

## LETTER OF INFORMATION

### Great Lakes Indigenous Water Governance Project

**Kelsey Leonard, (PhD Candidate)**  
**(Department of Political Science – McMaster University)**

**Principal Investigator:**

Kelsey Leonard  
Department of Political Science  
McMaster University  
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada  
**(905) 517-8840**  
E-mail: leonardk@mcmaster.ca

***Supervisor:***

Dr. Dustin Garrick  
E-mail: dustin.garrick@smithschool.ox.ac.uk

**Purpose of the Study:**

Indigenous Nations, organizations and leaders are invited to take part in this study on Great Lakes Indigenous Water Governance. The purpose of this study is to identify, celebrate, and share Indigenous excellence in innovation for water governance of the Great Lakes. Across the Great Lakes numerous endeavors are underway to protect the water. However, substantial variations exist between individual Indigenous Nations and how water governance is enacted. Further differentiation of water governance policy, practice, and outcomes exist given the added layer of interjurisdictional coordination Indigenous Nations face with the Canadian and United States governments. The research partnership is an opportunity to document the variety of innovations and approaches Indigenous Nations are undertaking to protect the Great Lakes. Although this research is a part of my doctoral dissertation within the Department of Political Science, it is my intent that the project purpose be of beneficial use to Indigenous Nation partners and help with Indigenous assertion of rights for protection of the Great Lakes.

**Procedures involved in the Research:**

Indigenous Nations are selected as partners in this study and will collaborate with the researcher to determine the best methods and procedures for undertaking the documentation of their water governance innovation project. The research is a quintessentially Indigenous project designed in partnership with the Nations identified as beacons of innovation. Initial steps Indigenous research partners must undertake include nominating an Indigenous Nation through the Call for Research Partnership Application and responding to any follow-up questions or requests for additional information from the researcher. Once research partners have been determined, Indigenous Nation project leads and the researcher will co-develop a research partnership agreement. Additional procedures involved in the research may include:

- Identifying a dedicated partner nation facilitator who assumes responsibility for communication and planning of the project
- Maintain availability by phone and email for timely communication with researcher
- Arrange for a site visit (if possible) for researcher to document water governance innovation and meet project goals as co-determined

**Are there any risks to being a part of this project?**

There are likely minimal risks, if any, to participating in this project. Participation in this research is voluntary and research goals co-determined with Indigenous research partners. However, you can withdraw (stop taking part) at any time until March 1, 2019 shortly prior to the deadline to finalize research partners. While there are no physical risks to participating in this project, there may be some psychological, social, and other risks. Water governance projects explore environmental management crises often rooted in colonization and land dispossession. These risks can be uncomfortable, but no more than day-to-day experiences and political challenges faced by Indigenous Nations protecting the Great Lakes. In the co-development of the research partnership agreement with each Indigenous Nation we will co-determine how to mitigate any potential or perceived risks associated with participation in this project.

**Potential Benefits**

The project hopes to better understand the unique role and responsibilities of Indigenous Nations in water governance in the Great Lakes region. Documenting Indigenous water governance innovations may also aid Indigenous Nations in their pursuit of equity in Great Lakes decision-making and a seat at the table for transboundary policy-making. Additional benefits will be explored with the research partners during the co-development of the research partnership agreement. Ultimately, researchers and others may be able to take the findings from the project to recommend reforms to current water governance mechanisms to build greater equity and resilience for water protection of the Great Lakes.

**Confidentiality**

The researcher and partner will co-develop terms of confidentiality for the project, this may include a data sharing agreement. Information collected during the project will only be used with partner permission. The researcher will take the utmost care to protect project information. The researcher and partner will determine procedures for obtaining consent for the project that are a cultural match for the Indigenous Nation. If the Indigenous Nation has a research ethics review board the researcher and project facilitator will submit a research ethics proposal to the Tribal/First Nation government for review. The storage of any data collected during the project will be co-determined and outlined in a data sharing partnership agreement. If co-determined data can be stored on MacDrive and/or in locked facilities in the Department of Political Science, KTH Building, at McMaster University, Hamilton, ON Canada.

**Participation and Withdrawal:**

Your participation in this project is voluntary. It is your choice to be part of the project or not. If you decide to be part of the project, you can stop (withdraw), from the project for whatever reason, even after submitting your project partnership application or part-way through the project or up until March 1, 2019 when I expect to finalize my research partners for my dissertation. If you decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal, any data you have provided will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise.

**Data retention plan:**

The data collected through this project will be stored for five years. Results will be disseminated as findings in my PhD dissertation, but may also inform and be used for additional postdoctoral research. The retention of final files of the data collected will be co-determined after the final dissertation submission date of June 1, 2019 and may be kept in a locked and password protected external hard drive that may be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Department of Political Science, KTH Building, at McMaster University. The researcher will follow appropriate transfer protocol as outlined in the data sharing agreement with the research partners if the data can no longer be stored at McMaster University.

**How do I find out what was learned in this project?**

I expect to have this project completed by June 1, 2019. Sharing of the project results will be co-determined with research partners.

**Questions about the project:** If you have questions or need more information about the project itself, please contact me at:

*leonardk@mcmaster.ca*

If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat  
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142  
C/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support  
E-mail: [ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca)