

Nawash-University of Guelph Research Partnership Transcript

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Who we are, our identity, it's tied up in the land, it's tied up in the water, it's tied up in the culture...

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it's tied up in the heritage and all those things interact, and we interact with on those levels...

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with the land and with the water.

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This is our land. This is where we're tied to. This is where our ancestors are buried.

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This is where they went into the ground.

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And you can't really talk about us giving up our plight so that we can become Canadian.

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Because they say well then you gotta give up all your land, you gotta give up who you are to become somebody else.

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I can see where non-native people are coming here, are coming from some place that they think is worse.

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They're coming to a better place.

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Where as if I give up my stuff, I'll be worse off.

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That's how I see it, anyway.

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Steve and I are doing research on Georgian Bay, but specifically on Colpoys Bay and Owen Sound.

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Owen Sound is of interest because the harbour has contaminants that are trapped underneath the sediment.

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So any dredging that could happen could release these sediments or re-suspend them, and they could travel...

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throughout the bay and affect the ecosystem.

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There's been barely any research at all in this area for the last 10 to 20 years.

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So we need to get some starting information before more industrialization is present here.

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So we're hoping to make doing research in this area an annual thing.

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So you can see things as they change and know how and what you need to respond on...

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and what you can do to help it.

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Doppler Current Profiler. It has three sonar heads on it.

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And what it does is it hangs off the buoy here and it emits sonar.

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And it picks up very tiny particles in the water column.

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And then for each metre of water it will give an estimate about the direction and the velocity of the water that's flowing.

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So these units are extremely helpful for telling us what's happening in terms of the water currents in the bays.

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And that specifically with regards to the contaminated harbour in Owen Sound...

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if there is any dredging, any resuspension of the contaminants

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then this unit will help us figure out where those contaminants are gonna go...

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by tracking those water currents and those water currents, they can change on a dime.

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We did point samples, one sample for each location...

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and then we have one series, we call it the temporal series

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where we went back three times so we could see how much variation there is over time.

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And this all just in one month. This is a very preliminary first cut.

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But it's the first time anybody has done it.

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I don't know if I mentioned, but do you see any other research boats out here?

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Filmmaker: "Negative."

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None. There are none.

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My name's Ryan Lauzon. I work for the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation as a Fisheries Assessment Biologist.

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I started a little over seven years ago.

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I can't speak for the two first nations but I believe they are tied directly to the land and water...

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as well as culture and so on goes.

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In order to protect their identity they need to understand what's going on in the territories and protect those rights and interests.

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Which is why I think they have such a strong interest in partnering with the University of Guelph.

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And developing those research programs.

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There's an increasing amount of development that's being proposed in the territory.

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And in order for the first nations to consult from a technical level...

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on those kind of projects they need to have that understanding from a scientific perspective...

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in what the affects may be of these different proposals.

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So, Western Scientists have a way of being and a way of thinking which in many ways, very...

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it's very intractable. It's very difficult to sometimes get a Western Scientist to explain their knowledge...

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and the process that they use to get that knowledge in ways that a non-scientist would understand.

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Where the indigenous communities, they need to explain themselves, their knowledge system, how it works...

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in a ways that a western scientist could understand.

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So, basically, the Nawash tasked me with the responsibility of...

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putting some serious effort into the development of functional, effective tools...

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for that reciprocal dialogue between the knowledge systems.

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You have your Aboriginal view, your political Aboriginal view that you're trying to put forward.

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And then you have a legal view, and you a science view.

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And so, you've got to try to make the most of the resources you have in terms of having the teams...

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to support what it is you think you want done.

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Whether you want to stop some project, be involved, minimize a project, make it a better project.

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So all those things have be unfolding at the same time, right?

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I'm not a specialist in indigenous knowledge systems...

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I'm a specialist in western science knowledge systems.

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But the strategic vision of the first nations in this regard, I think, is very progressive.

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Because they said, 'let's put our sponsored guy into a science faculty position

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and ask him to build back to us.

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We think it's important to have those people working on our side.

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Working with us.

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Even when they don't agree with us, then we have to go back and reassess what our thinking was.

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They're not gonna capitulate and give into your thought, you need to get to that right point...

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of saying 'Yeah. This is the right way to think about the situation.'

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So, they help bring us along in that sense as well...

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in that they're deeper thinkers and can get to that particular point.

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But, they still understand that we are somebody different and unique...

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and we need to be addressed in that aspect, in that way.

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You know, if the University (of Guelph) has this motto where they're about social justice...

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and bringing that all about through education so this project also works out to help them as well...

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in that they're trying to make impactful changes, educate the people in a proper way that would make long-term, lasting

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good human beings, and maybe bring about change and Canada is able to...

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everybody gets brought up to a level.

English (United Kingdom)