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# RING OF FIRE ASSESSMENT

AN ASSESSMENT OF REFLECTIONS  
FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE  
NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION  
TERRITORY

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*IN HONOUR OF RINGO FIDDLER*

JOSEPH DUNCAN  
ALEKSANDRA SPASEVSKI

*"We exist in a different world than our ancestors once inhabited. The onus is upon our generation to sustain our traditional land practices to ensure the survival of the generations to come."*



**JOSEPH DUNCAN**

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The research supervisor for the Ring of Fire Assessment is Joseph Duncan (**HBOR, MA-Soc-j**).

Joseph Duncan is a member from Muskrat Dam First Nation, located in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

A former chair to the Sierra Club Ontario Chapter, Joseph Duncan is a committed Indigenous person that advocates for environmental protection in Treaty 9 Territory.



# PART I

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An Introduction to  
the Ring of Fire



# Introduction

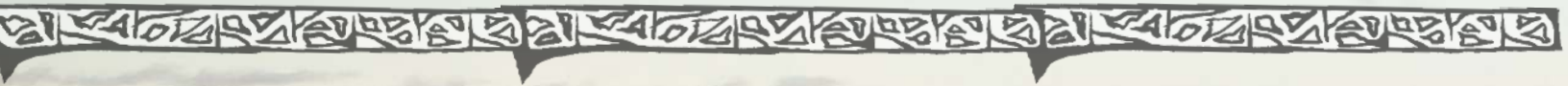
Ontario's Far North recently received attention due to the \$60 billion chromite mining potential. The massive mining project is known as the Ring of Fire. Both provincial and federal leaders have identified this mining opportunity as a multigenerational opportunity that can create both economic and societal benefits for communities (Chetkiewicz & Lintner, 2014).

Repercussions of mining developments generally have a significant impact on the economy, environment, society and Indigenous nations' natural habitat impacting their survival. Unfavorable repercussions of surface and subsurface mining incorporate waste material, environmental permanent devastations, and human rights violations under the Canadian Charter of Rights, United Nations Declaration of Indigenous People for First Nations communities. This can be comparable to the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (Keeling & Sandlos, 2015). The potential economic contributions can significantly benefit both current and future generations (Haddaway et al., 2019). For instance, Dr. John Bacher and Danny Beaton, Mohawk of the Turtle Clan outlined that the Ring of Fire severely threatens caribou herds and their habitats (Sierra Club Canada, 2021).

# History of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Territory



Established in 1983, the Nishnawbe Aski Nation governance represents Forty-nine First Nations communities with a population of 45,000 in Northern Ontario (Nishnawbe Aski Nation, n.d.; Nishnawbe Aski Nation & Together Design Lab, 2018). This encompasses the James Bay Treaty 9. Signed in 1905 with Canada and Province of Ontario, Treaty 9 was established on the agreement to full sovereignty and autonomy involving hunting and trapping rights as well as education and economic stability on reserves. In 1977, the Nishnawbe Aski Nation publicly declared their rights and principles for the people and the land. Indigenous and First Nations communities accepted a promise of happiness and prosperity however, the Crown haven't fulfilled promises on the Treaty (Nishnawbe Aski Nation, n.d.; Nishnawbe Aski Nation & Together Design Lab, 2018).



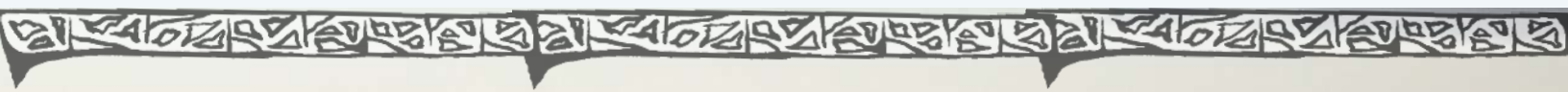


"These rights include:

- The right to receive compensation for our exploited natural resources.
- The right to receive compensation for the destruction and abrogation of our hunting, fishing, and gathering rights.
- The right to renegotiate our Treaty as understood by our people, land and resources.
- The right to approach other world nations to further the aims of the Cree and Ojibway Nations of Treaty No. 9."

(Nishnawbe Aski Nation, n.d.)

Recently, Northern Ontario's First Nations leaders have placed a moratorium on the Ring of Fire mining development. Similar to the Mining Act, the Forestry Act and the Far North Act- Bill 191, the Ring of Fire mining development can eliminate Native rights without proper consultation. This is due to the minimal effort made by leaders and decision makers to properly consult with members of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation. As a result, the Ring of Fire consultation process has been extended to ensure that communities within the Ring of Fire region are properly and meaningfully consulted (CBC News, 2021).



# Purpose

The assessment aimed to encourage the Indigenous members of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation to share their traditional and land base knowledge on the Ring of Fire development. Under section 35 of the Canadian Constitution Act, the crown must recognize treaty rights and legal obligation to consult with 49 First Nations communities and the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Governance. This includes meaningful consultations with Indigenous members from that territory (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982). Lacking meaningful consultation, it's unclear whether the perceptions about the Ring of Fire's potential environmental and animal migration patterns will be impacted from the Ring of Fire development within the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Territory.

This research assessment examined the Indigenous knowledge and concerns from NAN members affecting their hunting, trapping and traditional land practices. The assessment identified multiple concerns surrounding environmental impacts in the region, including lakes and rivers systems near the Ring of Fire. Additionally, this research assessment will provide an understanding of the potential economic growth for Nishnawbe Aski Nation members and bring economic stability in the NAN Territory.





# Goals

This assessment addresses four main objectives to further understand the impacts of the Ring of Fire on the Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory.

The objectives are:

1. Explore current understandings in how mining developments impact Indigenous communities.
2. Highlight Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge and perspective on how their land rights are impacted by the Ring of Fire development.
3. Highlight Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge and perspective on environmental and ecological damage on the Ring of Fire.
4. Outline Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Indigenous peoples' recommendations for the Ring of Fire development.



# Background

In the past, environmental, social, and economic impacts of mining developments were a primary focus. However, there are various challenges identified when discussing impact particularly related to social and economic impact of mining developments. This is especially true when understanding how Indigenous communities' livelihoods are impacted (Keeling & Sandlos, 2015).



As the purpose of this assessment outlines benefits and deficiencies the Ring of Fire development and emphasizes Indigenous viewpoints, the objectives of this chapter will gain an understanding in:

- The environmental, economic, social impacts of mining development in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Territory from the original land owners.
- The history and challenges for Indigenous consultation.
- The current understanding of the Ring of Fire mining development.





# Impacts of Mining Developments

Reports have outlined that mining developments and related activities yield both positive and negative impacts on the environment, economy, and social welfare. As a result of the various stages of mining developments, there are both direct and indirect impacts that should also be considered when assessing the overall impact of a mining development in a region. Different developmental stages of mining developments can include prospecting, exploration, construction, operation, maintenance, expansion, abandonment, decommissioning (Haddaway et al., 2019).

In relation to environmental impacts, stages including mine exploration, construction and operation have been noted to significantly alter land-use. As a result, land and ecosystems can experience deforestation, erosion, soil contamination, contamination of wetlands and water systems (Haddaway et al., 2019; Keeling & Sandlos, 2015). Whereas, stages including mine abandonment and decommissioning, or repurposing can result in impacts to soil and water systems contamination (Haddaway et al., 2019). Other infrastructure built to support mines such as roads and powerlines can disrupt wildlife migration patterns and increase habitat fragmentation and pollution (Atlin & Gibson, 2017).

In respect to economic contributions, mining developments are a source of employment for local people. This opportunity can contribute to both local and regional economies (Atlin & Gibson, 2017). Previously, mines were operated and supported through government funding and built-in infrastructure. However, a shift in strategy has now encouraged Indigenous communities to take ownership in mine operations through private investments. This allows for Indigenous peoples to benefit more from local and regional employment and economic opportunities (Rodon & Lévesque, 2015).



