

# Species at risk, environmental management and protection of indigenous rights

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# Overview of Presentation

- Definitions SAR, Cultural keystone species and ATEK studies and traditional rights
- How much is enough?
- How indigenous communities applying these?
- What kinds of resources are there?
- Summary: SAR is a tool
- Case Study Constance Lake ATEK study



# Species at Risk

- Species at risk – wildlife species that are disappearing:
  - International (UN Convention BD/IUCN)
  - Federal (SARA/COSEWIC)
  - Provincial (Ontario Endangered Species Act)
  - Not listed species (assessment and prevention)



# Cultural Keystone Species

- Cultural keystone species (not just animals that you eat) – things tied to identity
- Linkage between SAR and cultural rights are practices is the right and ATEK studies– This can be defined through different processes (agreements, courts, Nation plans).
- Example report “I want to eat caribou again before I die”



# Aboriginal traditional ecological knowledge studies (ATEK) and rights

- Require rigorous methodologies prepared by well-trained social scientists working with ecologists and community expert knowledge holders
- Methodology includes ethnology studies, focus groups, semi-structured interviews
- Document practice of rights historically (mapping of spatial data/GIS analysis and harvest studies)
- On-territory verification (where budget allows)
- Habitat modeling



# How much is enough?

- Western science approaches and gaps (biological persistence)
- Well designed Aboriginal Traditional Ecological Knowledge Studies fill gaps
- **Rights**-based Harvest Studies (Preferred species, preferred areas and preferred means?)
- Habitat modeling (using ATEK and WS)



# How are Indigenous communities applying these?

- Environmental assessment
- First Nations planning
- Impact and benefit agreement and accommodations
- First Nations definitions of biodiversity
- Reconciliation



Níh boghodi: We are the stewards of our land

An ACFN stewardship strategy for thunzea, et'thén and dechen yághe ejere (woodland caribou, barren-ground caribou and wood bison)

April 26, 2012



Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation

# What kinds of resources are there?

- Federal funding programs – Aboriginal fund for species at risk – prevention stream
- Provincial funds – funded Constance Lake First Nation caribou study (Ontario Species At Risk Stewardship fund)
- Monitoring or planning funds set aside through EA agreements or IBAs
- Foundation Funding (longer shot)





# Summary: SAR is a tool

- Combining species at risk with a rights based perspective makes for a powerful tool for communities to affect environmental decisions on their land for future generations.
- It is a tool that only aboriginal communities can use effectively because of the connection to rights.



# Case Study: Woodland Caribou ATEK Study

Bertha Sutherland,  
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and  
Carolyn Whittaker,  
The Firelight Group



Constance Lake First Nation  
with  
Ontario MNR Stewardship funding  
and technical support  
from the Firelight Group Research  
Cooperative



# Aboriginal Traditional Ecological Knowledge Study

## Primary objectives

- Develop woodland caribou baseline (compiling previous studies and TUS); provincial data are limited
- Inform the Land use plan
- Understand harvesting rights for members
- Develop a monitoring program



# CLFN and caribou

- Why are caribou important? Caribou is a cultural keystone species in Constance Lake Territory
- They are a canary in the coal mine, if they go moose may follow
- Under Treaty Rights, the right to harvest preferred species in preferred areas is protected
- Some members would like to hunt caribou again one day before they die



