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2023-2024 Annual Report

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Message from the Panel Chair

I am pleased to present the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Panel, which documents the Panel's activities from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024. The report fulfills the requirements of the *English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Funding Act, 2017* to report annually to the Minister and leadership of each participating Indigenous government.

Each represented government shares a commitment to advance remediation of mercury in the English and Wabigoon Rivers in a safe and timely manner. The Panel is currently making positive strides towards remediation.

During this reporting period, the Panel continued to approve funding for studies that build our understanding of mercury levels and transport in the English and Wabigoon Rivers system. Notably, the Panel approved funding for development of a conceptual site model, which will show how mercury transport, cycling and bioaccumulation occur in the English and Wabigoon Rivers. Panel members and participants worked collaboratively to identify a team of independent experts who are now developing the model using the data collected from various Panel studies in the Rivers. When completed, the Panel will use the model to support evaluation of various remediation options.

The Panel also continued to approve funding for member and participant First Nations to participate in the Panel, share traditional knowledge, and engage their communities to increase understanding about remediation and provide opportunities for training and employment. Panel members and participants have also had a chance to learn more about each First Nation through in person meetings in communities. In May, Wabaseemoong Independent Nations hosted a spring feast and Panel meeting near Kenora at Wauzhushk Onigum Nation and, during the same week, some Panel members and participants were able to attend Waubauskang First Nation's community open house event. In June, Eagle Lake First Nation hosted a Panel meeting in their community. These events have provided opportunities to hear from Elders and other members of First Nation communities about their knowledge and experience of the Rivers system and the impacts of mercury contamination.

I thank the Panel members, participants and technical advisors for their continued patience and perseverance in working towards our common goal. I look forward to our ongoing collaboration.

Sincerely,



Julie Schroeder
Panel Chair

Background

English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Funding Act, 2017

The English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Funding Act, 2017 (“the Act”) came into effect December 14, 2017.

The purpose of the Act is to provide for:

- The funding of the remediation of contaminants in the English and Wabigoon Rivers;
- The co-operative management of that funding by Ontario, and the two First Nations (Grassy Narrows First Nation and Wabaseemoong Independent Nations) that have been most directly and significantly affected by historic mercury contamination in the English and Wabigoon Rivers; and
- An opportunity for other Indigenous communities that have a historic relationship with the English and Wabigoon Rivers to be involved in discussions in respect of that funding.

The Act established the English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Trust (“Trust”) with \$85 million in dedicated funding to support the purposes of the Act. The Act also established the English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Panel (“Panel”), a decision-making structure that includes members representing Grassy Narrows First Nation, Wabaseemoong Independent Nations, and Ontario. As Indigenous communities who have a historic relationship with the Rivers and who have expressed interest in this project, Eagle Lake First Nation, Wabauskang First Nation and Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation also actively participate in supporting the work of the Panel.

The Panel is responsible for providing advice to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks on a series of items, including: the terms and conditions of the Trust, the Panel’s Practices and Procedures, criteria for making payments from the Trust, and remediation objectives and goals, among others. The Panel is also responsible for directing the expenditure of the Trust funds towards the remediation of mercury in the English and Wabigoon Rivers.

BMO Trust Company was appointed by the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks as the Trustee. BMO Global Asset Management was retained by the Trustee to manage the Trust assets.

The Panel Annual Report

Section 11(1) of the Act includes the requirement for the Panel to prepare an annual report by June 1 of each year. This requires the Panel to report in respect of:

- The activities funded by the Trust for the annual period ending on March 31 in the year in which the Report is due;
- The balance of funds remaining in the Trust as of March 31 in the year in which the Report is due;

- A forecast of the expenditures from the Trust for the five-year period beginning April 1 in the year in which the Report is due;
- A recommendation of whether additional funds will be required to fund the Trust and in what amount; and
- A description of how the activities funded by the Trust have contributed to the remediation of the English and Wabigoon Rivers.

The Chair of the Panel is required to submit the Panel's Annual Report to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (Minister) by June 1, and to the leadership of the Indigenous communities that participated in the work of the Panel.

The Trustee is also required to submit an annual report by June 1 of each year reporting on the financial affairs of the Trust and disbursement of trust assets. The Trustee is to provide this report to the Minister, the leadership of each Indigenous community that participated in the work of the Panel, and the Chair of the Panel. The Minister is required to table the Panel and Trustee reports in the Legislature and make the reports available to the public on the government of Ontario website.

The English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Panel

Panel members are appointed by their represented governments. The Panel Chair and Vice-Chair are selected by the members from amongst themselves.

Panel participants are nominated by the leadership of their Indigenous community and authorized by the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

The operation of the Panel is governed by the Act, the Panel's Practices and Procedures, and the criteria for making payments from the Trust.

Panel Members

Grassy Narrows First Nation

Chief Rudy Turtle

David Sone

Wabaseemoong Independent Nations

Chief Waylon Scott

Councillor Rocky Bunting – Panel Vice-Chair

Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Dave Manol, Assistant Director, Northern Region, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Julie Schroeder, Director, Technical Assessment and Standards Development Branch, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks– Panel Chair

Panel Participants

Eagle Lake First Nation

Jordan Gardner, Lands and Resources Manager (until January 8, 2024)

Daniel Morriveau (from January 8, 2024)

Wabauskang First Nation

Councillor Della Van Wynen*

Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation

Robert Parenteau, Lands and Resources Director

The Responsible Party Working Group

In this context, “responsible party” refers to a person or entity who could be entrusted to coordinate the remaining assessment and remediation of the English and Wabigoon Rivers. The Responsible Party Working Group was established in September 2018 to:

- Support represented governments in understanding the role of the entity in the development and execution of the remediation plan; and
- Provide input to the Panel on advice to the Minister on the form that the entity could take including their governments’ potential role with respect to the responsible party in the development and execution a remediation plan for the English and Wabigoon Rivers.