However, some researchers have documented that mining developments don't entirely benefit Indigenous and First Nations communities. Communities like the Nishnawbe Aski Nation who are rich in resources, are also isolated and may not earn the greatest number of economic benefits from the mines. This is mainly due to the fact that communities are not consulted thoroughly and have little capacity to mitigate the impacts of mines (Keeling & Sandlos, 2015). It is also important to note that communities lose economic benefits when mines are closed or decommissioned. Due to the difficulty of evaluating economic impacts, the true effects of mining development on Indigenous and First Nations communities require further understanding (Haddaway et al., 2019; Rodon & Lévesque, 2015).

Furthermore, researchers have also identified that Indigenous and First Nations communities are most impacted by mining developments (Keeling & Sandlos, 2015). Negative impacts identified from mining developments on Indigenous and First Nations communities often result in decreased health and living standards. This is primarily due to complex relationships with government bodies, socio-economic statuses and impacts on traditional practices (Rodon & Lévesque, 2015).

## *Case Study: Socio-Economic Impacts of Mines*

Rodon and Lévesque (2015) studied the impacts of two active mines located in Inuit Nunangat on Indigenous communities and whether the impacts of the communities have changed over time. The mines studied operated from 1957 to 2002.

Indigenous and First Nations communities involved were not against the mines due to the economic benefits they can potentially offer. Communities wanted to develop their own frameworks and have autonomy over their land. As a result, Inuit communities benefited more from economic opportunities. The construction and operation of mines resulted in community empowerment, employment opportunities and ability to gain experience for future mining projects. The study also concluded the mines resulted in an increase in drug and alcohol abuse, environmental destruction and contamination, disruption in land-based economic, cultural and family impacts and an increase in employee turnover.

Final thoughts: Experiences and thoughts from Inuit communities were mixed as though there are benefits in welcoming the mining operation, many felt that they do not create a sustainable economic development for communities.



## Indigenous Consultations

Consultations are intended to respect and protect Indigenous rights and fair use of resources for future generations (Payer & Bonshor, 2019). It is Canada's duty to consult with Indigenous and First Nations peoples during projects and activities that infringe on the rights or interests of Indigenous and First Nations peoples (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982). Once communities have been properly and fairly consulted, it is the government's duty to ensure that accommodations are implemented to mitigate or prevent impacts identified throughout the consultation process (Canadian Transportation Agency, 2021).

The consultation process can be generally described in four stages. This includes initial outreach, formal consultation, integrated consultation, and determination. In respect to the first stage, initial outreach allows for government officials identifying all communities and Indigenous peoples who will be impacted (Canadian Transportation Agency, 2021). This stage also allows for decision-makers to share project details early on in the project development. Stage two focuses on a formal consultation, where decision makers engage Indigenous people by providing all relevant project details and discussing problems and concerns. Decision makers must consider all feedback given by communities and respond to issues raised and outline mitigation strategies. The third stage is an integrated approach that allows for ongoing discussions (Payer & Bonshor, 2019). Finally, the last stage is determination. Once properly and meaningfully consulted with Indigenous peoples, decision makers will reveal their final thoughts and future steps for the project. If the project proceeds, compensation and strategies should be outlined to mitigate impacts on indigenous communities (Canadian Transportation Agency, 2021; Gamble & McQueen, 2019).

Past consultations with Indigenous and First Nations peoples failed to adequately engage and meaningfully consult with communities. In 2018, the Federal Court of Appeal overturned the government of Canada's approval to move forward with the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. This was in part due to the lack of inadequate consultation process for Indigenous peoples (Irwin, 2018). This was a major turning point for communities and decision makers as discussions increased around how to hold meaningful consultations (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., 2018). As described by Justice Dawson in a review of the National Energy Board, meaningful consultations "entail testing and being prepared to amend policy proposals in the light of information received and providing feedback" (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., 2018). Simply taking notes to pass along information to decision makers is not enough. Consultations allow for Indigenous and First Nations people to be listened to and properly accommodated. Note taking doesn't satisfy the need for proper consultations and infringes on the rights of Indigenous peoples (Gamble & McQueen, 2019).

