Image source: Res'eau WaterNet

Infrastructure Alone is Not Enough: Identifying
Gaps in the Literature Regarding First Nations
Water Governance

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Indigenous Water Governance

- ❖ Chronic drinking water quality problems in First Nations communities across Canada
- ❖ The federal government has committed to ending drinking water advisories in First Nations communities by the year 2021.
- ❖ This commitment includes funding allocations to improve infrastructure, operator training and supporting source water protection.

Image Source: Government of Ontario

Indigenous Water Governance

- ❖ Indigenous peoples often view water as a living entity or relative, not a resource which can be owned (*Wilson & Inkster, 2018*)
- ❖ Indigenous peoples have their own laws, systems, practices and beliefs for managing their relationship with creation / water
- ❖ Conflicting views between mainstream or colonial ideas of water and constraints of the Indian Act that governs First Nations communities limit First Nations ability to govern water
- ❖ Despite Aboriginal and treaty rights, and international commitments (UNDRIP) – many water related

Gaps in Indigenous Water Governance

- ❖ Federal funding, and provincial involvement, is overdue and necessary, but does not adequately address systematic issues underlying water problems
- ❖ Local water governance led by Indigenous communities can contribute to more effective, integrative and culturally appropriate water management

Image Source: LCI Magazine

Research Goals

- ❖ This research aims to identify gaps in the literature related to Indigenous water governance
- ❖ Specially this research aims to examine the impacts of policy and governance on current water problems
- ❖ Will examine current water governance frameworks within Indigenous communities
- ❖ Aims to add to the toolkit of solutions to address water insecurity within Indigenous communities

Implications for Rural Ontario

- ❖ Many Indigenous communities are located within rural remote areas of Northern Ontario
- ❖ Indigenous water governance is a rural Ontario issue.
- ❖ Indigenous communities themselves have similar characteristics to rural areas of Ontario
- ❖ Lessons from Indigenous water governance can also apply to those outside the community

Key Take Aways

- ❖ While federal policies and commitments are a step in the right direction, they do not holistically address the issues and history behind water issues within Indigenous communities
- ❖ By conducting an extensive review of the Indigenous water governance literature and policy, this research will identify gaps and provide additional options toward enhancing local water governance

Thank you.

Questions?