

1 TITLE: Horizon scan of conservation issues for inland waters in
2 Canada.

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25

26 ABSTRACT

27 Horizon scanning is a systematic approach increasingly used to explore emerging trends,
28 issues, opportunities, and threats in conservation. We present the results from one such
29 exercise aimed at identifying emerging issues that could have important scientific, social,
30 technological, and managerial implications for the conservation of inland waters in
31 Canada, in the proximate future. We recognized six opportunities and nine challenges,
32 for which we have provide research implications and policy options, such that scientists,
33 policy makers, and the Canadian society as a whole could prepare for a potential growth
34 in each of the topic areas we identified. The issues spanned a broad range of topics from
35 recognizing the opportunities and challenges of community-enabled science and the need
36 to consider the legal rights of nature, to the likely increase of pharmaceuticals in
37 wastewater due to an aging population. These issues represent a first baseline that could
38 help decision makers identify and prioritize efforts, while simultaneously stimulate new
39 research avenues. We hope our horizon scan will pave the way for similar exercises
40 related to the conservation of biodiversity in Canada.

41 INTRODUCTION

42 Rivers, lakes, springs, and other inland waters¹ are often classified among the most
43 threatened ecosystems on the planet (Dudgeon et al. 2006; Reid et al. 2018). For
44 example, fewer than 40% of large rivers remain free flowing (CBD 2014) and
45 approximately 80% of the world's human population has experienced high levels of threat
46 to water security for the last decade (Vörösmarty et al. 2010; Abel et al. 2019). Vertebrate
47 populations in fresh water environments have shown to be particularly threatened, with
48 declines in their abundances as dramatic as 83% since 1970 (WWF 2018) and
49 approximately one-third being listed as threatened under the IUCN Red List (Collen et al.
50 2014). While inland water issues are of top concern for conservation biologists,
51 economists, and national security experts alike, current approaches for managing inland
52 waters have often failed to slow or reverse the declines in freshwater biodiversity (Strayer
53 and Dudgeon 2010). Foreseeing future and emerging threats to inland waters as well as
54 opportunities for improved monitoring or management can allow practitioners to prioritize
55 research, plan strategically, and facilitate enhancements of management and
56 conservation efforts in a pre-emptive way (Reid et al. 2018). For the last decade, horizon
57 scans have facilitated such efforts by systematically exploring emerging trends, issues,
58 opportunities, threats, and events relevant to various topics in conservation. In particular,
59 Sutherland et al. (2019) have annually published horizon scans in global conservation,

¹ All surface waters contained within lands (FAO 2008).

60 touching upon subjects that range from microplastic pollution (Sutherland et al. 2011) to
61 the use of robots to target invasive species (Sutherland et al. 2017). Nonetheless,
62 emerging issues specifically related to inland waters have been addressed only loosely
63 and none specifically within the Canadian context.

64 Canada holds 20% of the world's fresh water and is home to more lakes than any
65 other country, approximately 2,400,000 (Figure 1a) (Messenger et al. 2016). Although
66 Canada is a water-rich nation, there are a few key disconnects. For one, on a per capita
67 basis, Canadians use more water than most other nations, only second to the U.S.A.
68 (Hoekstra and Mekonnen, 2012; OECD 2016). Yet, the vast majority (92%) of Canadian
69 water resources renew only over longer times scales (e.g., only a small fraction of our
70 water is found in rivers and is replenished quickly whereas the water residence time of
71 lakes is much longer and renews over longer time scales; Sprague 2007). In addition,
72 there is a disparity between the distribution of fresh water in Canada and the distribution
73 of human populations, whereby the supply of water available to most Canadians is much
74 smaller than the national total because a substantial fraction of the renewable water flows
75 to the Arctic (Sprague 2007; Renzetti and Dupont 2017). Moreover, many changes in
76 Canadian inland waters are occurring in remote regions and disproportionately affect
77 Indigenous communities (Figure 1b) (Patrick 2011). Finally, a recent synthesis of
78 Canadian watershed health (based on stream flow, quality, fish and invertebrate
79 abundances) and stressors (e.g., pollution, water use, fragmentation, invasive species
80 and climate change) has highlighted the heterogeneity of data quality and availability for

81 large regions of the country (WWF 2017). Therefore, Canada would benefit from
82 proactive management and readiness to deal with future threats to its inland waters as
83 well as opportunities to improve conservation efforts. Horizon scanning allows us to
84 identify issues that are emerging and whose impact is currently unknown, in the hope of
85 motivating the data collection required to inform policy and research decisions in the
86 future. Here we report the results of a horizon-scan exercise that sought to identify issues
87 and opportunities related to governance/management, technology, and society that might
88 have an effect on the conservation of inland waters, and the biodiversity therein, in
89 Canada within the next 5-10 years.

90

91 MATERIALS AND METHODS

92 Our horizon scan followed the methodological framework described in Sutherland et al.
93 (2011). In the current exercise, representatives of the *Groupe de recherche*
94 *Interuniversitaire en Limnologie* at McGill University invited 30 researchers with expertise
95 in a wide range of topics related to fresh and/or inland waters to participate in a two-day
96 workshop in Montreal in January 2019. The invitees were selected to maximize
97 representation of expertise, gender and backgrounds (in terms of where participants
98 originated from): 17 agreed to participate. Prior to the workshop, participants submitted
99 up to three issues (positive or negative in nature) that they considered will become
100 important in the conservation of inland waters in Canada in the next 5-10 years, along

101 with a description (200-300 words) and a relevant bibliography. These contributions were
102 subsequently collated and consolidated to avoid repetition. The resulting 33 distinct
103 issues were returned to the participants for evaluation and ranking. Each participant
104 anonymously ranked all issues by taking into consideration their novelty (i.e., noting
105 whether the issue was already widely recognized such as climate change), its potential
106 impact, and its likelihood of occurrence. The median scores for these rankings were used
107 as a starting point for discussions during the workshop. Workshop participants broke out
108 into groups to discuss proposed issues and to consider any new issue that arose during
109 the discussions. All participants then scored each issue individually and anonymously.
110 Low scores identified issues that are already well known in Canada, unlikely to be
111 important, and/or unlikely to occur, whereas high scores denoted issues that could have
112 a strong impact and are least mainstream issues in Canada. The submitted scores were
113 converted to ranks and the median rank for each issue was calculated. Through this
114 procedure, the group identified 15 emerging issues and opportunities that are likely to
115 have substantial implications for the conservation of inland waters in Canada. Importantly,
116 we refer to inland waters as all continental waters that may be on the surface or
117 underground. We specifically did not restrict our discussions to fresh waters, as many
118 inland waters in Canada can be quite salty. Given that the expertise of the participants of
119 the workshop was mainly related to research, NL and RP provided input on the
120 manuscript, and refined the policy implications of the 15 issues previously identified.

