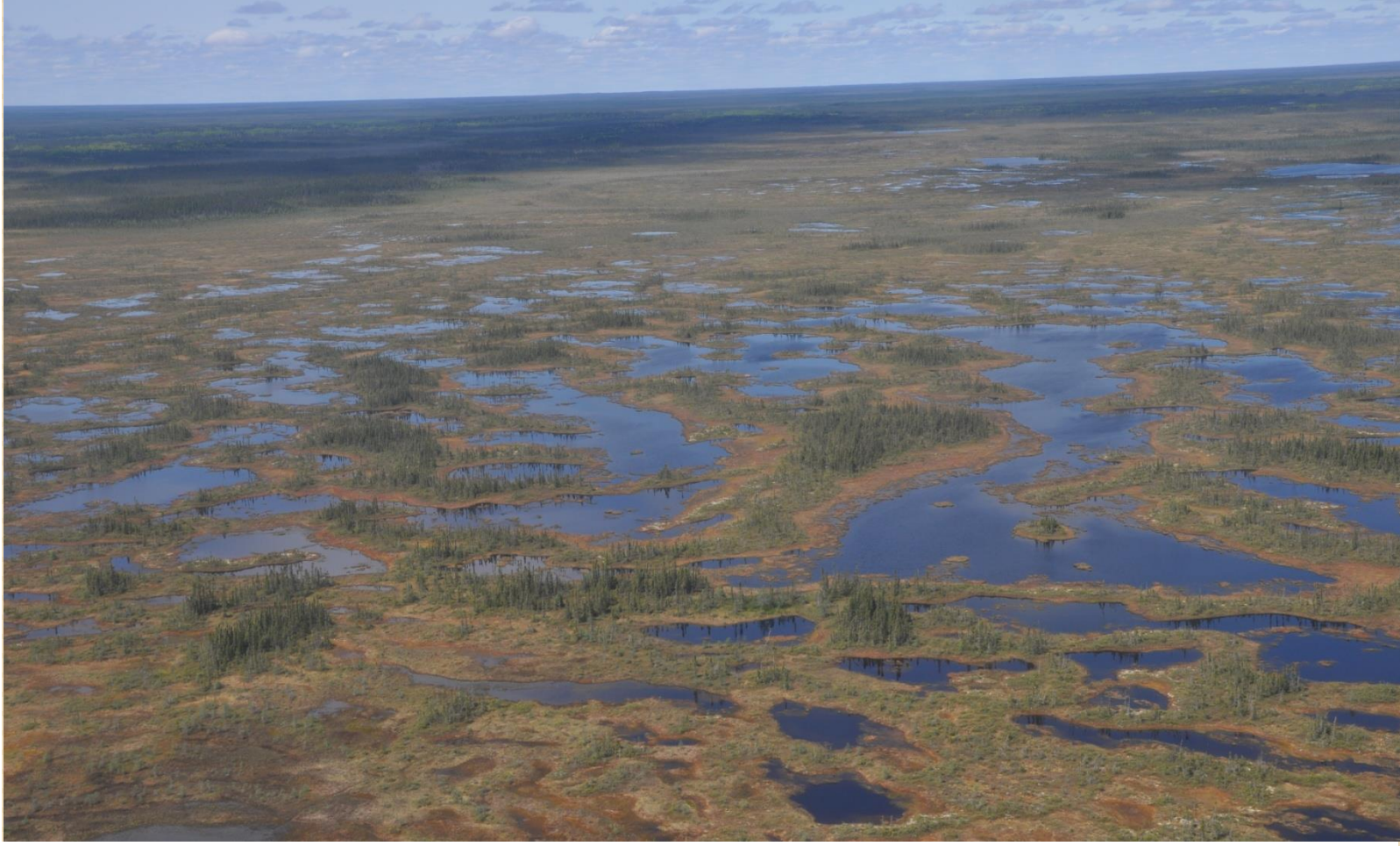
on cumulative disturbance in the Attawapiskat watershed.

To our knowledge this is the first time anyone has done this type of mapping on the Attawapiskat.