To ensure Indigenous communities are properly consulted, the Indigenous Corporate Training Inc, outlined strategies to ensure consultations are meaningful. Strategies include doing proper research to understand communities, acknowledge the past and being open for diverse opinions by not defending the crown. Moreover, decision makers should engage communities early on for consultations, be transparent and be a part of the community. This allows us to maintain trust and build relationships. Finally, respect cultural relationships between community and land, show business integration and consistently provide information for ongoing consultations (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., 2015; Payer & Bonshor, 2019). This allows for building opportunities for Indigenous peoples and looking towards community members for leadership and support. The primary aim for holding meaningful consultations should allow for accommodation and continuing meaningful discussions. Moving forward, decision makers and governing bodies must allow for sufficient consultations to not infringe on the rights of Indigenous peoples (Gamble & McQueen, 2019; Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., 2015; Payer & Bonshor, 2019).



# Ring of Fire Mining Development

Ontario's Far North has received a lot of attention from the Federal and Ontario Government to revitalize Canada's economic stability. The Ring of Fire is estimated to potentially retain approximately \$60 billion mining deposits the in the Ring of Fire. Many provincial and federal decision makers have described this as a multigenerational opportunity that can create both economic and societal benefits for communities. As reports suggest, this opportunity could contribute more than \$5 billion in Ontario's Gross Domestic Product over the next decade. The Ring of Fire is located in a remote area of the James Bay Lowlands. It is approximately 5 000 km<sup>2</sup> in size (Chetkiewicz & Lintner, 2014). As shown in Figure 1, this mining opportunity is located on the traditional territories of several of Northern Ontario's First Nations communities (Chong, 2014).

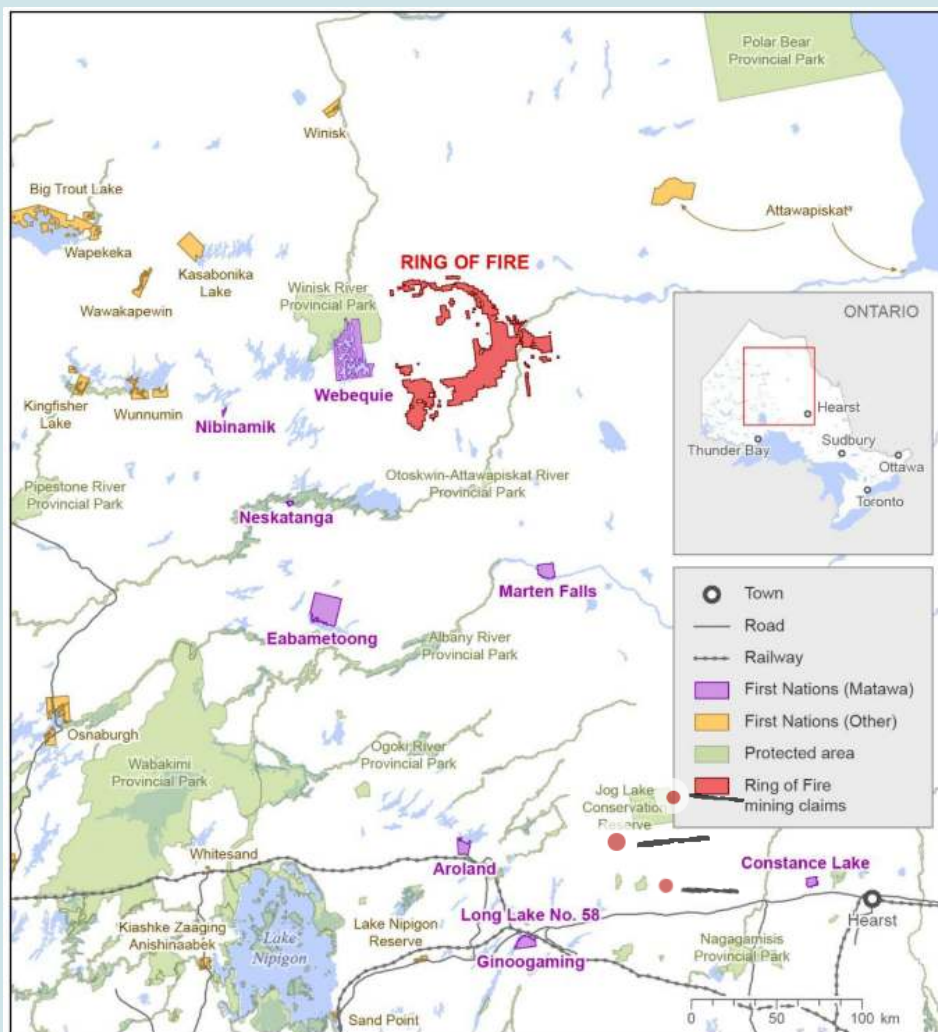


Figure 1: Ring of Fire of Northern Ontario Map (Chong, 2014).

Preceding reports have identified additional challenges specific to the Ring of Fire's location and potential shortfalls. One challenge includes the threat against the ecosystem. The region where the Ring of Fire is located is also home to one of Canada's largest peatlands and boreal forest that is free from human impacts. Both peatlands and forests are an important carbon storage and are critical for mitigating the impacts of climate change (Chetkiewicz & Lintner, 2014; Norgate & Haque, 2010). Additionally, the remote location and the lack of infrastructure is an additional challenge that must be considered as it impedes resource development. Mining developers will face additional costs at each stage of development. For example, additional building costs are needed for transportation and energy infrastructure to begin resource extraction (Chetkiewicz & Lintner, 2014; Chong, 2014). Finally, proper education and training for employees of the mining development is an additional challenge identified in reports. The OCC states that more than 45% of Northern Ontario employers have a difficulty in hiring people with proper qualifications. As a result, more time is needed to engage communities and identify training programs (Chetkiewicz & Lintner, 2014).

Moreover, some Indigenous and First Nations people have expressed their concerns about the Ring of Fire mining development. This is due to the lack of consultations and opportunities to share benefits and roles that First Nations communities play in the development (Chetkiewicz & Lintner, 2014). As previously outlined, Indigenous consultations must be conducted in good faith with meaningful efforts from decision makers. However, minimal effort was made to properly consult other members of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (Turner, 2020). As a result, the Ring of Fire consultation process has been extended to ensure that communities are properly and meaningfully consulted (CBC News, 2021).