# What did we do?

Focus Group with Elders,  
Meeting with community  
members and CLFN staff

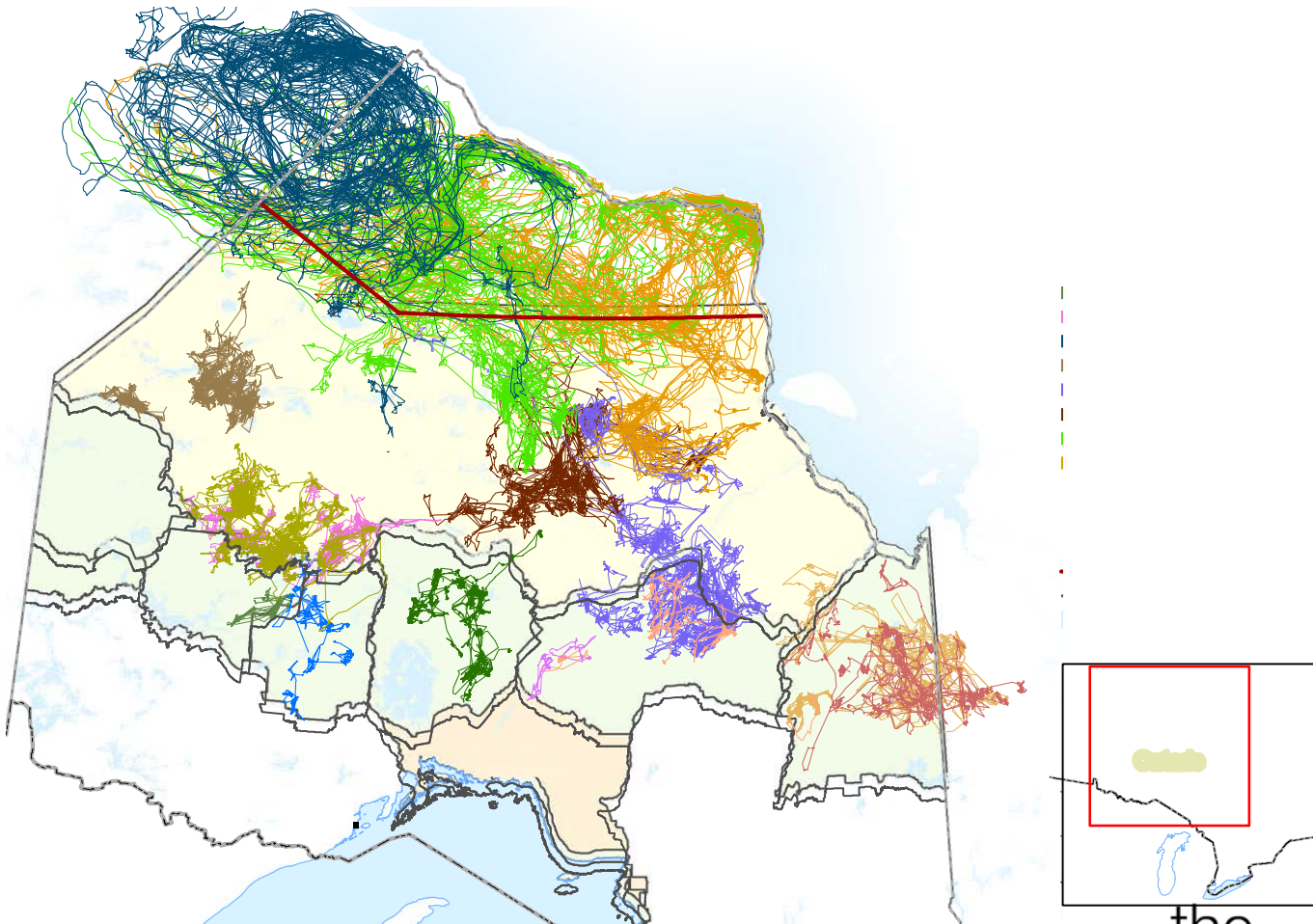
ATEK mapping interviews  
with key Knowledge  
Holders

