



# Community Wellbeing Pilot Project (Ring of Fire)



*Series on Indigenous Issues & Initiatives*  
May 7, 2018

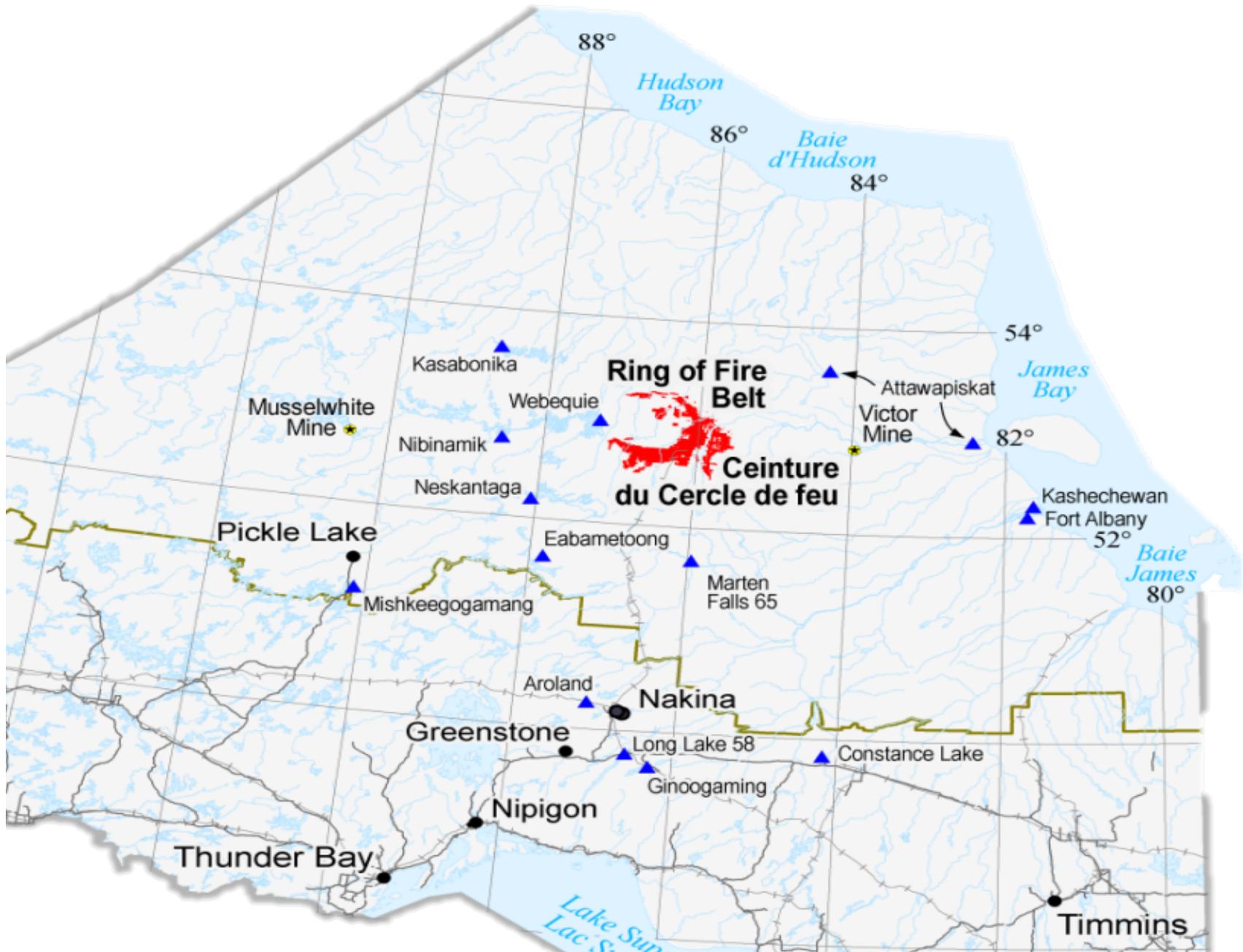




# Presentation Outline

1. Pilot project description and progress to date
2. Results of interim review
3. Lessons learned and future potential
4. Conclusion and next steps