Responsible Party Working Group Representatives

Grassy Narrows First Nation

David Sone, Panel Member

Nelson Walter, Technical Advisor (until December 21, 2023)

Stefano Marconetto, Technical Advisor (from December 21, 2023)

Adrienne Telford, Advisor

Wabaseemoong Independent Nation

George Land, Elder

Marvin McDonald, Panel Coordinator

Ariel Lupu, Advisor

Regina Scott, Youth Coordinator

Nick Hobbs, Advisor

Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Dave Manol, Panel Member

Neil Gervais, Advisor

Eagle Lake First Nation

Alison Fraser, Advisor

Wabauskang First Nation

Della Van Wynen, Panel Participant*

Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation

Annie Dietrich, Advisor

The Technical Subcommittee

The Technical Subcommittee was established in February 2018. It meets on an as needed basis as determined by the Panel. The purpose of the Technical Subcommittee is to:

- Support the Panel in making informed decisions about proposals for the funding of remediation activities;
- Strive for a common understanding on research, science and data interpretation and provide a venue for information sharing; and
- Support the Panel by providing advice on remediation objectives and goals.

The Technical Subcommittee is comprised of traditional knowledge holders from each First Nation and technical advisors from each represented government.

Technical Subcommittee Representatives

Grassy Narrows First Nation

William Fobister Sr., Traditional Knowledge Holder

Nelson Walter, Technical Advisor (until December 21, 2023)

Andrew Madison, Technical Advisor (from December 21, 2023)

Reed Harris, Technical Advisor

Wabaseemoong Independent Nations

George Land, Elder

Marvin McDonald, Panel Coordinator

Regina Scott, Youth Coordinator

Ariel Lupu, Technical Advisor

Michelle Mico, Technical Advisor

Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Saloni Clerk, Technical Advisor

Paula Spencer, Technical Advisor

Eagle Lake First Nation

Bob Kavanaugh, Traditional Knowledge Holder

Alison Fraser, Technical Advisor – TSC Liaison

Miles Pitchenese, Technical Advisor

Wabauskang First Nation

Betty Riffel, Traditional Knowledge Holder*

Ryan Haines, Technical Advisor *

Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation

Annie Dietrich, Technical Advisor

Dan Leitch, Technical Advisor

*Wabauskang First Nation chose to withdraw from participation at the Panel and TSC meetings effective December 5, 2023. Wabauskang First Nation indicated they still supported remediation, however, they no longer felt that participation at the Panel was an effective or efficient use of their limited time and resources and elected to pursue other avenues to advance their community members' and Elders' interests with respect to the historical impacts of pollution of the Wabigoon River.

The Panel Secretariat

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks provides Secretariat support to the Panel, Technical Subcommittee and the Responsible Party Working Group. As directed by the Panel, the Secretariat is responsible for coordinating meetings, preparing Panel documents, drafting operational policy, maintaining records and reviewing funding proposals, among other tasks.

Achievements

Panel

During this reporting period, the Panel held four teleconferences and four in-person meetings. Building on past years' work, the Panel continued to fund projects aimed at characterizing mercury in the English and Wabigoon Rivers. The return to regularly scheduled in-person meetings has allowed for increased discussion and positive relationship building. During the 2023-2024 reporting year, Panel accomplishments included, but were not limited to:

- Collaborative work being led by First Nations governments, including the development of a conceptual site model proposal to show how mercury transport, cycling and bioaccumulation occur in the English and Wabigoon Rivers.
- Continued field work including in the areas of methylation, erosion, and monitoring.
- Prioritized work to complete the characterization stage and continued discussions on the development of preliminary remediation objectives and goals advice to the Minister.
- Provided capacity funding to Panel Member and Participant First Nations to support their involvement in the work of the Panel and Technical Subcommittee and engage their communities and youth.

The Panel has heard and understands concerns that remediation has yet to begin and there remains no remediation plan or timeline. Given the injustice and suffering of the people and the environment caused by the contamination of the English and Wabigoon Rivers from the mill, the Panel is committed to advancing remediation of the Rivers as quickly and safely as possible.

Responsible Party Working Group

The Responsible Party Working Group held two teleconferences and one in-person meeting during this reporting period. The discussions focused on evaluating options for an entity to coordinate the remaining assessment and remediation of the English and Wabigoon Rivers. Operating under the guidance and direction of the Panel, the Working Group focused their discussions on:

- Screening criteria as identified by the Working Group, including:
 - Safe and timely cleanup with remediation progressing in a rational way

- Accountability to the First Nations
- Employment and training benefits to First Nations
- First Nations liability addressed
- Value for money
- A jurisdictional scan to evaluate entity options in other jurisdictions.
- Initial evaluations on preliminary options for an entity:
 - Ministry project office
 - Board governed crown agency
 - Expansion of Panel powers
 - Multi-Indigenous/Ontario entity
 - Indigenous entity
 - Engineering or project management firm
 - Independent panel
- The Working Group will continue discussions throughout 2024-2025 with the goal of providing consensus-based recommendations to the Panel on the establishment of an entity to coordinate the remaining assessment and remediation of the English and Wabigoon Rivers. The Panel may submit recommendations to the Minister.

Technical Subcommittee

The Technical Subcommittee reviewed and discussed pre-remediation proposals as directed by the Panel. It also reviewed and interpreted scientific and technical information, worked to develop consistent methodologies for field work, and assessed data gaps and priorities for studies to be undertaken. The group shared Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge and scientific information, and discussed study results. Updates to the Panel on the Technical Subcommittee discussions were provided by the Panel Liaison at Panel meetings.