121

122 We acknowledge that the set of issues identified here could have been influenced by the
123 composition of our group. However, it is worth noting that a recent review of decade's
124 worth of global horizon scanning efforts showed no association between the participants'
125 expertise and the emerging issues selected (Sutherland et al. 2019). Our group was
126 largely from the academic sphere spanning the fundamental-applied continuum, and
127 represented a population that was gender-balanced. Members originated from disparate
128 regions of Canada or international locations, and were from different career stages (i.e. 1
129 PhD student, 4 post-doctoral fellows, 2 science professionals, and 10 university
130 professors). One participant was an Indigenous scientist, and another was a government
131 employee. All issues were subjected to a democratic and confidential voting process,
132 which minimizes biases arising from any one individual (Sutherland et al. 2019). We
133 emphasize that our list of issues is not necessarily exhaustive but rather an important
134 subset, as identified by our participants.

135
136 As a secondary evaluation of the novelty of each of the issues identified we conducted a
137 search in Web of Science of the past five years' worth of manuscripts published in the
138 Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences. We searched for issue-specific
139 keywords in the topic or title field tags. All entries were then manually verified to
140 correspond to the target issue. We also quantified the relative frequency of the term
141 climate change (in terms of the relative proportion of articles where this term appears), as
142 a point of comparison for a timely issue that is already well studied.

143

144 ISSUES: FROM CHALLENGES TO OPPORTUNITIES

145 Chromite Mining in the Ring of Fire

146 The 'Ring of Fire' is a 5000 km² crescent-shaped chromite deposit (North America's
147 largest) in the Lowlands of Northern Ontario (Beukes et al. 2017). Chromite is needed for
148 producing stainless steel but is mined in few countries. The Ring of Fire is thus the
149 potential target of a massive development project, likely to proceed when the region's
150 infrastructure is modernized. The project will involve several underground mines and
151 possibly an open pit, both of which may cause water contamination through the release
152 of chromium-6 (hexavalent chromium). Chromium-6 is a priority substance in the
153 Canadian Environmental Protection Act because it is soluble, environmentally persistent,
154 and induces a broad suite of toxicological effects on fish and birds (Velma et al. 2009).
155 The Ring of Fire is in close proximity to the traditional territory of nine First Nations
156 communities (James Bay Treaty, 1905). The mineral deposits in the Ring of Fire lie
157 beneath a unique ecoregion that comprises the world's largest peatland and a global
158 breeding hotspot for waterfowl (Beukes et al. 2017).

159

160 **Research implications:**

- 161 1) Identify preventative and mitigative measures for chromium-6 and other
162 contaminants from mining activities.

- 163 2) Forecast potential downstream or legacy effects (e.g., bioaccumulation)
- 164 3) Determine the natural occurrence and spatiotemporal variability of chromium-6 in
- 165 soils, untreated chromite ore, and surface/groundwater, and identify areas of
- 166 ecological sensitivity.

167 **Policy options:**

- 168 1) Apply evidence-based decision-making processes regarding mining and ore
- 169 processing in the region (e.g., advantages of wet milling over dry in terms of
- 170 potential to generate chromium-6).
- 171 2) Include First Nations communities in the consultation process following
- 172 commitments made in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous
- 173 Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Calls to Action set forth by the Truth and Reconciliation
- 174 Commission of Canada (TRC 2015).
- 175 3) Provide rigorously-documented baseline studies to the public.
- 176

177 **Consequences of dynamic winter conditions for aquatic life and its management**

178 Winter in Canada is generally characterized by sub-zero temperatures, high snowfall, and

179 ice-covered waterbodies. However, such winters are becoming increasingly rare in face

180 of current rates of climate change in parts of southern Canada. Across such regions, the

181 previously long “deep freeze” is becoming a more dynamic season with episodic freeze-

182 thaw events and rapid fluctuations in temperature, along with shorter periods of ice cover

183 (Sharma et al. 2019). Winter is regarded as a strong selective force on aquatic life, yet
184 we know remarkably little about aquatic ecosystems during this season (Hampton et al.
185 2017). Some recent observations – such as extensive winter methane and CO₂ gas
186 production and release in lakes (Denfeld et al. 2018), under-ice nitrification contributing
187 to winter-kill events (Powers et al. 2017), and river ice dynamics altering the distribution
188 of fish (Brown et al. 2011) – reveal that winter effects are still largely unknown. This gap
189 in knowledge about how aquatic ecosystems function in winter, particularly when coupled
190 with dynamic conditions related to climate change, generates important uncertainty for
191 the management of inland waters in Canada.

192

193 **Research priorities:**

194 1) Quantify the variation in freeze-thaw events (frequency, intensity), and associated
195 impacts on aquatic life.

196 2) Harness the power of remote sensing and other tools like Earth Engine to interpret
197 freeze/thaw timing by fusing data from optical satellites and radar satellites (e.g.,
198 Canada's Radarsat and IceSat series).

199 3) Study how animal habitat use and behaviour differ in winter compared to other
200 seasons, and identify conditions and events (such as the development of frazil ice)
201 that may limit survival or reduce post-winter fitness of individuals.

202 **Policy options:**

- 203 1) Recommend construction windows to protect sensitive aquatic habitats, based on
204 knowledge of winter dynamics and changing climatic conditions.
- 205 2) Account for winter dynamics in aquatic management during other seasons (e.g.,
206 fish stocking, restoration, biomanipulation).
- 207 3) Include important winter refuges when considering the protection of critical habitats
208 for species at risk.
- 209

210 **Considering effects of rapid global change requires integrating evolutionary**
211 **adaptive capacity**

212 Assessments of aquatic community responses to environmental stressors typically focus
213 on biodiversity at the species level, thereby overlooking a key component of biodiversity:
214 variation within species. Intraspecific variation can act as an evolutionary insurance policy
215 against rapid environmental change, as well as having significant effects on community
216 dynamics and ecosystem services (Schindler et al. 2015; Mimura et al. 2016). For
217 Canada to successfully manage and conserve its inland waters, standard environmental
218 impact assessments could be complemented by “evolutionary impact assessments”
219 (EvoIA). EvoIA entails the assessment of intraspecific variation and its potential for
220 enabling adaptive responses that maintain the long-term health of aquatic communities
221 and ecosystems (Laugen et al. 2014). EvoIA allows for more targeted and efficient use of
222 conservation resources as it identifies not only current contributions of evolution to

223 biodiversity and ecosystem function, but it can also predict how specific management
224 actions will enhance future contributions to the same services – that is “ecosystem
225 services”.

226

227 **Research priorities:**

- 228 1) Improve knowledge of within-species genetic differentiation to support the
229 identification of Designatable Units (DUs) used by COSWEIC
- 230 2) Develop field-ready genomic monitoring kits for rapid and easy assessment of
231 intraspecific diversity.

232 **Policy options:**

- 233 1) Consider management procedures that account for adaptive capacity of
234 populations (e.g., setting restrictions to avoid selective fishing/harvest, which
235 cause genetic bottlenecks).
- 236 2) Train practitioners to enhance competency with evolutionary principles and
237 methodology (e.g., through workshops or online training platforms).