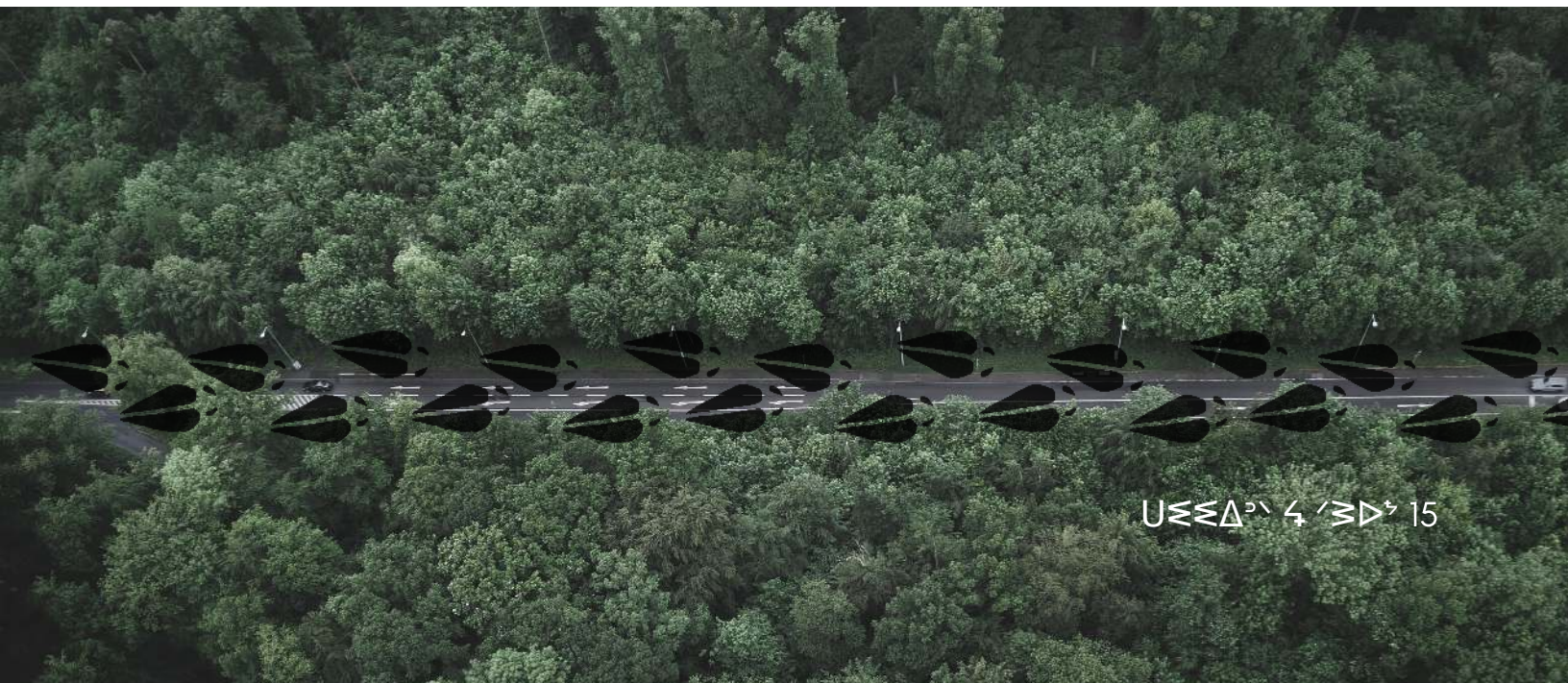
More work is needed to ensure communities in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation are and meaningfully consulted throughout the Ring of Fire development by both levels of government, mining corporations and other stakeholders. Decision makers and leaders must engage Indigenous communities early on in the development. However, recent actions by decision makers and leaders do not show that there has been sufficient effort to engage Indigenous communities (CBC News, 2021).



# Summary

Due to the various stages of mining developments, there are both direct and indirect social, economic and environmental impacts that should also be considered when assessing the overall effect of the Ring of Fire mining development (Haddaway et al., 2019). Benefits identified for this mining development include the economic potential for current and future generations. However, concerns discussed within the literature include environmental impacts, lack of infrastructure due to the remote location and potential negative impacts on the Indigenous communities (Keeling & Sandlos, 2015).

Indigenous communities have yet to be adequately informed or properly consulted on the mining development. Consultations don't restrict a project's progress, but they can potentially enhance benefits and ensure that there are mitigation efforts in place to support communities (Chong, 2014; Keeling & Sandlos, 2015). As a result of the lack of meaningful consultation, the Ring of Fire mining development Indigenous consultations have been formally extended (CBC News, 2021; Chong, 2014). Currently, more work is needed to understand what the Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities think about the Ring of Fire mining project.







# PART II

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## Our Approach

**This assessment used interviews to understand the impact of the Ring of Fire in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN).**

This technique can provide insights into the specific roles of the problems, uncovering the First Nations community's concerns of wildlife migrations patterns impacted by the development. This also includes effects on the environment in the region, including lakes and rivers systems situated near the Ring of Fire. The research also hopes to provide an understanding of the potential economic growth for NAN members.



## Data Collection & Selection

Interviews hosted were approximately 30 minutes - 1 hour long. Interviews will look to answer 9 questions. Interviewers may ask supplementary questions for participants to further expand on their answers and experiences. Interview questions are outlined in the Interview Guide. People surveyed were not asked questions related to names or participants identity and did not require participants' private information confidentiality and continuity purposes. Interview data have been digitized and kept safely and securely on password protected servers. The interview data collection period began July 2021 and concluded in November 2021. Statistically the surveys were either hand written with Indigenous members from the NAN Territory by researcher Joseph Duncan and Creedon Tait. The electronic surveys were completed by members from the NAN Territory within the 49 First Nation Communities shared on social media platforms and individually emailed to NAN members who participated.