In the 2023-2024 reporting year, Technical Subcommittee's key accomplishments included:

- Development of an updated priorities table that provided the following benefits:
 - A list of areas of work for consideration to understand and identify potential data gaps;
 - Evaluation of priorities to inform remediation; and
 - Extensive discussion and exchange of ideas regarding future studies.
- Peer review of numerous technical reports led by Member and Participant First Nations.
- Technical knowledge sharing through several high-level presentations to better understand system-wide issues related to remediation.
- Traditional knowledge sharing from elders.
- Technical review of, and input to, pre-remediation proposals, including detailed input towards the development of a conceptual site model proposal which received consensus support from the Panel.
- Collaborative field program adjustments through Technical Subcommittee discussion.

- Discussion to help ensure methodologies and collected data were aligned across studies being undertaken.

During this reporting period, the Technical Subcommittee held five teleconferences and two in-person meetings.

Trust Update

Activities funded by the Trust between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024

1. Pre-Remediation Activities

At this stage of the project, funds are being directed to pre-remediation activities, which are intended to characterize mercury contamination in the English and Wabigoon Rivers systems. Where possible, these projects provided opportunities for participation, knowledge transfer, training, and employment for First Nation community members. Traditional knowledge holders are actively engaged and play a critical role in the Panel process by informing pre-remediation activities and supporting training and community engagement programs by sharing past accounts and experiences.

Many of the activities described below span more than one reporting period and may have disbursements from previous years. Generally, for pre-remediation activities approved by the Panel, funds are disbursed in multiple installments following the approval of required project milestones and reporting. The final disbursement of funds is released after the project's completion following receipt of any deliverables and approval of a final report and reconciled budget.

Activities included in the following section were either started, completed or ongoing during the 2023-2024 reporting period. For activities that have received funding in prior years, the total amount disbursed to date has also been included.

A summary table of all pre-remediation funds disbursed during the 2023-2024 reporting period is provided on page 18. A summary table of cumulative disbursements for all pre-remediation activities funded to March 31, 2024, is provided on page 21. These financial summaries were developed by the Panel to provide information regarding the activities funded by the Trust for this reporting period. Audited financial statements for the Trust can be found in the Annual Report of the Trustee for the corresponding reporting period.

Panel Members

Grassy Narrows First Nation – Dated Core Analyses Project

The purpose of this project is to contribute to the evaluation as to whether there are ongoing sources of mercury, how much mercury is stored in different parts of the Wabigoon River system, the role of riparian wetlands in mercury storage and recovery, and how long it will take

the Wabigoon River to recover naturally after any ongoing mercury sources have been controlled. This was accomplished by analyzing sediment cores collected from the Wabigoon River between Dryden and Clay Lake.

Approved: May 2019

Total approved budget: \$1,206,338.83

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$0.00

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$1,124,038.16

Status: Ongoing

Grassy Narrows First Nation – 2019-21 Sediment, Water and Biota Sampling Program

The purpose of this project is to contribute to the evaluation of where mercury is located, how it moves through the Rivers system, where it is being deposited and how it gets into fish and edible plants. The project is focused on areas of known elevated mercury, and areas which are currently under-characterized. This work includes sediment, water and biota sampling.

Approved: August 2019 (Initial Scoped Proposal)/ September 2020 (Revised Proposal)

Total approved budget: \$5,230,237.79

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$0.00

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$4,358,214.45

Status: Ongoing

Grassy Narrows First Nation – Mercury Modelling for the English-Wabigoon River System

The purpose of this project is to develop and apply a numerical model framework to better understand mercury in the existing system and help design and predict the response of the English and Wabigoon Rivers to potential remediation actions to reduce mercury contamination in the Rivers. The project will provide the Panel with scientifically sound and defensible information to support the identification of data gaps and needs, evaluate proposed remediation options, employ adaptive management in implementation of remediation plans, and design pre and post remediation monitoring programs. The project was revised in 2024 to include bathymetry gap data collection.

Approved: November 2020

Total approved budget: \$1,534,237.12 (total revised budget)

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$382,080.48

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$1,174,739.67

Status: Ongoing

Grassy Narrows First Nation – Mercury Methylation Dynamics

The purpose of this project is to help characterize the impacts of elevated sulfate from Dryden Mill effluent on mercury methylation in the English Wabigoon Rivers system, and evaluate porewater concentrations of mercury, methylmercury and relevant parameters affecting methylmercury production in the Wabigoon River sediments.

Approved: April 2023
Total approved budget: \$1,502,698.99
Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$901,619.40
Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$901,619.40
Status: Ongoing

Grassy Narrows First Nation – Conceptual Site Model Project

The purpose of the work is to contribute to the continued development of a remediation plan for mercury contamination in the English Wabigoon Rivers system. Understanding the transport, fate, transformation and bioaccumulation of mercury throughout the Rivers system, and integrating existing and diverse knowledge forms into one rigorous model is an important part of characterizing the current problem, as well as assessing the potential suitable remediation options for the English and Wabigoon Rivers system.

Approved: November 2023
Total approved budget: \$1,182,274.75
Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$236,454.95
Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$236,454.95
Status: Ongoing

Wabaseemoong Independent Nations – 2021 Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Study

The purpose of this project is to sample phytoplankton and zooplankton within the English and Wabigoon Rivers system to further understand current and legacy effects and distribution of mercury within the aquatic environment.

Approved: May 2021
Total approved budget: \$1,270,193.33
Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$110,182.03
Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$1,186,261.31
Status: Complete

Wabaseemoong Independent Nations – 2022-23 Monitoring Program

This project is a continuation of previous work undertaken by Wabaseemoong within the Wabaseemoong Independent Nations traditional land use area. The 2022-23 project involves collecting key mercury data to further the understanding of the ecosystem, and to obtain measurements to determine changes to mercury and methylmercury in the system.