238

239 **Dynamics of state changes caused by multiple stressors**

240 Most research and impact assessments have traditionally focused on how individuals,
241 populations, communities, and ecosystems respond to a single stressor, such as
242 temperature or turbidity or acidity. Yet these and many other stressors likely act

243 simultaneously in complex and often unpredictable ways (Folt et al. 1999). Despite
244 multiple stressors being the norm on the Canadian landscape, it is still not well understood
245 how multiple stressors interact to influence organisms, populations, communities, and
246 ecosystems (Ormerod et al. 2010). Multiple stressors have the potential to combine
247 additively, multiplicatively, or in other ways making it difficult for environmental managers
248 to predict responses (Jackson et al. 2016). It may also be possible for multiple stressors
249 to trigger regime shifts between alternative system states or alter tipping points (e.g.,
250 Leichenko et al. 2014) such that shifts are accelerated, delayed, or made more or less
251 abrupt (Piggott et al. 2015). Resource managers will face challenges in determining what
252 to do in the face of regime shifts given the complexity arising from multiple stressors.
253 Finally, multiple stressors have the potential to generate entirely new “non-analog” states
254 to which systems might shift – states that would not be observed even at high levels of a
255 single stressor.

256

257 **Research Priorities:**

258 1) Determine how multiple stressors influence the probability and nature of tipping
259 points that influence shifts between system states.

260 2) Define which combinations of particular stressors generate the strongest non-
261 additive and nonlinear effects on organisms, populations, communities, and
262 ecosystems.

263 **Policy options:**

- 264 1) Integrate multiple stressors in environmental risk assessments and
265 authorization/permitting decisions.
- 266 2) Integrate non-additive and non-linear effects of stressor combinations in
267 conservation management.

268

269 Expansion of land and water use in northern Canada

270 Since 1900, surface temperature in the Arctic (60-90 °N) has been increasing at a rate
271 that is twice that of the global average (Overland et al. 2018). As such, northern areas
272 hold considerable potential for both an expansion of agriculture (Arsenault 2017) and
273 hydroelectric development (Canadian Hydropower Association 2009), amongst other
274 climatic and development-related pressures. Although northern agricultural expansion
275 could be a positive step towards northern food security and assist in feeding the growing
276 global population, important considerations include heightened water use pressures and
277 increased loading of agrochemicals to nearby water bodies. Also, the common perception
278 of hydropower as 'clean renewable energy', combined with increasing political pressure
279 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, could provide impetus for hydroelectric power
280 development within vast areas of the Arctic (WWF 2017). Such development could
281 produce an array of impacts on northern First Nations and Indigenous communities, as
282 well as affect sensitive populations of invertebrates, fishes, and birds – as has been the

283 case for many existing hydropower projects in Canada and the US (Willacker et al. 2016),
284 and elsewhere in the world (Winemiller et al. 2016).

285

286 **Research priorities:**

287 1) Conduct life cycle assessment research to fully characterize current and potential
288 hydropower impacts in northern Canada.

289 2) Identify crops or strains that have the greatest local benefit while mitigate their
290 impacts on water resources.

291 3) Investigate the effects of agricultural expansion (northward) on land-water linkages
292 (e.g., fragmentation).

293 **Policy options:**

294 1) Develop northern-based farming and agricultural research institutes (e.g.,
295 Northern Farm Training Institute, NWT).

296 2) Develop a national-level plan for intensive land use projects in northern Canada.

297 3) Expand the National Hydrometric Program (Water Survey Canada) to provide
298 more extensive flow and water level data for northern systems.

299

300 **Expectation for increased rigour and transparency in environmental decision**301 **making**

302 The environmental assessment procedure in Canada has been under increased scrutiny
303 recently, and has launched this topic into the forefront of public policy discussions. Calls
304 for transparency in the use and sharing of data, and in the assessment of regional and
305 cumulative impacts are mounting (Westwood et al. 2019). Additionally, the need to
306 consider the impacts of such projects in the context of larger national goals (e.g.,
307 biodiversity targets, UN Sustainable Development Goals, and reduced carbon emissions)
308 has been consistently highlighted. The changes made in 2012 to the *Canadian*
309 *Environmental Assessment Act*, *Fisheries Act*, and *Navigable Waters Protection Act* (now
310 *Navigation Protection Act*), as well as the subsequent review and introduction of Bills C-
311 68 and C-69 have attempted to address such problems by putting an emphasis on
312 creating registries to improve public access to environmental information. The aim of
313 these changes is to encourage meaningful public participation in environmental decision-
314 making (Jacob et al. 2018). Putting evidence-based decision making into broader practice
315 will require additional capacity within natural resource management agencies (Cooke et
316 al. 2017), open data efforts, and regional assessments.

317

318 **Research priorities:**

- 319 1) Determine how data collected from strategic impact assessments can be
320 integrated into national databases, such that it is useful for conservation planning.
- 321 2) Conduct case studies to investigate the effects of legislative reforms on
322 transparency, accountability, and meaningful public involvement.

323 **Policy options:**

- 324 1) Provide open access to baseline and monitoring data, methodologies, and
325 metadata.
- 326 2) Include rigorous scientific methodologies in environmental decision making while
327 facilitating the implementation of Indigenous knowledge.
- 328 3) Make publicly available all documents used to inform government regulatory
329 impact analysis statements.

330

331 **Geopolitical tensions over water access and trade**

332 Under current climate change and human population growth, access to clean fresh water
333 is a major global concern (World Economic Forum, 2018). Stress on water resources will
334 arise from direct consumption, and indirectly through the consumption of commodities
335 that require substantial quantities of water for their production. Current analysis of national
336 water footprints from around the world have placed Canada as the second largest user
337 of fresh water, only second to the U.S.A. (OECD 2016). Serious water issues are already
338 apparent within Canada, ranging from hundreds of boil-water advisories to the

339 fragmentation of water management across multiple levels of government (Mitchell 2017).
340 Growing global trade networks could further strain access to clean water in Canada,
341 whether nations are geographical neighbours or not. Some recent examples that could
342 spark geopolitical tensions over water include Wisconsin's approval for the diverting of 28
343 million liters of water per day from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River watershed to
344 support local industry (<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/WaterUse/Racine/>). Although in 2013 the
345 Parliament of Canada approved a law prohibiting bulk water exports, some water policy
346 experts argue that considerable uncertainty remains over the strength of the protection
347 afforded by Canadian laws, particularly as new trade deals are negotiated (Rivera 2015;
348 Barlow 2016). Moreover, it is expected that under climate change and with increased
349 global environmental degradation, markets will become highly unstable, and over 200
350 million environmental refugees will seek asylum in Canada by 2050 (Murray 2010). In that
351 context, preserving water security on a global scale can be a lynchpin to an equitable,
352 prosperous and sustainable future, and it is clearly in Canada's interest to contribute to
353 that outcome.

354

355 Research priorities:

- 356 1) Improve understanding of how climate change will influence water demand for
357 agriculture and other intensive practices.

358 2) Identify Canadian waterbodies most likely to be affected by shifting water demands
359 and evaluate scenarios to determine which conservation strategies will be most
360 effective.