# 1. Project Description

- On February 17, 2016, partners (Neskantaga, Webequie, Marten Falls, Canada, & Ontario) agreed to jointly test an innovative approach to community development focused on community-identified needs and priorities:
  - **Neskantaga: Housing, Water, Social Emergency\***
  - **Webequie: Housing, Education, Health\***
  - **Marten Falls: Housing, Education, Health\***
  - **Strengthening Financial Management and Governance emerged as a critical priority in the planning phase**
- \*Jointly address mental health and addictions (e.g. opioid crisis)*
- Overall project goals are to:
  - **Improve health and wellbeing of community members**
  - **Test place-based, whole-of-government, single-window approach**
  - **Assess effectiveness/adequacy of government responsiveness to needs of remote communities**
  - **Operationalize 'nation-to-nation' partnerships**
  - **Improve community readiness to direct and catch economic opportunities in Ring of Fire**



# 1. Project Approach

## Proof of Concept:

- Test ‘place-based management’ approach, and single-window federal funding, using horizontal authorities & flexibilities of Strategic Partnerships Initiative (SPI) program
- Jointly develop and implement community-specific action plans with clear targets & deliverables, with consolidated reporting to partners

## Key Partners:

- First Nations, INAC, CMHC, Health Canada, ESDC/Service Canada, Government of Ontario, Matawa Tribal Council/KKETS, NADF, and OGDs/NGOs/Industry where appropriate

## Process:

- Determine/agree on key objectives & deliverables for each priority, through **facilitated** planning and community engagement sessions, and supported by technical working groups

## Governance/Implementation:

- Chiefs/ADM oversight committee (including INAC RDG, Ontario Region)
- Director-level project lead (HQ), supported by regional project team and departmental program leads
- Activities undertaken within existing authorities, resources, and mandates
- SPI used to fill program & funding gaps and support project development costs

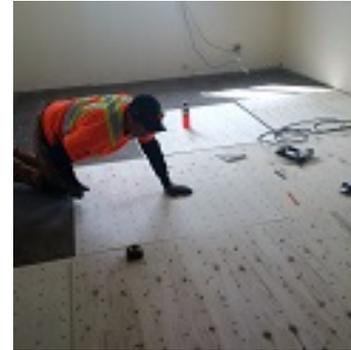


# 1. Progress: HOUSING

- ✓ **Comprehensive 2-Year Housing Action Plans** (co-funded by INAC & CMHC through B16), **were jointly developed with and are being implemented by all partners (ANNEX A)**
- ✓ **Each Plan focuses on:**
  - **Addressing Immediate Needs** (i.e. new construction, major renovations, emergency repairs, and trades training, & employment, project management/coordination) **and**
  - **Building a Sustainable Housing Program/Economy** (i.e. capacity & governance development, policy & program development, finance and administration, training, planning, & communication) ...
  - **...based on the unique needs and circumstances of each community** (i.e. based on what could realistically be accomplished within existing capacities, time frames, & constraints)
- ✓ **Immediate Needs activities are mostly on track or complete...** Despite compressed planning/implementation timelines, and ongoing capacity, funding, and remoteness challenges,
- ✓ **...while achieving targets for Building a Sustainable Housing Program/Economy are proving more difficult to achieve,** given complex human resource challenges & weak organizational capacity in each community
- ✓ **In comparison to NOT being able to ‘catch’ a similar funding opportunity in 2009/11** (i.e. INAC received \$400M/2yrs to address immediate needs but these 3 FNs were not able to build any new homes and collectively only accessed \$650K for repairs), **the Pilot project has enabled ...**
  - **Construction of 49 new units, major renovations of 38 units, and 1 training centre;**
  - **Community-based apprenticeship trades training, and local employment/business; and**
  - **Set the foundations for ongoing sustainability (i.e. self-financed social housing program)**



# Neskantaga





# Webequie





# Marten Falls





# 1. Progress: Financial Management & Governance

- ✓ **Leadership came to realize core organizational capacity and accountability is critical to overall community wellbeing**, including successful implementation of pilot project priorities
- ✓ **Neskantaga:** After 16 yrs, transitioned from co-managed to self-managed within 9 months; qualified for MLG to access CMHC S.95 program under **2-Yr. Housing Action Plan**; first-ever unqualified audit; on-track to exit DPM by Sept. 2018
- ✓ **Webequie:** Self-managed but ongoing capacity challenges; Leadership/staff retreats held; Financial and Human Resource Needs Assessments underway
- ✓ **Marten Falls:** Poorly performing RAA replaced; Finance, HR, Governance and Communication sub-committees (C/C) established; Financial needs assessment underway
- ✓ Moving towards **integrated** planning: Strategic Planning; Comprehensive Community Planning; Land Use Planning; & Infrastructure Planning