Approved: April 2022
Total approved budget: \$787,288.42
Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$0.00
Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$708,559.58
Status: Ongoing

Wabaseemoong Independent Nations – 2023 Monitoring Program

This project is a continuation of previous work undertaken by Wabaseemoong within the Wabaseemoong Independent Nations traditional land use area. The 2023 project involves to collecting information related to mercury and how it changes and moves through the environment over time.

Approved: May 2023

Total approved budget: \$570,815.92

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$428,111.93

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$428,111.93

Status: Ongoing

Panel Participants

Eagle Lake First Nation – 2021 Water Level Program and Clay Lake Surface Water Sampling

The purpose of this project is to monitor water levels and flows in the Wabigoon River system to support the numerical model being developed by Grassy Narrows First Nation, and sample surface water in Clay Lake to capture the extent of methylation near the lake bottom and the significance of lake turnover events in the transport of mercury in the system.

Approved: April 2021

Total approved budget: \$349,461.49

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$0.00

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$251,811.57

Status: Ongoing

Eagle Lake First Nation – 2022 Sampling Program

The purpose of this project is to conduct a baseline assessment of mercury in Wildrice Lake, assess mercury concentrations in biota of five wetlands along the Wabigoon River, and to assess water level, flow and chemistry in four tributaries of the Wabigoon River.

Approved: April 2022

Total approved budget: \$495,538.34

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$0.00

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$394,153.90

Status: Ongoing

Eagle Lake First Nation – Database Management

The purpose of this project is to provide the professional and technical support required to oversee a contract for management and maintenance of the scientific database between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025.

Approved: February 2024

Total approved budget: \$100,867.55

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$50,433.78

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$50,433.78

Status: Ongoing

Wabauskang First Nation – Long-Term Database Management

The purpose of this project is to provide the professional and technical support required to oversee a contract for management and maintenance of the scientific database between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2024. The responsibility for this project was transferred to Eagle Lake First Nation on January 1, 2024.

Approved: March 2022

Total approved budget: \$215,920.25

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$77,470.39

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$148,538.26

Status: Completed

Wabauskang First Nation – Wabigoon River and English River Bathymetry and LiDAR Mapping Project

The purpose of this project is to provide detailed mapping of the Rivers and surrounding lands to support the development of remedial options.

Approved: April 2020

Total approved budget: \$730,907.73

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$0.00

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$654,213.24

Status: Ongoing

Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation – Erosion Pilot Study

The purpose of this project is to understand erosion rates of riverbanks and riverbeds along the Wabigoon River, and to better understand how erosion contributes to total suspended solids by collecting instream turbidity data. The project will also assess the suitability of the pilot study for expansion in other areas of the Wabigoon River or in future years.

Approved: June 2022

Total approved budget: \$389,139.30

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$155,655.72

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$350,225.37

Status: Ongoing

2. Capacity Funding

The Panel provided funds to the Member and Participant First Nations to participate in the work of the Panel in an informed way. These funds were used for purposes including governance, community and youth engagement, advisory and support services, remuneration of members and participants who were otherwise not already remunerated for their participation on the Panel, and travel expenses to attend meetings.

Capacity funding is based on a calendar year. Funds are typically released in three installments following the approval of required documentation: at the beginning of the year following approval of the proposed budget, mid-year following approval of an interim report, following approval of a final report and reconciled budget. Budgets included in the following section span more than one reporting period and were either started, completed or ongoing during the 2023-2024 reporting period. For budgets that have received funding in prior years, the total amount disbursed to date has also been included.

A summary table of all capacity funding disbursed during the 2023-2024 reporting period is provided on page 19. A summary table of cumulative disbursements for all capacity funding disbursed to March 31, 2024, is provided on page 22. These financial summaries were developed by the Panel to provide information regarding the activities funded by the Trust for this reporting period. Audited financial statements for the Trust can be found in the Annual Report of the Trustee for the corresponding reporting period.

Panel Members

Grassy Narrows First Nation – 2021 Capacity Funding

Approved: December 2020

Total approved budget: \$819,147.00

Funds returned in 2023/2024: \$7,110.54

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$566,292.46

Status: Completed*

*Returned funds were in transit at the end of the previous fiscal and were deposited on June 7, 2023.

Grassy Narrows First Nation – 2022 Capacity Funding

Approved: December 2021

Total approved budget: \$793,863.00

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$92,951.67

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$648,655.67

Status: Completed

Grassy Narrows First Nation – 2023 Capacity Funding

Approved: November 2022

Total approved budget: \$855,738.00

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$0.00

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$599,017.00

Status: Ongoing

Grassy Narrows First Nation – 2024 Capacity Funding

Approved: December 2023

Total approved budget: \$863,107.00

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$604,175.00

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$604,175.00

Status: Ongoing

Wabaseemoong Independent Nations – 2022 Capacity Funding

Approved: November 2021

Total approved budget: \$772,047.10

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$64,107.40

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$734,537.93

Status: Complete

Wabaseemoong Independent Nations – 2023 Capacity Funding

Approved: November 2022

Total approved budget: \$826,537.80

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$165,307.56

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$743,884.02

Status: Ongoing

Wabaseemoong Independent Nations – 2024 Capacity Funding

Approved: December 2023

Total approved budget: \$850,275.25

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$595,192.68

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$595,192.68

Status: Ongoing

Wabaseemoong Independent Nations – 2022 Youth Camp

Approved: June 2022

Total approved budget: \$70,906.63

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$17,342.32

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$70,522.29

Status: Completed

Wabaseemoong Independent Nations – 2023 Youth Camp

Approved: June 2023

Total approved budget: \$77,647.05

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$58,235.29

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$58,235.29

Status: Ongoing

Panel Participants

Eagle Lake First Nation – 2022 Capacity Funding

Approved: November 2021

Total approved budget: \$280,742.48

Funds returned in 2023/2024: \$8,523.50

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$200,190.71

Status: Completed*

*Returned funds were in transit at the end of the previous fiscal and were deposited on July 11, 2023.