361 **Policy options:**

- 362 1) Determine the most effective policy levers to protect water quality and quantity,
363 while also encouraging a reduced national water footprint
- 364 2) Engage in stakeholder activities to promote participatory process in water-related
365 issues.
- 366 3) Explore options for Canada to contribute more fulsomely to the resolution of water
367 issues in other countries.

368

369 **Increased loading of pharmaceuticals in wastewater**

370 Pharmaceuticals are emerging environmental contaminants that are increasingly used in
371 human and veterinary medicine. Today, almost 70% of all Canadian citizens 65 years
372 and older take five or more drugs (CIHI 2018) and by 2031 it is expected that one in four
373 Canadians will be over 65 (Statistics Canada). Many drugs are not efficiently eliminated
374 by sewage treatment plants and are directly discharged into wastewater, finding their way
375 into inland waters (Koné et al. 2013). Despite the relatively low concentrations reported
376 in effluents of sewage treatment plants, several classes of drugs are expected to pose
377 high environmental risks including analgesics (e.g., salicylic acid, naproxen, and

378 ibuprofen), antibiotics (e.g., sulphamethoxazole and ciprofloxacin), antidepressants (e.g.,
379 fluoxetine), and hormone disrupters (Koné et al. 2013). The effects of such compounds
380 on aquatic organisms is often evaluated using acute toxicity assays. However, a major
381 concern is that their chronic toxicity and their subtle effects are not understood (Fent et
382 al. 2006). Although many pharmaceuticals are considered of low risk for lower-trophic-
383 level taxa, the potential remains for food-web-mediated effects on primary consumers
384 (Hamilton et al. 2016). Potential mitigation options include the development of advanced
385 treatment technologies of municipal wastewaters, source reductions, and proper
386 ecotoxicological testing of new generation drugs.

387

388 **Research priorities:**

- 389 1) Determine the safety limits for drugs and drug combinations in the environment.
- 390 2) Determine the impacts of key drugs, with an emphasis on sublethal and chronic
391 thresholds in individuals, populations and communities.
- 392 3) Develop advanced wastewater treatment techniques/options across different
393 scales, from communities to cities.

394 **Policy options:**

- 395 1) Development of efficient treatment and mitigation approaches.
- 396 2) Reduce improper disposal or collection of unused pharmaceuticals.
- 397 3) Increase monitoring of pharmaceuticals in effluents.

398

399 **Increased risk of petroleum spills arising from new pipelines**

400 With growing oil production in Canada, there is increasing demand for transport of crude
401 oil through pipelines to major refineries and terminals across North America. While most
402 research on threats posed by oil spills has focused primarily on high-profile events in
403 coastal marine environments, risks to inland aquatic ecosystems such as the Great
404 Lakes have been largely overlooked (IJC 2018). Nonetheless, existing and planned oil
405 transport infrastructure poses important threats of ecologically-significant spills in
406 sensitive fish habitats and species-rich environments such as estuaries, rivers, bays, and
407 wetlands (IJC 2018). Crude oil spills can impact all levels of an aquatic food web, and
408 their effects on benthic invertebrates can persist beyond 25 years (Bertrand and Hare,
409 2017). Moreover, laboratory experiments have revealed negative short-term and latent
410 impacts on growth and development of several fish species, including the economically-
411 and culturally-important salmonids (Alderman et al. 2018). However, the scope,
412 magnitude, and persistence of the effects of crude oil on freshwater biota, the recovery
413 capacities of aquatic habitats, and the behaviour and fate of oil products in freshwater
414 systems remain poorly understood.

415

416 **Research priorities:**

- 417 1. Develop technologies and test models for rapid and accurate detection of spills
418 (especially slow leaks that may go unnoticed for some time).
- 419 2. Understand the ecological effects of spills during different seasons (e.g., spring
420 runoff versus frozen winters) to inform possible seasonal limits on oil transport.

421 **Policy options:**

- 422 1. Consider sensitive aquatic habitats when planning pipeline routing and
423 configurations (e.g., salmon bearing streams and spawning/incubation/rearing
424 seasons).
- 425 2. Ensure that the standards of response planning for inland spills meet those upheld
426 for marine environments.
- 427 3. Incorporate modern safety standards and monitoring protocols into authorizations
428 for the construction and operation of pipelines to minimize the risk of spills.

429

430 **Increasing pressure for Canada to enshrine constitutional rights to a healthy**
431 **environment and the rights of nature**

432 Health Canada has estimated that, each year, over 14,000 premature deaths in Canada
433 are the result of air pollution, toxic chemicals, and other environmental risk factors (Health
434 Canada 2017). International comparisons have shown that Canadian environmental laws
435 and policies are lagging behind other industrialized countries (Boyd 2015). For example,
436 when a person or company obtains a legal right to land or water in Canada, these private

437 rights often trump public rights regarding that water or land. As a result, the public often
438 has little recourse for the negative impacts that the private use inflicts on the wider
439 community. Many communities and environmental organizations are seeking innovative
440 institutional arrangements that can address the environmental degradation of inland
441 waters and improve our stewardship of ecosystem health (Curran 2015). As a result, more
442 than 100 nations around the world now recognize constitutional environmental rights and
443 responsibilities. Several provinces have forms of enforceable environmental rights and
444 150 Canadian municipalities have passed declarations recognizing their residents' right
445 to live in a healthy environment. Pressure is now increasing for the federal government
446 to legislate similar rights and to include protection provisions in the Canadian constitution.

447

448 **Research priorities:**

449 1) Establish quantitative, objective definitions for terms such as “healthy” and “harm”
450 as they relate to inland waters so they can be applied in legal and policy
451 frameworks.

452 2) Develop and track standardized-nation-wide testing of key health indicators for
453 inland waters

454 **Policy options:**

455 1) Expand and unify municipal and provincial declarations of environment rights to all
456 jurisdictions.

457 2) Determine what constitutes ecological harm from a legal perspective.

458 3) Apply the emerging approach “legal personality” to provide water systems with
459 legal standing and enforceable rights.

460

461 Invasions by novel pathogens will challenge biosecurity and conservation

462 Invasive pathogens are being recorded with greater frequency in ecosystems worldwide
463 (Fisher et al 2012). Current rates of climate change, nutrient pollution, and global
464 transport of organisms are creating conditions in Canada that are conducive to the spread
465 and proliferation of pathogens that threaten endemic freshwater biodiversity and fisheries
466 (Schmeller et al. 2018). Many pathogens can go undetected before producing die-offs,
467 or can remain an unrecognized cause of mortality (Adams et al. 2018). Immense numbers
468 of undescribed taxa of bacteria, protozoa, oomycetes, and fungi are potentially
469 transported between disparate regions and can undergo rapid evolutionary changes that
470 affect their virulence or host repertoire in Canada (Hoberg & Brooks 2015; Robin et al.
471 2017). One such important emerging threat to Canadian freshwater biodiversity is
472 *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans*, the chytrid fungus responsible for recent
473 catastrophic declines in wild salamanders in Europe after being introduced through the
474 pet trade (Martel et al. 2014). Although we recognize that Canada has recently restricted
475 the import of salamanders to limit the introduction of *B. salamandrivorans* into Canada
476 (<https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/publications/cn-ad/cn17-17-eng.html>), continued vigilance
477 is needed. The limited ability to detect emerging invasive pathogens will impede

478 conservation efforts to prevent or promptly contain and manage outbreaks across the
479 Canadian landscape.

480

481 **Research priorities:**

482 1) Determine how global stressors promote the emergence and virulence of novel
483 pathogens, and whether synergistic interactions are at play.

484 **Policy options:**

485 1) Reassess existing regulations concerning inspection of travellers and goods at
486 ports of entry to maximize detection of new pathogens.

487 2) Exercise vigilance towards illegal importations of amphibians (e.g., Government of
488 Canada 2017) and aquatic organisms in general using current mechanisms (e.g.,
489 the Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations SOR/2015-121 under the Fisheries Act).

490

491 [New satellite and remote sensing technologies can transform our understanding
492 of aquatic ecosystems and their dynamics.](#)

493 Recent advances in satellite and remote sensing technologies have set the stage for
494 transforming aquatic ecosystem research and monitoring. In particular, several new
495 satellites (launched since 2013) improve our ability to estimate lake properties. For
496 example, Landsat-8 provides a greater depth of possible measurement values within
497 images, and thus improve the signal-to-noise ratio (Roy et al. 2014). More recently,
498 Sentinel-2a and -2b have enhanced the frequency of imaging a given point on Earth's

499 surface, when data are combined across satellites (Pahlevan et al. 2017). A second major
500 area of advancement is the development of Google Earth Engine (Gorelick et al. 2016),
501 which enables users to access and manipulate the full suite of satellite images remotely,
502 greatly minimizing data storage and processing demands. Google Earth Engine has
503 already allowed for planetary-scale assessments of global surface water distribution at
504 fine resolution across multiple decades (Pekel et al. 2016), and it holds considerable
505 promise for creating new time series of lake characteristics at regional, continental, and
506 planetary scales.

507

508 **Research priorities:**

- 509 1) Seek out effective ways to expand remote sensing training into high school and
510 early undergraduate levels.
- 511 2) Develop remote sensing hardware and software to identify sensitive aquatic
512 habitats, such as groundwater upwelling zones, salmon redds, and winter thermal
513 refugia.
- 514 3) Improve multi-scale (reach, watershed, ecoregion) assessments of aquatic habitat
515 condition and stressors by incorporating new information available from emerging
516 remote sensing technologies.

517 **Policy options:**

- 518 1) Incorporate systematic remote sensing into government monitoring programs at
519 all levels (federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, Indigenous).

520 2) Develop planning methodologies that incorporate remotely-sensed data and
521 inform the prioritization of conservation and restoration actions.

522

523 Opportunities and challenges from technology-enabled community science

524 Over 85% of Canadians own a smartphone (CRTC 2019); which translates into
525 approximately 31.7 million potential sampling platforms distributed across the country.

526 Smartphones generate opportunities for community-based science and could help to fill
527 important data gaps on aquatic ecosystems that exist for most Canadian watersheds
528 (WWF 2017). Relying on engaged communities will be critical as monitoring resources
529 are sparse, and resource management agencies are unable to provide complete
530 coverage of the country – especially in the vast and difficult-to-access northern regions.

531 Moreover, the increase in accuracy and the development of novel sensors in
532 smartphones, in synergy with technological advances (e.g., computer vision), will enable
533 important improvements in the data quality of community-based science (Kosmala et al.
534 2016), while facilitating the validation and geo-localization of entries. Beyond data
535 acquisition, however, including schools and communities directly in the scientific process
536 provides excellent opportunities to educate and engage the public. Existing successful
537 programs, such as iFish (<http://www.ifishalberta.com/>; Papenfuss et al. 2015) and Water
538 Rangers (<https://waterrangers.ca/en/>) provide valuable models that could be further
539 developed.

540

541 **Research priorities:**

542 1) Develop robust processes for curation and validation of community-generated
543 aquatic data.

544 2) Explore best practices for passive versus active engagement of community
545 members.

546 3) Study how to incentivize the broader population and keep community scientists
547 engaged.

548 **Policy options:**

549 1) Further engage Northerners as technological stewards with formal funding
550 opportunities.

551 2) Incorporate instantaneous public reporting into early detection and rapid response
552 procedures for aquatic invasive species.

553 3) Explore options for linking with “Big Data” initiatives of commercial data providers,
554 such as Google and Amazon, to increase the development and distribution of third-
555 party applications and decision support tools.

556

557 **Opportunities from national data integration**

558 The landscape of nation-wide ecological data collection and curation is changing through
559 the collaborative efforts among academic research networks, government scientists, and

560 NGO partners. Large research networks focused on inland waters are paving the way to
561 a new scale of ecological inference, mainly by integrating spatial, temporal, historical, and
562 “dark” (collected but unused: Heidorn 2008) ecological data. This integration will naturally
563 involve partnerships and multi-sector research co-design, stimulating in this way a long-
564 term vision for data sharing and management while increasing data accessibility to
565 researchers, stakeholders, and policy makers. With systematic and continuous nation-
566 wide sampling, ecological variability across inland waters will be better understood
567 (Soranno et al. 2015), and gaps between fundamental ecological research and its
568 application by managers will be greatly narrowed (Cadotte et al. 2017). Current examples
569 that provide a model for scaling up include the NSERC Canadian LakePulse Network in
570 Canada (Huot et al. 2019) and the National Lakes Assessment Program in the USA.
571 Programs such as these will be instrumental in ensuring that Canada meets its
572 commitments under the 2030 Agenda and the implementation of the associated UN
573 Sustainable Development Goals.

574

575 **Research priorities:**

- 576 1) Develop best approaches for extrapolating from monitored to non-monitored inland
577 waters.
- 578 2) Improve forecasting of responses to environmental stressors such as invasive
579 species, climate change, or pollution through large scale surveys.

580 **Policy options:**

- 581 1) Support the development and management of large, comparative datasets that
582 will facilitate evidenced-based decision making.
- 583 2) Promote data sharing, trust and rights across sectors.
- 584 3) Establish open and long-term nation-wide monitoring databases.

585

586 Whole community monitoring opportunities arising from environmental DNA

587 The application of environmental DNA (eDNA) metabarcoding to biomonitoring of aquatic
588 systems has remarkable potential. Although techniques are still developing (Goldberg et
589 al. 2016; Pawloski et al. 2018; Cristescu & Hebert 2018), there are tremendous
590 opportunities for the use and development of eDNA surveys in Canada, as a complement
591 or supplement to conventional, time- and resource-intensive sampling. Scaled up, eDNA
592 metabarcoding has the potential to transform the frequency and range at which aquatic
593 communities are monitored, generating an unprecedented amount of biodiversity data.
594 Additionally, because of the relatively simple field equipment required, it is feasible to
595 sample eDNA across very large spatial scales and at high temporal frequencies. There
596 remain several challenges, such as high rates of false-positives and false-negatives
597 (Cristescu & Hebert 2018). However, with the establishment of coordinated efforts to
598 standardize methods for metazoan community detection, the approach could soon be
599 ready for widespread adoption and routine use in biodiversity assessments (Rees et al.
600 2014). The scale of data generation will foster collaborations with bioinformaticians, while

601 taxonomists will be crucial for building and improving reference databases. These
602 techniques have the potential to allow conservation practitioners to better inform policies
603 related to invasive species spread, climate-related range shifts, and seasonal signals,
604 amongst other critical conservation challenges.