*"Three of our communities right now are involved in a pilot project, which is funded by INAC under the Strategic Partnerships Initiative. One of them, Neskantaga, has been under co-management for nearly 16 years now. In the past year, starting in June with this pilot project, we took a new approach in that the Department, along with ourselves at the tribal council and along with community leadership, formed a working group that met regularly to try to determine what was the best way to get them out of it.*

*The system hasn't worked. It's been 16 years of paying MNP and their predecessors a quarter of a million dollars a year of their band support funding. How are you supposed to get out of it? It's like you mentioned. It's going around in a circle down the drain.*

*Sixteen years is a long time, and the leadership has said it has to stop. We have to change as well, and it's going to take both sides. That's why we came together. In that time, they've hired a new band manager. They have adopted new financial policies, a new HR policy, a new organizational structure. They've met with their community continuously. They developed a new management action plan, and they have been de-escalated, and now they are managing themselves. We did that in less than a year.*

*It is because of this funding. It's given us the flexibility, and that's what we need. You can't just say, okay, this is your education pot. This is your health pot. This is your band support funding pot, and you cannot mix, otherwise, you fall into default. Getting this sum of money has given us that flexibility to know where we can direct it. What we have accomplished in less than a year is pretty amazing, after 16 years of being in default.*

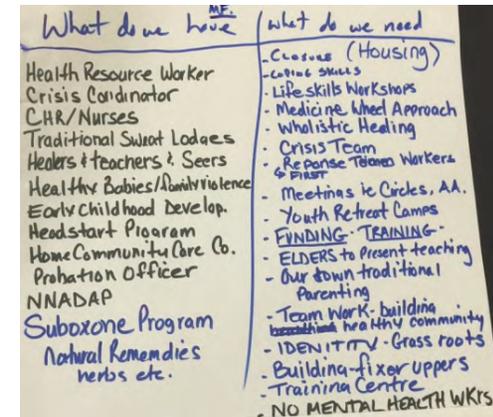
*We're just starting our second community, Marten Falls First Nation. Our third will be Webequie, and we're hoping to repeat that success. If this model works, why can't it be applied all across the country?"*

**Andrew Yesno, Matawa First Nations Management – testimony at Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, April 6, 2017**



# 1. Progress: Mental Health & Addictions (Suboxone)

- ✓ Addiction continues to deeply affect day-to-day life, presenting challenges for community leaders and staff, as well as individuals and families (e.g. employment, recruitment/retention, education, training, safety, etc.)
- ✓ Suboxone program (funded by FNIHB) helped stabilize opioid crisis but has become maintenance/replacement therapy instead of intended interim measure (i.e. 'tapering-off')
- ✓ Joint workshops (2) held in Spring 2016 to review existing activities/needs, and assess opportunities for community-specific and shared approaches
- ✓ Key areas of focus included case-management, resources (e.g. physical, HR, & financial), land-based/cultural healing, and clinical supports (e.g. service-delivery, aftercare, treatment)
- ✓ Agreed each community would focus on revising and enhancing existing plans, based on workshop results and additional community-level planning
- ✓ Webequie making progress on expanding aftercare program, land-based healing camp, and case management
- ✓ Neskantaga supporting housing trainees through existing PDA program resources





# 1. Summary of Key Accomplishments

- Much improved relationships and trust among all parties
- Integrated Housing plans = more homes built + cost savings through incorporation of all of the main elements of INAC & CMHC's B16 objectives/investments under one plan/project (e.g. 16 modulars=10 ISC +6 CMHC= 1 project)
- Employment and skills and training benefits [associated with housing investments] being captured/maximized at the community level – e.g. Native Residential Construction Worker Program launched with KKETS in Neskantaga
- An established process to improve housing governance in all 3 communities
- Detailed implementation planning and monitoring to ensure investments are realized in efficient and cost effective manner
- De-escalation of Neskantaga after 16 years under co-management, and established processes to strengthen core governance capacity and financial administration with the other 2 communities



## 2. Highlights of Interim Review

### Positive Aspects:

- Improved relationships/trust/awareness among all players
- Fresh yet long overdue approach for remote communities
- Role of a neutral facilitator/secretariat, and the Tribal Council
- SPI funding and authorities = flexibility and safe space to take risks
- Timing of B16 (early wins), and active participation of the Province
- Cost effective, and fits with Comprehensive Community Planning
- Expertise, flexibility, and dedication of project lead & team members

### Challenges:

- Difficult to shift beyond 'Funder-Recipient' relationship, and try something different
- Federal policies/funding processes ill-suited to place-based, single-window approach
- Availability of, and raised expectations for, additional funding
- Communications within federal family and within INAC have not been adequate
- Significant demands on people's time, particularly in the communities

*"this work has been a refreshing change... [it] provides greater job satisfaction, and we have surrounded communities with support where they lack expertise"*

*"the pilots have got us to think differently...and have helped us better understand the different strengths, limitations, and needs of the communities"*

*"SPI flexibility has allowed us to respond effectively to many situations facing the communities...[and] ability to roll over funding to next fiscal year has been a big plus"*

*"We don't have a shared understanding of community development and how we measure success"*

*"major problem is silos within INAC...switch from funder to enabler has not been easy for some"*

*"There is a false assumption that every community can self-organize around new funding opportunities, ... we expect them to respond based on 'our' needs, rather than the other way around"*



## 3. Lessons Learned

- A Place-Based , partnership approach has been the most important factor for producing concrete results
- Having a lead senior official (at the director level) with the proper skill set and experience is necessary to give communities the assurance that the government is serious, and to marshal interdepartmental and intergovernmental collaboration.
- Producing ‘early wins’ builds confidence in the process among partners
- A development approach focused on a community’s assets instead of its deficits also appears to be the most effective and sustainable approach
- Including credible, high functioning indigenous-led institutions (e.g. Matawa, NADF) is a must if development is to be sustained – may require more investments in regional institutions or creation of new ones
- Tackling challenges in governance and related management functions early on (i.e. organizational capacity) is very important for making progress on other priorities
- Something like the SPI program also appears to be critical; it provides the needed flexibility / authorities to create early successes and leverage inter-departmental/governmental collaboration
- A comprehensive community assessment should be a starting point for identifying and sequencing priority actions –depending on a community’s strengths, its own priorities, and institutional supports available; there is no ‘cookie-cutter’ approach for all communities, but early community ownership is vital



### 3. Opportunity for A Differentiated Approach

- The approach could be used to establish community development teams in each region, focused on systematically working through the list of communities at the **low end of the scale**
- The current 'funder-recipient' approach is insufficient for helping lift communities out of the poverty trap
- Additional investments, direct assistance, and wrap-around supports are needed to improve overall wellbeing

**First Nations CWBI Average = 59**  
**Non-Aboriginal CWBI Average = 79**

The Community Well-Being Index (CWBI) combines data on income, education, housing, and labour force activity into well-being "Scores" for communities in Canada

#### Community Well-Being Index 2011

(↑ = better wellbeing)

	Low 21-48	Medium 49-69	High 70-90	TOTAL
<b># of FN Communities</b>	108 (18.2%)	402 (67.7%)	84 (14.1%)	594
<b>Default Management</b>	29	20*   29	2	80
<b>Average Remoteness</b> (0 = least remote; 1=most remote)	0.52	0.47	0.32	
<b>Not Connected by Roads</b>	17.6%	8.2%	2.4%	

\*20 of the total 49 have scores between 49-52 (FNs Average = 59)



## 4. Conclusion & Next Steps

“These Pilots are a fresh approach for assisting communities in distress, many of which are remote. They represent a re-engagement by the federal government from principally arms-length funder to a developmental partner. The approach is in line with international development best practices for so-called ‘fragile states’ – i.e. Taking ownership and responsibility for its own development; instituting an integrated, holistic approach; developing genuine partnerships; having a results orientation; strengthening governance; and emphasizing importance of implementation and follow-up. These pilots are an impressive evolutionary step in developing a whole of government approach to community development”

- ***John Graham, Patterson Creek Consulting***

### Next Steps:

- Complete Implementation of Year 2 of Housing Action Plans, with particular focus on Capacity & Governance, and transition towards ongoing CMHC-funded, sustainable housing programs
- Complete the Youth Documentary Project (filming underway)
- Complete and secure funding for community plans for Prescription Drug Abuse
- Continue to implement Financial Management and Governance action plans
- Commence planning process for remaining community priorities –i.e. education, water
- Work with partners to choose 3<sup>rd</sup> party to conduct an independent evaluation of Pilot