Eagle Lake First Nation – 2023 Capacity Funding

Approved: November 2022

Total approved budget: \$276,565.26

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$27,898.41

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$221,494.09

Status: Ongoing

Eagle Lake First Nation – 2024 Capacity Funding

Approved: October 2023

Total approved budget: \$239,174.94

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$167,422.46

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$167,422.46

Status: Ongoing

Wabauskang First Nation – 2022 Capacity Funding

Approved: November 2021

Total approved budget: \$177,252.06

Funds returned in 2023/2024: \$11,006.20

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$133,989.39

Status: Completed*

*Returned funds were in transit at the end of the previous fiscal and were deposited on June 7, 2023.

Wabauskang First Nation – 2023 Capacity Funding

Approved: November 2022

Total approved budget: \$171,769.66

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$8,359.61

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$128,598.37

Status: Completed

Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation – 2022 Capacity Funding

Approved: November 2021

Total approved budget: \$316,149.76

Funds returned in 2023/2024: \$34,708.48

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$217,319.41

Status: Completed*

*Returned funds were in transit at the end of the previous fiscal and were deposited on November 9, 2023.

Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation – 2023 Capacity Funding

Approved: December 2022

Total approved budget: \$298,357.99

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$26,356.70

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$235,207.30

Status: Ongoing

Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation – 2024 Capacity Funding

Approved: December 2023

Total approved budget: \$293,516.82

Funds disbursed in 2023/2024: \$176,110.09

Total funds disbursed to March 31, 2024: \$176,110.09

Status: Ongoing

3. Summary of 2023-2024 EWRRP Disbursements - April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024

Pre-remediation Activities - Members

Members	Project Name	Approved Budget	Funds Disbursed	Status
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2019 Dated Core Analyses	\$1,206,338.83	\$0.00	Ongoing
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2019-21 Sediment, Water and Biota Sampling	\$5,230,237.79	\$0.00	Ongoing
Grassy Narrows First Nation	Mercury Modelling for English-Wabigoon River System	\$1,534,237.12	\$382,080.48	Ongoing
Grassy Narrows First Nation	Mercury Methylation Dynamics	\$1,502,698.99	\$901,619.40	Ongoing
Grassy Narrows First Nation	Conceptual Site Model Project	\$1,182,274.75	\$236,454.95	Ongoing
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2021 Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Study	\$1,270,193.33	\$110,182.03	Complete
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2022-23 Monitoring Program	\$787,288.42	\$0.00	Ongoing
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2023 Monitoring Program	\$570,815.92	\$428,111.93	Ongoing
		Members Total Funding	\$2,058,448.79	

Pre-remediation Activities - Participants

Participants	Project Name	Approved Budget	Funds Disbursed	Status
Eagle Lake First Nation	2021 Water Level Program and Clay Lake Surface Water Sampling	\$349,461.49	\$0.00	Ongoing
Eagle Lake First Nation	2022 Sampling Program	\$495,538.34	\$0.00	Ongoing
Eagle Lake First Nation	Database Management	\$100,867.55	\$50,433.78	Ongoing
Wabauskang First Nation	Long-Term Database Management	\$215,920.25	\$77,470.39	Completed
Wabauskang First Nation	Wabigoon River and English River Bathymetry and LiDAR Mapping	\$730,907.73	\$0.00	Ongoing
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation	Erosion Pilot Study	\$389,139.30	\$155,655.72	Ongoing
		Participants Total Funding	\$283,559.89	

Capacity Funding - Members

Members	Project Name	Approved Budget	Funds Disbursed	Status
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2021	\$819,147.00	\$(7,110.54)	Completed
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2022	\$793,863.00	\$92,951.67	Completed
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2023	\$855,738.00	\$0.00	Ongoing
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2024	\$863,107.00	\$604,175.00	Ongoing
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2022	\$772,047.10	\$64,107.40	Completed
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2023	\$826,537.80	\$165,307.56	Ongoing
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2024	\$850,275.25	\$595,192.68	Ongoing
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2022 – Youth Camp	\$70,906.63	\$17,342.32	Completed
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2023 – Youth Camp	\$77,647.05	\$58,235.29	Ongoing
		Members Total Funding	\$1,590,201.38	

Capacity Funding - Participants

Participants	Project Name	Approved Budget	Funds Disbursed	Status
Eagle Lake First Nation	2022	\$280,742.48	\$(8,523.50)	Completed
Eagle Lake First Nation	2023	\$276,565.26	\$27,898.41	Ongoing
Eagle Lake First Nation	2024	\$239,174.94	\$167,422.46	Ongoing
Wabauskang First Nation	2022	\$177,252.06	\$(11,006.20)	Completed
Wabauskang First Nation	2023	\$171,769.66	\$8,359.61	Ongoing
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation	2022	\$316,149.76	\$(34,708.48)	Completed
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation	2023	\$298,357.99	\$26,356.70	Ongoing
Wabigoon Like Ojibway Nation	2024	\$293,516.82	\$176,110.09	Ongoing
		Participants Total Funding	\$351,909.09	

Other Administrative Fees

Category	Funds Disbursed
Audit/Consulting Fees	\$13,353.78
Asset Management Fees	\$124,608.37
Total Other Administrative Fees	\$137,962.15