605

606 **Research priorities:**

607 1) Develop more comprehensive genetic libraries of aquatic species, with a focus on
608 building localized and well validated species libraries.

609 2) Address high incidences of false positives and false negatives, and deal with the
610 complications arising from DNA decay, DNA advection, and primer bias.

611 3) Explore the use of environmental RNA (eRNA) as a means to examine the living
612 biodiversity in an ecosystem (i.e. tracking species relative abundances through
613 space and time).

614 **Policy options:**

615 1) Consider the systematic use of eDNA in routine monitoring for the early detection
616 of invasive species or climate-induced range shifts.

617 2) Manage fisheries and ecosystem health based on detailed understanding of
618 community composition and dynamics.

619 DISCUSSION

620 Inland waters constitute an extremely valuable natural resource, in economic, cultural,
621 aesthetic, scientific, and educational terms. Fresh water has been identified by Canadians
622 as their most important natural resource for 10 years running (RBC Blue Water Project
623 2017). As stewards of one fifth of the planet's inland waters, Canadians also bear a large
624 international responsibility.

625
626 Despite the importance of inland waters, monitored populations of freshwater vertebrates
627 have experienced marked declines since the 1970s, relative to terrestrial and marine
628 ecosystems (WWF 2018). Forecasting future conservation issues concerning inland
629 waters can identify important gaps in our knowledge, identify new tools and help
630 proactively manage these ecosystems through informed policy (Sutherland et al. 2007).
631 Moreover, while efforts have been made to identify and highlight threats to global
632 freshwater biodiversity (e.g., Reid et al. 2018), or broadly considered Canadian
633 conservation issues (Boxall et al. 2012), these earlier studies have been not focused on
634 Canadian aquatic systems, despite the vast freshwater resources within the region. The
635 impetus for our horizon scanning exercise was to address this gap and herein we have
636 identified 15 issues (for a summary see Table 1). Our list of issues comprises a carefully
637 derived subset of both challenges and opportunities that we assess as un-recognized or
638 under-appreciated, and that require immediate attention to effectively prepare for the near

639 future. Some of the issues we have listed are not unknown and have been addressed in
640 other countries, yet they are relatively new in the Canadian context. Indeed, based on our
641 search in Web of Science, we found that many issues have been addressed infrequently.
642 For example, with the exception of changing winter dynamics, none of the issues have
643 been addressed in more than 10 articles published in CJFAS in the last 5 years, compared
644 to climate change that has been the subject of 126 publications (Figure 2).

645
646 We identified potential socio-political conflicts that could pose significant threats to the
647 management of Canada's water resources. Examples include debates among national
648 and international stakeholders on access to and extraction of water, increased risk of oil
649 spills arising from the development of new pipelines, and tensions over chromite mining
650 in Northern Ontario. However, we also identified opportunities to improve the
651 management of Canada's water resources in the face of rapid geopolitical and
652 environmental changes. For example, community science (often referred to as citizen
653 science) can play an important role in filling data gaps related to watersheds and aquatic
654 ecosystems – including in the northern regions of the country. Similarly, the integration of
655 ecological data at the national scale can stimulate a long-term collaborative vision in data
656 sharing and water management, and can allow for an increase in data accessibility to
657 researchers, stakeholders, and policy makers. National-scale monitoring programs for
658 inland waters are essential to achieve commitments under the 2030 Agenda for

659 Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Dickens et al.
660 2019; Huot et al. 2019).

661
662 A recurrent issue during our discussions was the influence of climate change on many of
663 the emerging issues we have identified; its ramifying effects are still unclear and will
664 almost certainly vary across the country (e.g., Sharma et al. 2019). In this context, it
665 should not be surprising that we identified an expansion of land and water use in the north
666 as an emerging issue. In light of climate change and warming temperatures in northern
667 regions, integrating evolutionary adaptive capacity into environmental impact
668 assessments, while making these more transparent, will allow for more targeted and
669 efficient use of resources in conservation practices in an increasingly unpredictable future.

670
671 The emerging issues we have identified certainly reflect, in part, the interests and
672 knowledge of the participants engaged in the exercise, which in our case was comprised
673 mainly of academics. In future efforts, we envisage engaging with a group with broader
674 range of professions and backgrounds, with greater representation of Indigenous
675 peoples, NGOs, and government employees—so that more perspectives are represented.
676 Nevertheless, our group did identify a wide range of issues that are only loosely related
677 to academic and pure research questions. We see this publication as a first step to
678 engage the broader Canadian community to address the future of conservation of inland
679 waters in Canada.

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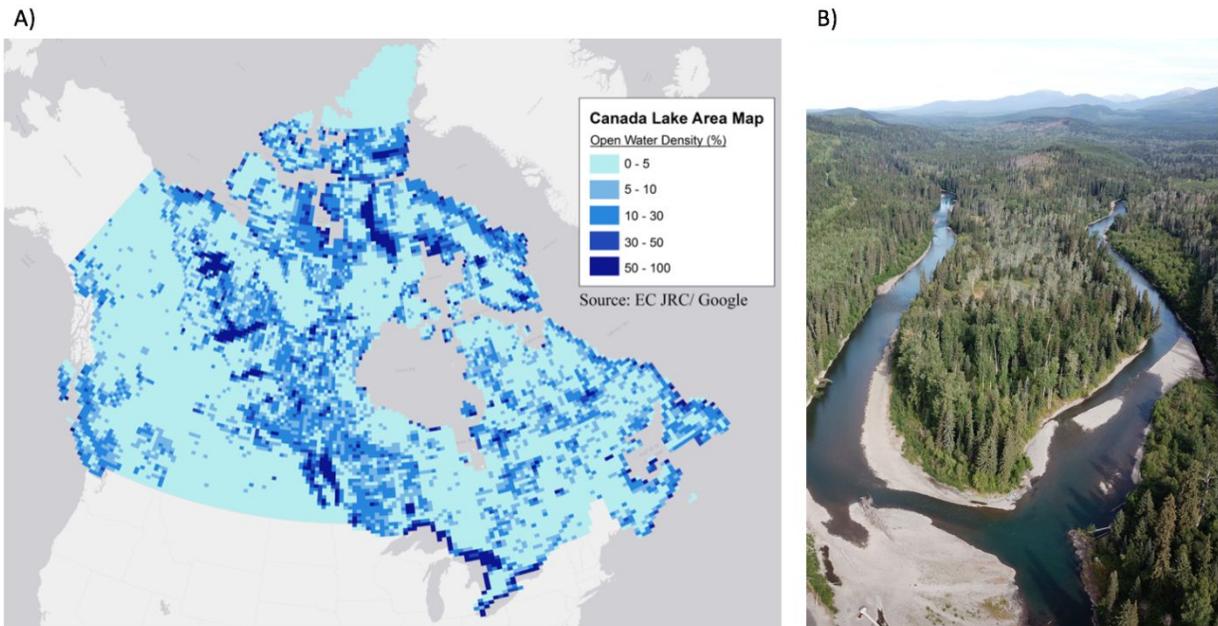
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958 Figures

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961 Figure 1. Canada is home to 20% of the world's freshwater and over 2,400,000 lakes.