## Annex A: Webequie First Nation

- 2-Day Planning Workshop held May 17-18, 2016
- 2 months for technical WG to finalize Action Plan, which was approved July 28, 2016
- Budget 2016-2018: **INAC: \$8.15M CMHC: \$3.22M TOTAL: \$11.37M**

### Key Deliverables

#### A. Home Building, Renovations, & Repairs

- Construct 2 INAC-funded fourplexes, (completed July/Aug 2017)
- Renovate 14 homes between March 2017-March 2018 (using one fourplex as transitional housing for renovation program), and complete emergency repairs to 10 homes
- Construct 5 CMHC-funded community homes (summer/fall 2017) and prepare for 10 INAC-funded prefab homes (2018/19) – **materials for renovations and 5 new units delivered on winter road**
- Assess, develop, and implement **training and skills development plan** so local members can **benefit from project-related employment/business opportunities**

#### B. Capacity Development & Planning

- **Hire Community Planner** to oversee coordination/completion of Capital Plan, Land Use Plan, housing assessments/database, Comprehensive Community Plan, and community engagement/communications
- **Establish Housing Committee** (governance) and **hire Project Coordinator** (management) to develop and implement Housing Maintenance and Rental programs (with training/development support from CMHC)
- **Engage accounting firm to track financial aspects of overall project**



## Annex A: Neskantaga First Nation

- 2-day workshop held in community Aug. 3-4, 2016
- 6 weeks for technical WG to complete plan, which was approved Sept. 21, 2016
- Budget 2016-2018: **INAC= \$4.29M; CMHC= \$3.51m ; ESDC= \$900,000 ; HC=\$30,000 TOTAL: \$8.73M**

### Key Deliverables

#### A. Home Building, Renovations, & Repairs

- Hire Project Manager and construct barrier-free INAC-funded sixplex for elders and members with mobility issues; construction on track to be completed by summer 2018,
- Renovate 12 homes between March 2017-March 2018 (using motel & teacherages as transitional housing for renovation program), and replace heating systems in 44 homes by March 2018
- Prepare for potential construction/renovation of 10 (5/5) CMHC-funded homes in spring 2018 (**secure MLG, purchase/ship materials, planning, etc.**)
- Assess, develop, and implement training and skills development plan so local members can benefit from project-related employment/business opportunities – **In-community training program for 12 apprentices under way with KKETS; rig camp for contractors / trainers delivered on winter road**

#### B. Capacity Development & Planning

- Establish Housing Committee (governance) and hire Housing Manager to oversee the management and administration of the community's existing housing program - which includes communications/engagement, and **revitalizing the rental and maintenance programs** (with training/development support from CMHC) – and the completion of NFN's Capital Plan
- Establish **Financial Management Working Group** with INAC to **exit Default Prevention Management and qualify for MLG**, as well as **engage external expertise to help manage the financial aspects of overall project**



## Annex A: Marten Falls First Nation

- 2-day workshop held Aug. 18-19, 2016
- Technical WG completed Plan in 2 phases; INAC worked with MFFN to address arrears and lift freeze on new connections imposed by Hydro One Remote Communities Inc.
- Budget 2016-2018: **INAC = \$5.08M CMHC= \$365,800 TOTAL: \$5.44M**

### Key Deliverables

#### A. Home Building, Renovations, & Repairs

- Phase I: Immediately complete construction of 4 unfinished homes and the community training centre (begun in summer 2015), and (Phase II) build 6 units in summer of 2017 [now 5 units, construction underway]
- Phase I: Renovate/convert 1 home into 2 units in winter 2016-17 (to provide transition housing for renovations); Phase II: renovate 10 homes between March 2017-2018; and (Phase I) inspect/remedy all homes for fire and safety – majority of materials for 17-18 season delivered on winter road
- Complete design and assessment work for future 14-lot subdivision and potential elders complex by 2018
- Assess, develop, and implement training and skills development plan so local members can benefit from project-related employment/business opportunities

#### B. Capacity Development & Planning

- Establish Housing Committee (governance) and hire Housing & Maintenance Managers to develop and oversee the management of a revitalized community housing program (72% of homes are CMHC-funded s.95 homes) – with significant training/development support from CMHC
- Establish contractual arrangement with Project Manager and accounting firm to assist in technical and financial management aspects of Project, and establish Financial Management Working Group with INAC to address longer-term governance/administrative capacity challenges
- Complete long-term housing needs assessment, Land Use Plan, & Comprehensive Community Plan