Administrative Expenses

Category	Funds Disbursed
Trustee Fees	\$41,694.61
HST	\$5,420.30
Total Administrative Expenses	\$47,114.91

Total Funding

Category	Funds Disbursed
Total Pre-remediation Funding	\$2,342,008.68
Total Capacity Funding	\$1,942,110.47
Total Other Administrative Fees	\$137,962.15
Total Administrative Expenses	\$47,114.91
Total Funding	\$4,469,196.21

4. Summary of EWRRP Cumulative Disbursements to March 31, 2024

Pre-remediation Activities - Members

Members	Project Name	Funds Disbursed 2018-2019	Funds Disbursed 2019-2020	Funds Disbursed 2020-2021	Funds Disbursed 2021-2022	Funds Disbursed 2022-2023	Funds Disbursed 2023-2024	Funds Disbursed to March 31, 2024
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2018 Field Sampling	\$1,630,397.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	(\$6,575.01)	\$ -	\$1,623,822.69
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2019 Nearshore Riverbank Sediment and Porewater	\$311,181.50	\$44,454.00	\$44,454.00	\$ -	(\$85,682.17)	\$ -	\$314,407.33
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2019 Dated Core Analyses	\$ -	\$877,135.82	\$164,601.56	\$82,300.78	\$ -	\$ -	\$1,124,038.16
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2019-21 Sediment, Water and Biota Sampling	\$ -	\$850,000.00	\$688,364.43	\$2,819,850.02	\$ -	\$ -	\$4,358,214.45
Grassy Narrows First Nation	Mercury Modelling for English-Wabigoon River System	\$ -	\$ -	\$528,439.46	\$264,219.73	\$ -	\$382,080.48	\$1,174,739.67
Grassy Narrows First Nation	Mercury Methylation Dynamics	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$901,619.40	\$901,619.40
Grassy Narrows First Nation	Conceptual Site Model Project	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$236,454.95	\$236,454.95
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2019 Field Program	\$ -	\$1,109,861.86	\$435,707.14	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$1,545,569.00
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2020 Field Program	\$ -	\$ -	\$824,722.88	\$ -	\$44,047.95	\$ -	\$868,770.83
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2021 Phytoplankton and Zooplankton Study	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$1,076,079.28	\$ -	\$110,182.03	\$1,186,261.31
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2022-23 Monitoring Program	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$708,559.58	\$ -	\$708,559.58
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2023 Monitoring Program	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$428,111.93	\$428,111.93
Members Total Funding		\$1,941,579.20	\$2,881,451.68	\$2,686,289.47	\$4,242,449.81	\$660,350.35	\$2,058,448.79	\$14,470,569.30

Pre-remediation Activities - Participants

Participants	Project Name	Funds Disbursed 2018-2019	Funds Disbursed 2019-2020	Funds Disbursed 2020-2021	Funds Disbursed 2021-2022	Funds Disbursed 2022-2023	Funds Disbursed 2023-2024	Funds Disbursed to March 31, 2024
Eagle Lake First Nation	Wetland Mercury Characterization	\$243,186.83	\$230,890.84	\$69,151.80	\$(14,363.23)	\$ -	\$ -	\$528,866.24
Eagle Lake First Nation	2020 Surface Water Sampling Program	\$ -	\$ -	\$334,011.84	\$ -	\$399.21	\$ -	\$334,411.05
Eagle Lake First Nation	2021 Water Level Program and Clay Lake Surface Water Sampling	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$251,811.57	\$ -	\$ -	\$251,811.57
Eagle Lake First Nation	2022 Sampling Program	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$394,153.90	\$ -	\$394,153.90
Eagle Lake First Nation	Database Management	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$50,433.78	\$50,433.78
Wabauskang First Nation	2018 GIS, Database Management and Research Capacity Building	\$371,983.55	\$(84,499.39)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$287,484.16
Wabauskang First Nation	2019 GIS, Database Management and Research Capacity Building	\$274,774.63	\$219,819.72	\$(121,593.32)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$373,001.03
Wabauskang First Nation	2019 Data Management Strategy Assessment	\$ -	\$18,077.09	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$18,077.09
Wabauskang First Nation	2019 Data Management Strategy Assessment – Addendum	\$ -	\$6,750.00	\$6,750.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$13,500
Wabauskang First Nation	Project Management and Support for Database Development	\$ -	\$ -	\$21,918.75	\$17,535.00	\$4,383.75	\$ -	\$43,837.50
Wabauskang First Nation	Scientific Database Development	\$ -	\$ -	\$58,985.25	\$62,694.80	\$29,541.62	\$ -	\$151,221.67
Wabauskang First Nation	Long-Term Database Management	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$71,112.87	\$77,470.39	\$148,583.26
Wabauskang First Nation	Wabigoon River and English River Bathymetry and LiDAR Mapping	\$ -	\$ -	\$511,635.41	\$142,577.83	\$ -	\$ -	\$654,213.24
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation	2019 Wabigoon Lake Background Environmental and Water Regime Study	\$ -	\$163,688.92	\$18,183.68	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$181,872.60
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation	2020 Field Program	\$ -	\$ -	\$403,049.09	\$ -	\$8,287.38	\$ -	\$411,336.47
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation	Reference Sites Sampling Program	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$73,189.60	\$3,715.25	\$ -	\$76,904.85
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation	Erosion Pilot Study	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$194,569.65	\$155,655.72	\$350,225.37
Participants Total Funding		\$889,945.01	\$554,727.18	\$1,302,092.50	\$533,445.57	\$706,163.63	\$283,559.89	\$4,269,933.78