962 Nonetheless, extreme events and reductions in water levels have been recently

963 documented even in remote locations or in areas with few human settlements. A)

964 Proportion of permanent open fresh water across Canada within each 1:50,000 sheet of

965 the National Topographic System. Water presence was estimated from multiple Landsat

966 30-m resolution images by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre and

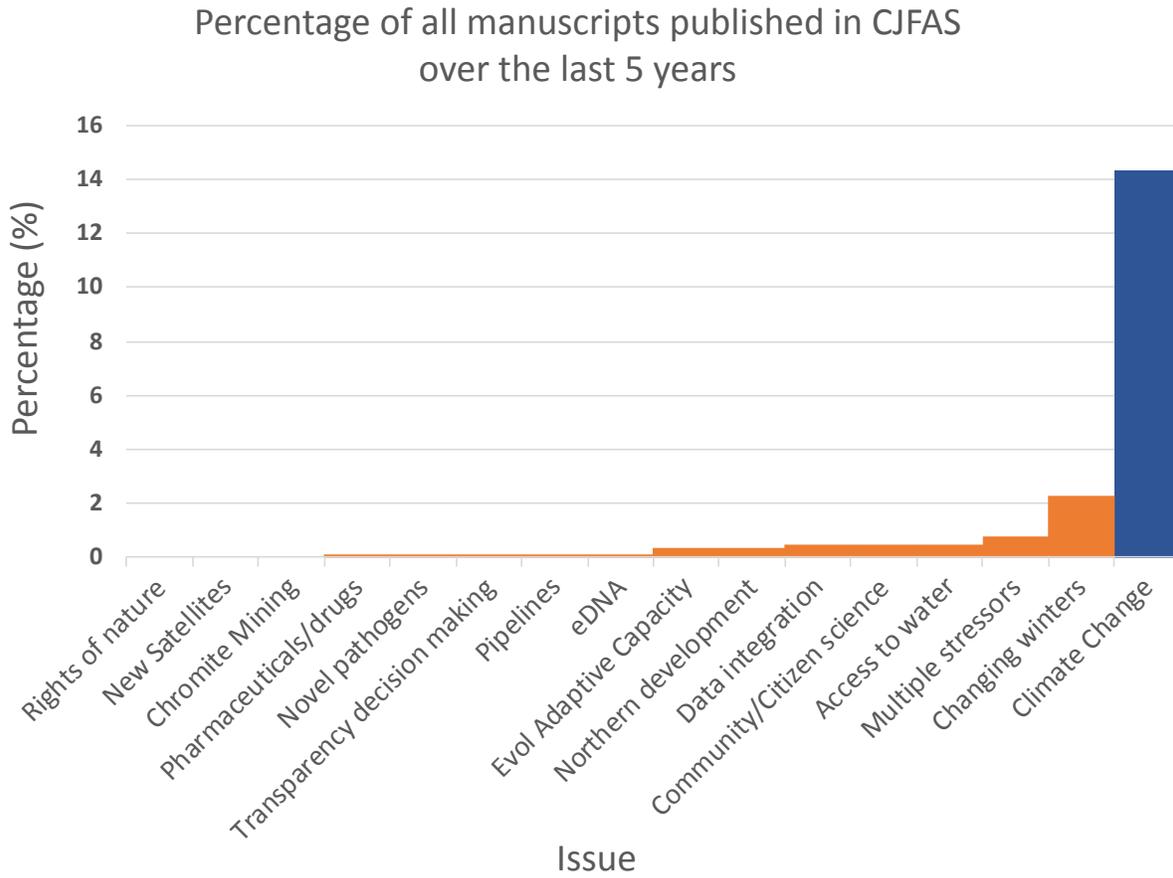
967 summarized in Google Earth Engine. B) Extreme droughts (levels 3 and 4) were reported

968 in 2018 for the Skeena-Nass river system in northern B.C., preventing salmon from

969 reaching upstream fall spawning sites.

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973 Figure 2. Literature scan for all publications in CJFAS over the last 5 years that address
 974 the 15 issues identified in the horizon scan. Labels on the x axis represent the keywords
 975 used to search for each issue. Climate change was used as a control issue for novelty as
 976 it is widely known and has received significant attention.

977

ISSUE	RESEARCH PRIORITY	POLICY OPTION
<p>CHROMITE MINING IN THE RING OF FIRE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify preventative and mitigative measures for chromium-6 and other contaminants from mining activities. 2. Forecast potential downstream or legacy effects (e.g., bioaccumulation). 3. Determine the natural occurrence and spatiotemporal variability of chromium-6 in soils, untreated chromite ore, and surface/groundwater, and identify areas of ecological sensitivity. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply evidence-based decision-making processes regarding mining and ore processing in the region (e.g., advantages of wet milling over dry in terms of potential to generate chromium-6). 2. Include First Nations communities in the consultation process following commitments made in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Calls to Action set forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC 2015). 3. Provide rigorously-documented baseline studies to the public.

CONSEQUENCES OF DYNAMIC WINTER CONDITIONS FOR AQUATIC LIFE AND ITS MANAGEMENT

1. Quantify the variation in freeze-thaw events (frequency, intensity), and associated impacts on aquatic life.
2. Harness the power of remote sensing and other tools like Earth Engine to interpret freeze/thaw timing by fusing data from optical satellites and radar satellites (e.g., Canada's Radarsat and IceSat series).
3. Study how animal habitat use and behaviour differ in winter compared to other seasons, and identify conditions and events (such as the development of frazil ice) that may limit survival or reduce post-winter fitness of individuals.

1. Recommend construction windows to protect sensitive aquatic habitats, based on knowledge of winter dynamics and changing climatic conditions.
2. Account for winter dynamics in aquatic management during other seasons (e.g., fish stocking, restoration, biomanipulation).
3. Include important winter refuges when considering the protection of critical habitats for species at risk.

CONSIDERING EFFECTS OF RAPID GLOBAL CHANGE REQUIRES INTEGRATING EVOLUTIONARY ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

1. Improve knowledge of within-species genetic differentiation to support the identification of Designatable Units (DUs) used by COSWEIC.
2. Develop field-ready genomic monitoring kits for rapid and easy assessment of intraspecific diversity.

1. Consider management procedures that account for adaptive capacity of populations (e.g., setting restrictions to avoid selective fishing/harvest, which cause genetic bottlenecks).
2. Train practitioners to enhance competency with evolutionary principles and methodology (e.g., through workshops or online training platforms).