Indigenous peoples from the NAN Territory will be selected for the interviews. All individuals volunteered for this assessment. These opportunities were shared through community centers and Wequedong Lodge situated in Thunder Bay that hosts NAN Indigenous peoples for medical appointments. The population of Indigenous peoples in the NAN Territory is 39,000 people from 49 First Nation Communities. This assessment completed 52 interviews.





# PART III

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## Results

This section will outline the results from the qualitative interviews and surveys. Additionally, this section will also discuss the implications of the results and outline recommendations made by NAN members who participated in this assessment and the possible limitations to this study.

## Demographics

Within this assessment, a majority of individuals were between the ages of 31-50. Three individuals who participated in this assessment were between the ages of 18-30 and twelve individuals were between the ages of 51-75. No individuals who participated in this study were above the age of 75. Figure 2 showcases the age distribution. Of the individuals who participated in this assessment, 29% of individuals were informed of the Ring of Fire Mining development while 71% indicated they were uninformed about the project.

This can be due to the limited reach of the virtual interviews have when reaching diverse age groups. Previous measures were taken to gather diverse age perspectives such as personally reaching out to communities and elders and providing outreach materials to hotels and residences Indigenous peoples frequented. Additionally, the short sampling period could also restrict the number of participants who participated in this assessment.

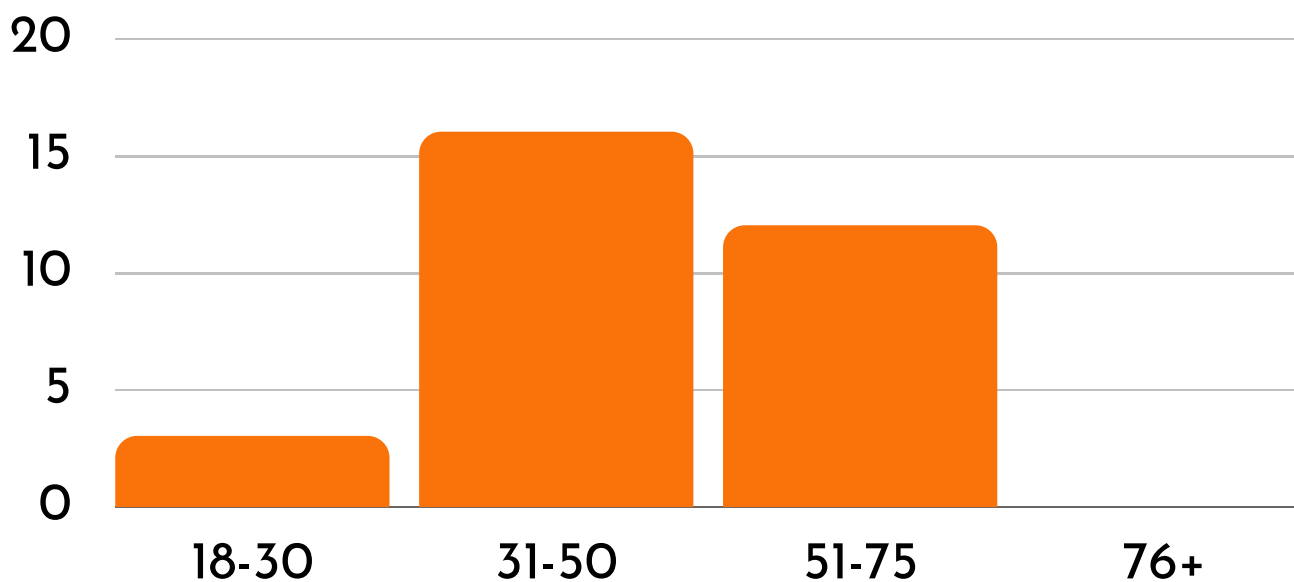


Figure 2: Age distribution of assessment participants

# Impacts on Indigenous Peoples & Traditional Knowledge

Within this assessment, participants were asked if there was concern about how the mining development could impact their traditional knowledge. As a result of the survey, 92% of participants expressed that they felt that the Ring of Fire would impact their livelihoods and traditional knowledge. More specifically, participants outlined that the impacts on the environment would destroy the ecosystems that they depend on and alter their way of living (i.e., hunters would be severely impacted). Additionally, 87.5% of participants outlined that they do not currently support the project.



Moreover, almost all participants outlined their concern for the lack of consultations. They feel regardless of what is shared and discussed, decision makers and leaders won't listen to Indigenous communities. Participants within this assessment highlighted that regardless of consultations, decision makers and leaders will "do what they want." One participant highlight that the current governing bodies don't care for First Nations and Indigenous peoples and these actions can destroy their current way of living. As a result, a participant highlighted that more communication is needed from leaders both Indigenous and none. Finally, many discussed the concerns for the environment and the animals that inhabitant the land. Many depend on the land for their livelihoods and participants identified that the Ring of Fire can be a serious threat.