Capacity Funding - Members

Members	Project Name	Funds Disbursed 2018-2019	Funds Disbursed 2019-2020	Funds Disbursed 2020-2021	Funds Disbursed 2021-2022	Funds Disbursed 2022-2023	Funds Disbursed 2023-2024	Funds Disbursed to March 31, 2024
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2018	\$612,040.37	\$38,924.40	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$650,964.77
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2019	\$617,395.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$249,153.87	\$ -	\$ -	\$866,548.87
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2020	\$ -	\$678,049.44	\$ -	\$71,660.68	\$ -	\$ -	\$749,710.12
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2021	\$ -	\$ -	\$573,403.00	\$ -	\$ -	(\$7,110.54)	\$566,292.46
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2022	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$555,704.00	\$ -	\$92,951.67	\$648,655.67
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2023	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$599,017.00		\$599,017.00
Grassy Narrows First Nation	2024	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$604,175.00	\$604,175.00
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2018	\$504,185.90	\$53,764.86	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$557,950.76
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2018 Youth Summer Camp	\$107,322.75	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$107,322.75
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2019	\$659,999.00	\$188,586.00	\$93,008.53	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$941,593.53
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2019 Youth Summer Camp	\$ -	\$116,011.98	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$116,011.98
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2020	\$ -	\$683,526.30	\$64,692.44	\$47,883.44	\$ -	\$ -	\$796,102.18
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2020 Youth Summer Camp	\$ -	\$ -	\$88,506.45	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$88,506.45
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2021	\$ -	\$ -	\$555,419.10	\$126,909.77	(\$18,797.33)	\$ -	\$663,531.54
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2021 Youth Summer Camp	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$84,475.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$84,475.70
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2022	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$540,432.97	\$129,997.56	\$64,107.40	\$734,537.93
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2022 Youth Summer Camp	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$53,179.97	\$17,342.32	\$70,522.29
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2023	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$578,576.46	\$165,307.56	\$743,884.02
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2023 Youth Summer Camp	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$58,235.29	\$58,235.29
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations	2024	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$595,192.68	\$595,192.68
Members Total Funding		\$2,500,943.02	\$1,758,862.98	\$1,375,029.52	\$1,676,220.43	\$1,341,973.66	\$1,590,201.38	\$10,243,230.99

Capacity Funding - Participants

Participants	Project Name	Funds Disbursed 2018-2019	Funds Disbursed 2019-2020	Funds Disbursed 2020-2021	Funds Disbursed 2021-2022	Funds Disbursed 2022-2023	Funds Disbursed 2023-2024	Funds Disbursed to March 31, 2024
Eagle Lake First Nation	2018	\$265,835.17	\$20,766.77	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$286,601.94
Eagle Lake First Nation	2019	\$417,962.28	\$119,417.79	\$(58,999.19)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$478,380.88
Eagle Lake First Nation	2020	\$ -	\$310,776.46	\$ -	\$(71,140.88)	\$ -	\$ -	\$239,635.58
Eagle Lake First Nation	2021	\$ -	\$ -	\$208,253.79	\$14,118.50	\$28,010.12	\$ -	\$250,382.41
Eagle Lake First Nation	2022	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$196,519.73	\$12,194.48	(\$8,523.50)	\$200,190.71
Eagle Lake First Nation	2023	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$193,595.68	\$27,898.41	\$221,494.09
Eagle Lake First Nation	2024	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$167,422.46	\$167,422.46
Wabauskang First Nation	2018	\$223,939.95	\$18,633.58	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$242,573.53
Wabauskang First Nation	2018 Addendum	\$13,800.00	\$3,450.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$17,250.00
Wabauskang First Nation	2019	\$266,888.30	\$76,253.80	\$24,307.80	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$367,449.90
Wabauskang First Nation	2020	\$ -	\$198,803.10	\$ -	\$(74,213.71)	\$ -	\$ -	\$124,589.39
Wabauskang First Nation	2021	\$ -	\$ -	\$126,742.00	\$36,212.00	(\$29,692.30)	\$ -	\$133,261.70
Wabauskang First Nation	2022	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$124,076.44	\$20,919.15	(\$11,006.20)	\$133,989.39
Wabauskang First Nation	2023	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$120,238.76	\$8,359.61	\$128,598.37
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation	2019	\$ -	\$338,307.51	\$(63,156.09)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$275,151.42
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation	2020	\$ -	\$325,920.21	\$ -	\$11,886.46	\$ -	\$ -	\$337,806.67
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation	2021	\$ -	\$ -	\$230,294.68	\$58,650.68	(\$5,333.02)	\$ -	\$283,612.34
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation	2022	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$221,304.83	\$30,723.06	(\$34,708.48)	\$217,319.41

Participants	Project Name	Funds Disbursed 2018-2019	Funds Disbursed 2019-2020	Funds Disbursed 2020-2021	Funds Disbursed 2021-2022	Funds Disbursed 2022-2023	Funds Disbursed 2023-2024	Funds Disbursed to March 31, 2024
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation	2023	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$208,850.60	\$26,356.70	\$235,207.30
Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation	2024	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$176,110.09	\$176,110.09
Participants Total Funding		\$1,188,425.70	\$1,412,329.22	\$467,442.99	\$517,414.05	\$579,506.53	\$351,909.09	\$4,517,027.58