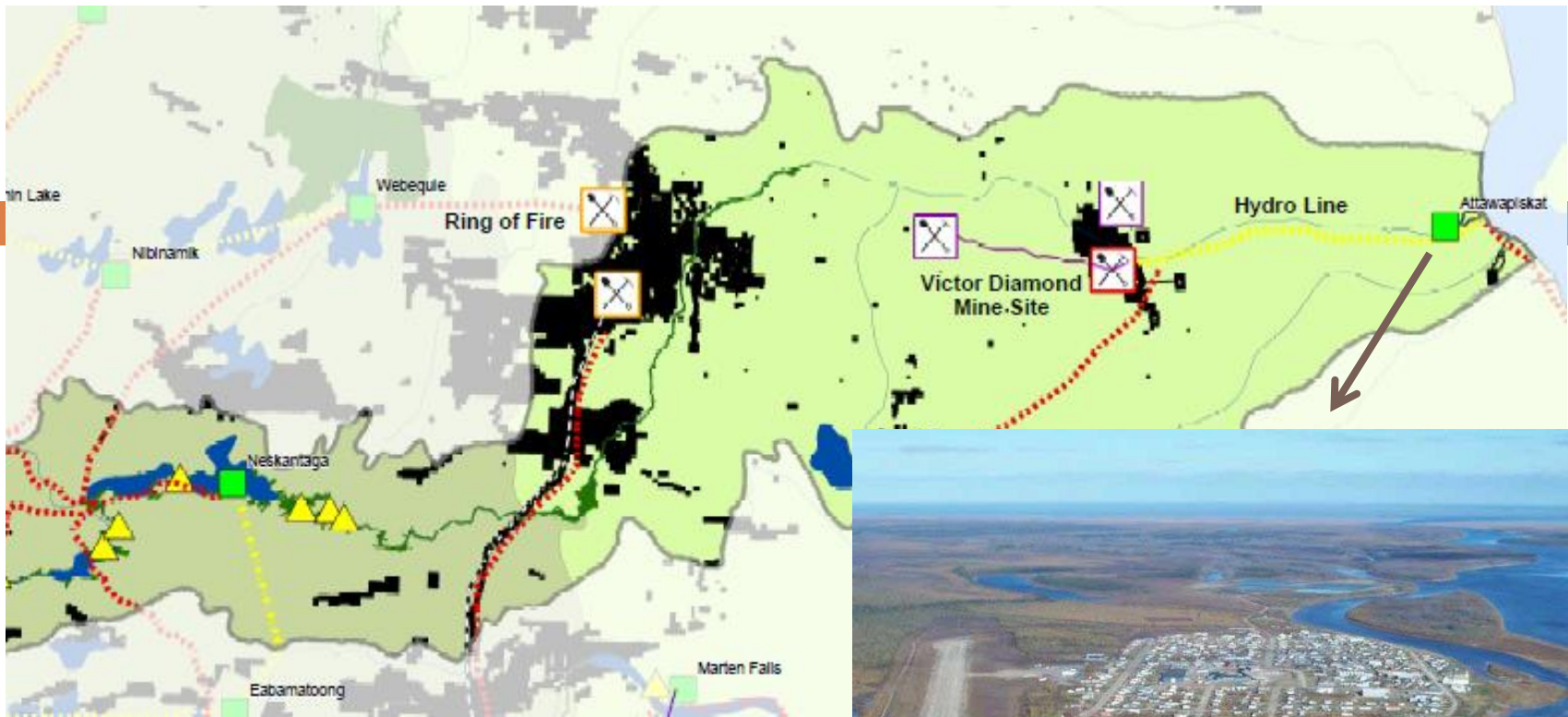
Why did we do it?

The purpose is to support a dialogue occurring in indigenous communities, tribal councils and across Ontario about the need for watershed protection and stewardship as well as inform conversations around infrastructure and mining development associated with the Ring of Fire.

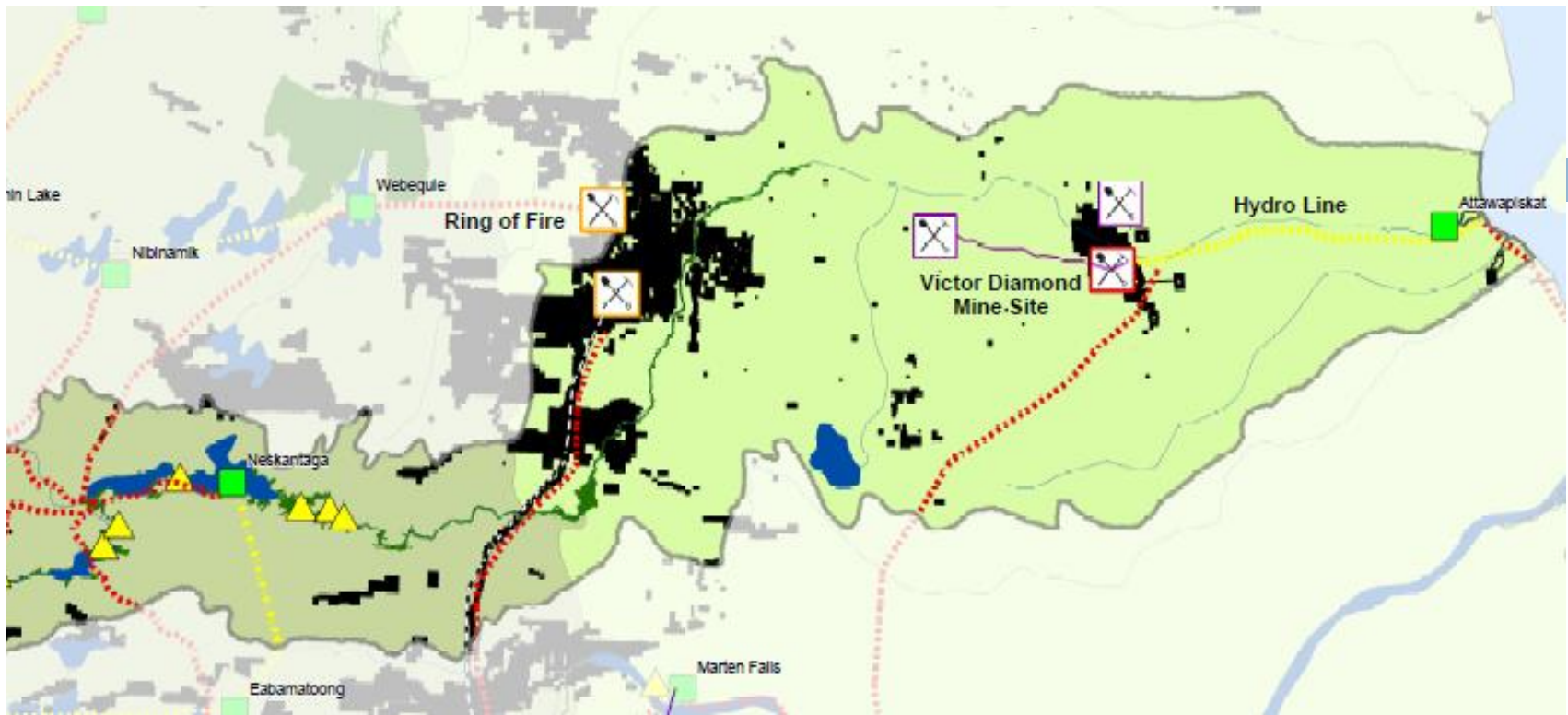


We hope it helps support a conversation about the health of the Attawapiskat River Watershed

Especially as it relates to new mining in the Ring of Fire and further downstream near the Victor Diamond Mine.



Here's one community that lives at the end of the River. The community of Attawapiskat is located downstream near where the river meets James Bay.



Approximately half of the Attawapiskat River is in the Boreal Forest, the other half is in the Hudson Bay Lowlands. The place where these two meet is very important.

Making watershed protection a key objective

Know your watershed(s).

- What watersheds will be impacted by the proposed developments?
- What is the current state of your watershed(s)? This is where our cumulative disturbance map might help as a first snapshot of the Attawapiskat watershed.
- Baseline data:
 - how intact or disrupted is your watershed now?
 - document current uses and users
 - fish abundance and diversity
 - methyl mercury levels [in rivers and fish before any further land use changes



- Use watersheds as a natural boundary for planning
- We advise communities to plan together at the watershed scale in addition to a fine filter approach at the local scale



Key element for good planning and for any EAs-minimize the creation of new permanent linear disturbances



Cumulative impacts assessment is needed

- Plan at the landscape level
- Coordinate all potential industrial uses to make sure to minimize opening up of intact forests
- Use areas already fragmented for major infrastructure
- Be intentional about keeping areas remote otherwise fisheries values, habitat etc will be compromised
- Examine the cumulative impacts of any new line (rail, transmission, road) + the industry (mining, hydro,) it is intended to facilitate



The Attawapiskat River is one of North America's Last Great Rivers. It's on the cusp on major change. The next few years hold the key to the long term health of this river.

Thank you. If you want more information about our mapping project or our work in the Ring of Fire please contact Anna at ext 47

Thank you!