<p>DYNAMICS OF STATE CHANGES CAUSED BY MULTIPLE STRESSORS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine how multiple stressors influence the probability and nature of tipping points that influence shifts between system states. 2. Define which combinations of particular stressors generate the strongest non-additive and nonlinear effects on organisms, populations, communities, and ecosystems. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrate multiple stressors in environmental risk assessments and authorization/permitting decisions. 2. Integrate non-additive and non-linear effects of stressor combinations in conservation management.
<p>EXPANSION OF LAND AND WATER USE IN NORTHERN CANADA</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct life cycle assessment research to fully characterize current and potential hydropower impacts in northern Canada. 2. Identify crops or strains that have the greatest local benefit while mitigate their impacts on water resources. 3. Investigate the effects of agricultural expansion (northward) on land-water linkages (e.g., fragmentation). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop northern-based farming and agricultural research institutes (e.g., Northern Farm Training Institute, NWT). 2. Develop a national-level plan for intensive land use projects in northern Canada. 3. Expand the National Hydrometric Program (Water Survey Canada) to provide more extensive flow and water level data for northern systems.
<p>EXPECTATION FOR INCREASED RIGOUR AND TRANSPARENCY IN ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION MAKING</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine how data collected from strategic impact assessments can be integrated into national databases, such that it is useful for conservation planning. 2. Conduct case studies to investigate the effects of legislative reforms on transparency, accountability, and meaningful public involvement. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide open access to baseline and monitoring data, methodologies, and metadata. 2. Include rigorous scientific methodologies in environmental decision making while facilitating the implementation of Indigenous knowledge. 3. Make publicly available all documents used to inform government regulatory impact analysis statements.

<p>GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS OVER WATER ACCESS AND TRADE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve understanding of how climate change will influence water demand for agriculture and other intensive practices. 2. Identify Canadian waterbodies most likely to be affected by shifting water demands and evaluate scenarios to determine which conservation strategies will be most effective. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine the most effective policy levers to protect water quality and quantity, while also encouraging a reduced national water footprint. 2. Engage in stakeholder activities to promote participatory process in water-related issues. 3. Explore options for Canada to contribute more fulsomely to the resolution of water issues in other countries.
<p>INCREASED LOADING OF PHARMACEUTICALS IN WASTEWATER</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine the safety limits for drugs in the environment. 2. Determine the impacts of key drugs, with an emphasis on sublethal and chronic thresholds in individuals, populations and communities. 3. Develop advanced wastewater treatment techniques/options across different scales, from communities to cities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of efficient treatment and mitigation approaches. 2. Reduce improper disposal or collection of unused pharmaceuticals. 3. Increase monitoring of pharmaceuticals in effluents.
<p>INCREASED RISK OF PETROLEUM SPILLS ARISING FROM NEW PIPELINES</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop technologies and test models for rapid and accurate detection of spills (especially slow leaks that may go unnoticed for some time). 2. Understand the ecological effects of spills during different seasons (e.g., spring runoff versus frozen winters) to inform possible seasonal limits on oil transport. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider sensitive aquatic habitats when planning pipeline routing and configurations (e.g., salmon bearing streams and spawning/incubation/rearing seasons). 2. Ensure that the standards of response planning for inland spills meet those upheld for marine environments. 3. Incorporate modern safety standards and monitoring protocols into authorizations for

	<p>the construction and operation of pipelines to minimize the risk of spills.</p>
<p>INCREASING PRESSURE FOR CANADA TO ENSHRINE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT AND THE RIGHTS OF NATURE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish quantitative, objective definitions for terms such as “healthy” and “harm” as they relate to inland waters so they can be applied in legal and policy frameworks. 2. Develop and track standardized-nation-wide testing of key health indicators for inland waters. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand and unify municipal and provincial declarations of environment rights to all jurisdictions. 2. Determine what constitutes ecological harm from a legal perspective. 3. Apply the emerging approach “legal personality” to provide water systems with legal standing and enforceable rights.
<p>INVASIONS BY NOVEL PATHOGENS WILL CHALLENGE BIOSECURITY AND CONSERVATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine how global stressors promote the emergence and virulence of novel pathogens, and whether synergistic interactions are at play. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reassess existing regulations concerning inspection of travellers and goods at ports of entry to maximize detection of new pathogens. 2. Exercise vigilance towards illegal importations of amphibians (e.g., Government of Canada 2017) and aquatic organisms in general using current mechanisms (e.g., the Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations SOR/2015-121 under the Fisheries Act).

NEW SATELLITE AND REMOTE SENSING TECHNOLOGIES CAN TRANSFORM OUR UNDERSTANDING OF AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS AND THEIR DYNAMICS.

1. Seek out effective ways to expand remote sensing training into high school and early undergraduate levels.
2. Develop remote sensing hardware and software to identify sensitive aquatic habitats, such as groundwater upwelling zones, salmon redds, and winter thermal refugia.
3. Improve multi-scale (reach, watershed, ecoregion) assessments of aquatic habitat condition and stressors by incorporating new information available from emerging remote sensing technologies.

1. Incorporate systematic remote sensing into government monitoring programs at all levels (federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, Indigenous).
2. Develop planning methodologies that incorporate remotely sensed data and inform the prioritization of conservation and restoration actions.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FROM TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED COMMUNITY SCIENCE

1. Develop robust processes for curation and validation of community-generated aquatic data.
2. Explore best practices for passive versus active engagement of community members.
3. Study how to incentivize the broader population and keep community scientists engaged.

1. Further engage Northerners as technological stewards with formal funding opportunities.
2. Incorporate instantaneous public reporting into early detection and rapid response procedures for aquatic invasive species.
3. Explore options for linking with “Big Data” initiatives of commercial data providers, such as Google and Amazon, to increase the development and distribution of third-party applications and decision support tools.

OPPORTUNITIES FROM NATIONAL DATA INTEGRATION

1. Develop best approaches for extrapolating from monitored to non-monitored inland waters.
2. Improve forecasting of responses to environmental stressors such as invasive species, climate change, or pollution through large scale surveys.

1. Support the development and management of large, comparative datasets that will facilitate evidenced-based decision making.
2. Promote data sharing, trust and rights across sectors.
3. Establish open and long-term nation-wide monitoring databases.

**WHOLE COMMUNITY MONITORING
OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM
ENVIRONMENTAL DNA**

1. Develop more comprehensive genetic libraries of aquatic species, with a focus on building localized and well validated species libraries.
2. Address high incidences of false-positives and false-negatives, and deal with the complications arising from DNA decay, DNA advection, and primer bias.
3. Explore the use of environmental RNA (eRNA) as a means to examine the living biodiversity in an ecosystem (i.e. tracking species relative abundances through space and time).

1. Consider the systematic use of eDNA in routine monitoring for the early detection of invasive species or climate-induced range shifts.
2. Manage fisheries and ecosystem health based on detailed understanding of community composition and dynamics.

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979 Table 1. Tabular summary of the 15 issues identified with their corresponding Research Priorities and Policy Options. Issues
980 are presented in alphabetical order.

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