Other Administrative Fees

Category	Funds Disbursed 2018-2019	Funds Disbursed 2019-2020	Funds Disbursed 2020-2021	Funds Disbursed 2021-2022	Funds Disbursed 2022-2023	Funds Disbursed 2023-2024	Funds Disbursed to March 31, 2024
Audit/Consulting Fees	\$6,299.75	\$21,334.13	\$12,562.50	\$19,884.64	\$12,666.17	\$13,353.78	\$86,100.97
Asset Management Fees	\$96,162.29	\$137,996.65	\$144,712.12	\$135,682.41	\$128,487.40	\$124,608.37	\$767,649.24
Total Other Administrative Fees	\$102,462.04	\$159,330.78	\$157,274.62	\$155,567.05	\$141,153.57	\$137,962.15	\$853,750.21

Administrative Expenses

Category	Funds Disbursed 2018-2019	Funds Disbursed 2019-2020	Funds Disbursed 2020-2021	Funds Disbursed 2021-2022	Funds Disbursed 2022-2023	Funds Disbursed 2023-2024	Funds Disbursed to March 31, 2024
Trustee Fees	\$41,543.01	\$51,455.33	\$49,306.51	\$45,909.58	\$43,211.51	\$41,694.61	\$273,120.55
HST	\$5,302.65	\$6,689.20	\$6,409.84	\$5,968.25	\$5,617.50	\$5,420.30	\$35,407.74
Total Administrative Expenses	\$46,845.66	\$58,144.53	\$55,716.35	\$51,877.83	\$48,829.01	\$47,114.91	\$308,528.29

Total Funding

Category	Funds Disbursed 2018-2019	Funds Disbursed 2019-2020	Funds Disbursed 2020-2021	Funds Disbursed 2021-2022	Funds Disbursed 2022-2023	Funds Disbursed 2023- 2024	Funds Disbursed to March 31, 2024
Total Pre-remediation Funding	\$2,831,524.21	\$3,436,178.86	\$3,988,381.97	\$4,775,895.38	\$1,366,513.98	\$2,342,008.68	\$18,740,503.08
Total Capacity Funding	\$3,689,368.72	\$3,171,192.20	\$1,842,472.51	\$2,193,634.48	\$1,921,480.19	\$1,942,110.47	\$14,760,258.57
Total Other Administrative Fees	\$102,462.04	\$159,330.78	\$157,274.62	\$155,567.05	\$141,153.57	\$137,962.15	\$853,750.21
Total Administrative Expenses	\$46,845.66	\$58,144.53	\$55,716.35	\$51,877.83	\$48,829.01	\$47,114.91	\$308,528.29
Total Funding	\$6,670,200.63	\$6,824,846.37	\$6,043,845.45	\$7,176,974.74	\$3,477,976.75	\$4,469,196.21	\$34,663,040.15

Balance of funds remaining in the Trust as of March 31, 2024

The balance of funds in the Trust as of March 31, 2024, was \$57,506,453.25 (compared to \$59,798,563.93 on March 31, 2023). During this reporting period, the Panel approved, but has not yet disbursed, funding for ongoing pre-remediation activities totalling \$1,740,037.15 and for capacity funding totalling \$722,585.54.

Forecast of the expenditures from the Trust for the five-year period beginning April 1, 2024

During this reporting period, the Panel continued funding pre-remediation projects aimed at characterizing mercury contamination in the English and Wabigoon Rivers system. Given that remediation options have not been selected, it is not possible to provide an accurate forecast of expenditures from the Trust for the following five-year period at this time.

The Panel does, however, forecast that a range of \$25-\$40 million will be required in the next three years to continue the characterization of mercury in the Rivers system; to develop remediation objectives and goals, remediation options and responsible party advice to the Minister. This forecast also reflects the funds required for Panel operations. It is anticipated that significant additional funds will be required if remediation activities are commenced in the next three to five years. The Panel expects that it will be better able to forecast future expenditures once characterization efforts are complete and remediation planning is underway.

Recommendation of whether additional funds will be required to fund the Trust and in what amount

Based on the advice of remediation professionals and others, the Panel suggests that significant additional funds beyond the current Trust balance will be required to complete the remediation of the English and Wabigoon Rivers, including long term monitoring. Given the remediation options have not been selected, the Panel does not have a recommendation on the specific amount of additional funds that may be required at this time.

Description of how the activities funded by the Trust have contributed to the remediation of the English and Wabigoon Rivers

The activities funded by the Panel during this reporting period focused largely on continued assessment and characterization of mercury levels in water, sediment, fish and other biota, wetlands and plants in the Rivers system. There are over 200 km of the Rivers system that are impacted by mercury contamination and a large amount of sampling has been required to locate mercury deposits, identify how mercury is moving in the system, understand how and where mercury is being changed to the more toxic

methyl mercury form, and understand how the mercury is getting into fish and plants. These efforts are filling in data gaps and enhancing the current understanding of why mercury remains elevated in the English and Wabigoon Rivers system. The resulting information will be required to develop remediation objectives and goals advice to the Minister, assess and select remediation options, and in the development and implementation of a remediation plan.

All of the First Nation communities performed sampling/assessment work during the year and reported on their work completed. In addition to sampling and assessment of sediment, water and biota, other work was undertaken including land topographic and bathymetric surveys; hydrodynamic and mercury transport modelling; evaluation of mercury depositional history and Rivers recovery projections; the creation/maintenance of a consolidated database, and development of a conceptual site model.

Considerable progress has been made in identifying concentrations of mercury in sediment, water and fish, but more work will be needed to fill in data gaps. Additional work is also needed to develop a conceptual site model and to fully understand mercury transport, mercury methylation dynamics and whether other contaminants should be considered for remediation.

Funding was also provided to each member and participant First Nation to meaningfully participate in the work of the Panel, as well as for their governance and for the engagement of their communities and youth.

Vetting proposals, prioritizing funds and involving the participating First Nation communities are key components of the Panel's work. Thanks to the important contributions of each represented government, the Panel is currently making progress towards remediation of the English and Wabigoon Rivers.