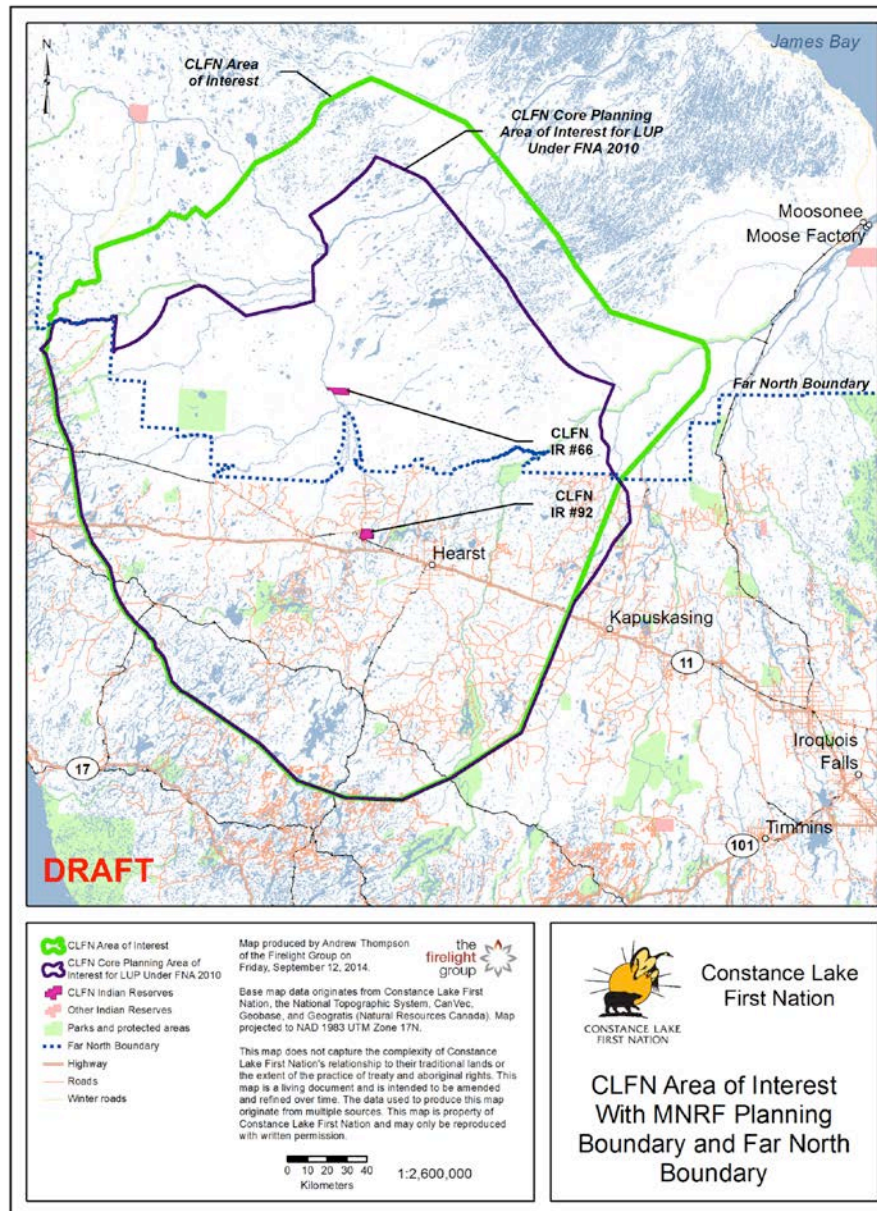
Next step: Verify the data

Seek funding for  
Monitoring

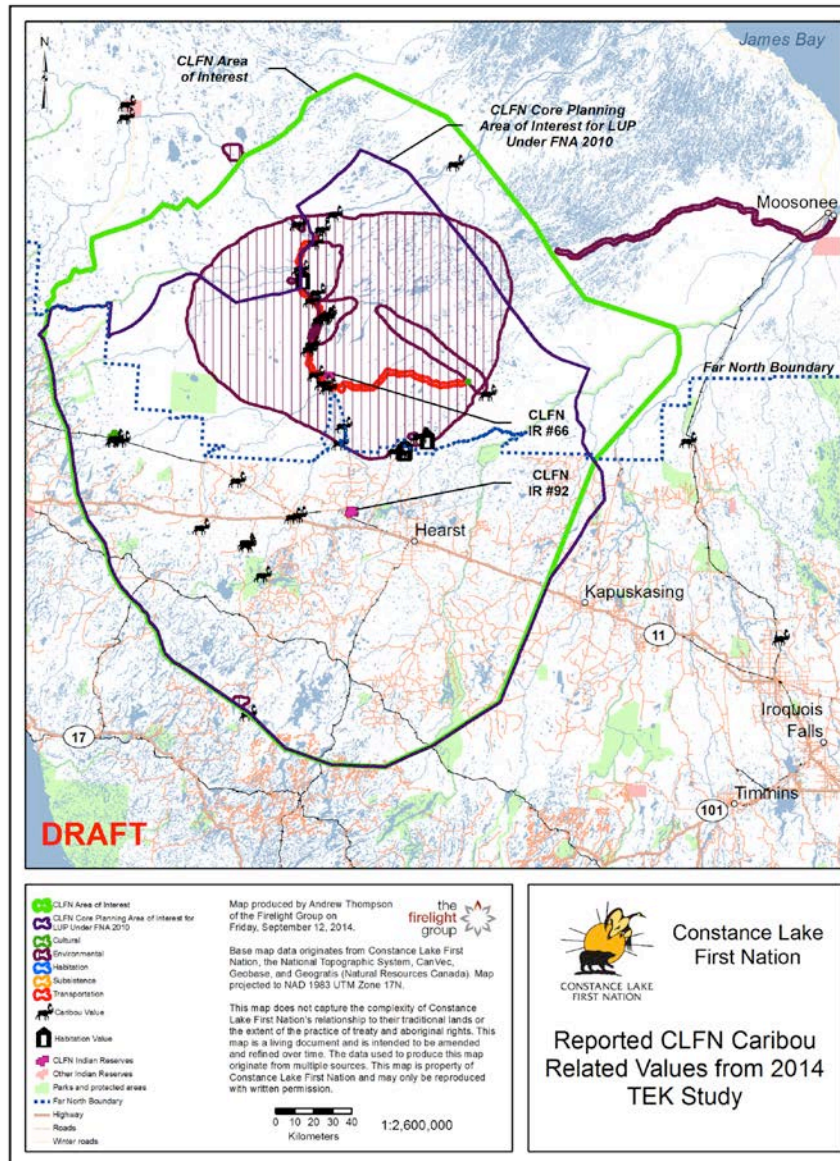


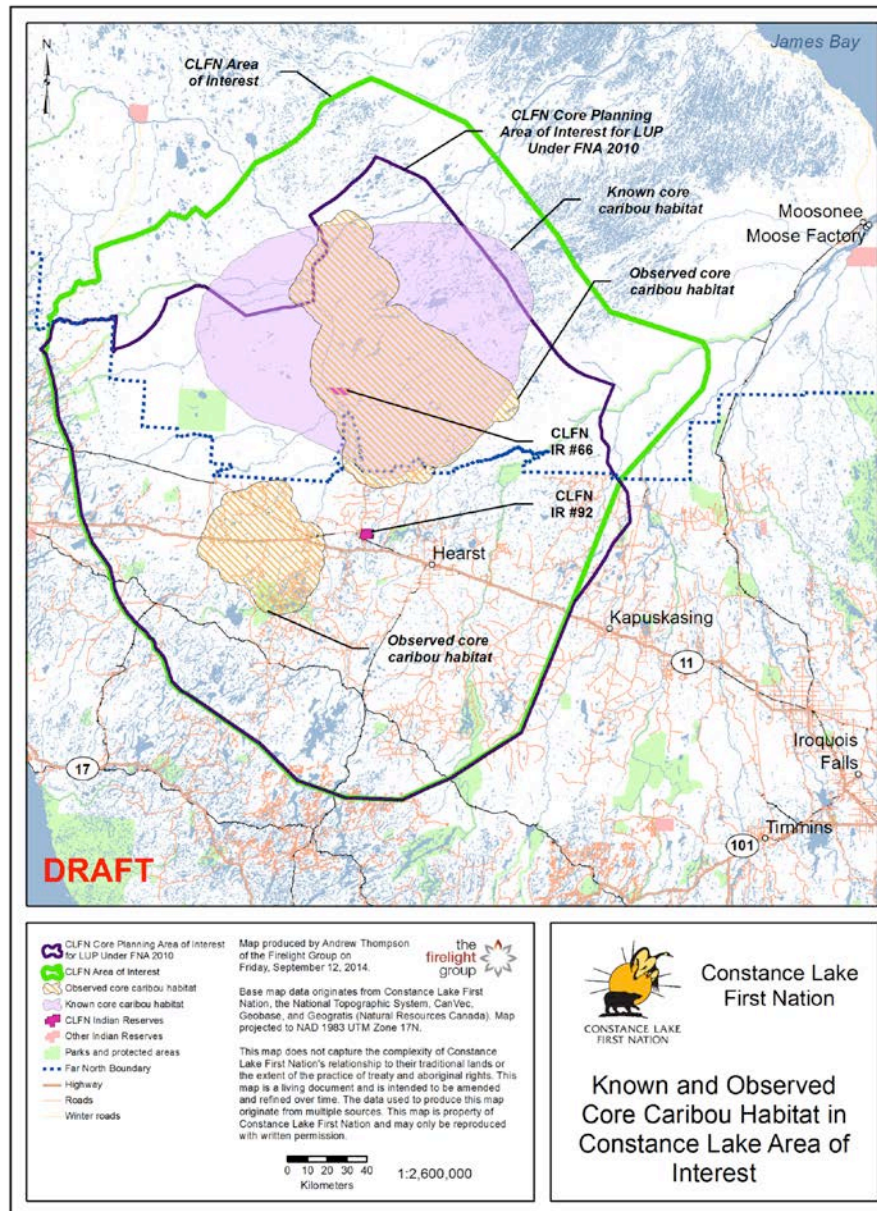
# Provincial data are limited











# What happened to the caribou?

- There used to be a lot more caribou than there are now
- They moved north because of the logging and other industry



# Province is Monitoring



# Practicing Rights is not Poaching

# TO YOUR LO

Four members of the deer family live in Ontario. There is a possibility of seeing two of them when hunting there is also a very good possibility of seeing a Woodland Caribou.

There is no hunting season for caribou in Ontario. The "forest-dwelling" Woodland Caribou, which inhabits the province, also has been designated as "threatened" by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife.

Woodland Caribou are an important component of northern Ontario's forest ecosystems. These animals once ranged across much of the northern part of Ontario, and as far south as the French River. However, for more than a century now the range of the woodland caribou has been receding northward and numbers of caribou have been declining. This is due to a combination of factors including changes in the animal's habitat, an upset in the balance of the number of predators to prey, and an increase in human travel in the north.

It is the hunters' responsibility to properly identify the animal species as legal before squeezing the trigger. If you are unsure...don't shoot! Penalties under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act may consist of a maximum of \$25 000 or 1 year imprisonment or both.



# Results

- Recommendations for the LUP
  - Where to protecting important caribou habitat?
  - Where to support industrial development?
- Better Caribou baseline data
  - ATK gives a better baseline – where did the animals go in the past?
- Next steps to verify data and seek funding
- Plan for caribou to be there for our children