## Environmental Impacts

Within this assessment, participants were asked various questions about whether they currently had concerns about the wildlife, rivers, and lakes in relation to the Ring of Fire. In respect to the wildlife, participants acknowledge that they have noticed a shift in migration patterns for geese, fowl, and caribou. Additionally, fish populations have been unusually low, while fish spawning's times have been irregular. In respect to how the wildlife will change in the areas near the Ring of Fire, there were a number of participants were not concerned however others were highly concerned especially due to the change in migration patterns, potential water contamination, impact on vegetation. Moreover, one participant highlighted the concern about how this development could influence climate change. In respect to rivers and lakes near the Ring of Fire, similar concerns were discussed which includes migration patterns for aquatic wildlife.

Additionally, participants discussed that traplines, vegetation, wildlife and livelihoods are currently impacted due to infrastructure constructions. Many have witnessed bulldozers and other construction tools destroying native ecosystems. This is a major concern for individuals if the Ring of Fire project further progresses.

## Economic Impacts

This assessment also asked participants to rank potential economic contributions for Indigenous communities that they feel the Ring of Fire development could bring. As shown in Table 1, participants identified that the most valuable economic contribution of the Ring of Fire was the potential increase in job opportunities for communities' members. Additionally, economic stability, housing and food security were highly ranked in terms by participants for high economic contributions. Alternatively, tourism, economic sovereignty and Indigenous health and awareness were ranked low by assessment participants as they felt that these factors were not as valuable compared to other economic contributions that the mining development could bring.

Table 1: Summary of how participants ranked potential economic Ring of Fire contributions

Economic Contribution	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7
Jobs	77%	11%	5%	5%	5%	0%	0%
Economic stability	0%	47%	16%	26%	5%	5%	0%
Housing	16%	5%	58%	5%	5%	11%	0%
Food security	5%	16%	5%	58%	5%	11%	0%
Tourism	0%	0%	0%	0%	58%	16%	16%
Economic Sovereignty	0%	0%	11%	0%	16%	53%	21%
Indigenous health & awareness	0%	21%	0%	0%	0%	0%	53%



## Limitations

This assessment was limited by several factors including time. As a result of the short sampling period, sample size was quite small and may not accurately represent the total population. This limited this study as the interviewing period lasted 5 months. Additionally, due to the time sensitivity of the Ring of Fire development, a longer study period may not have benefited communities. An additional limitation for the study is the current wildfire fires impacting Northern Ontario (The Canadian Press, 2021). As a result, many Indigenous communities were evacuated from their homes and were transported to the nearest and safest locations away from the growing fires. This may have impacted the reach of this assessment as many NAN members were primarily focused on safely evacuating their homes rather than participating within this assessment. Future studies should focus on extending their study period to gather more data.





# PART VI

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## Concluding Thoughts

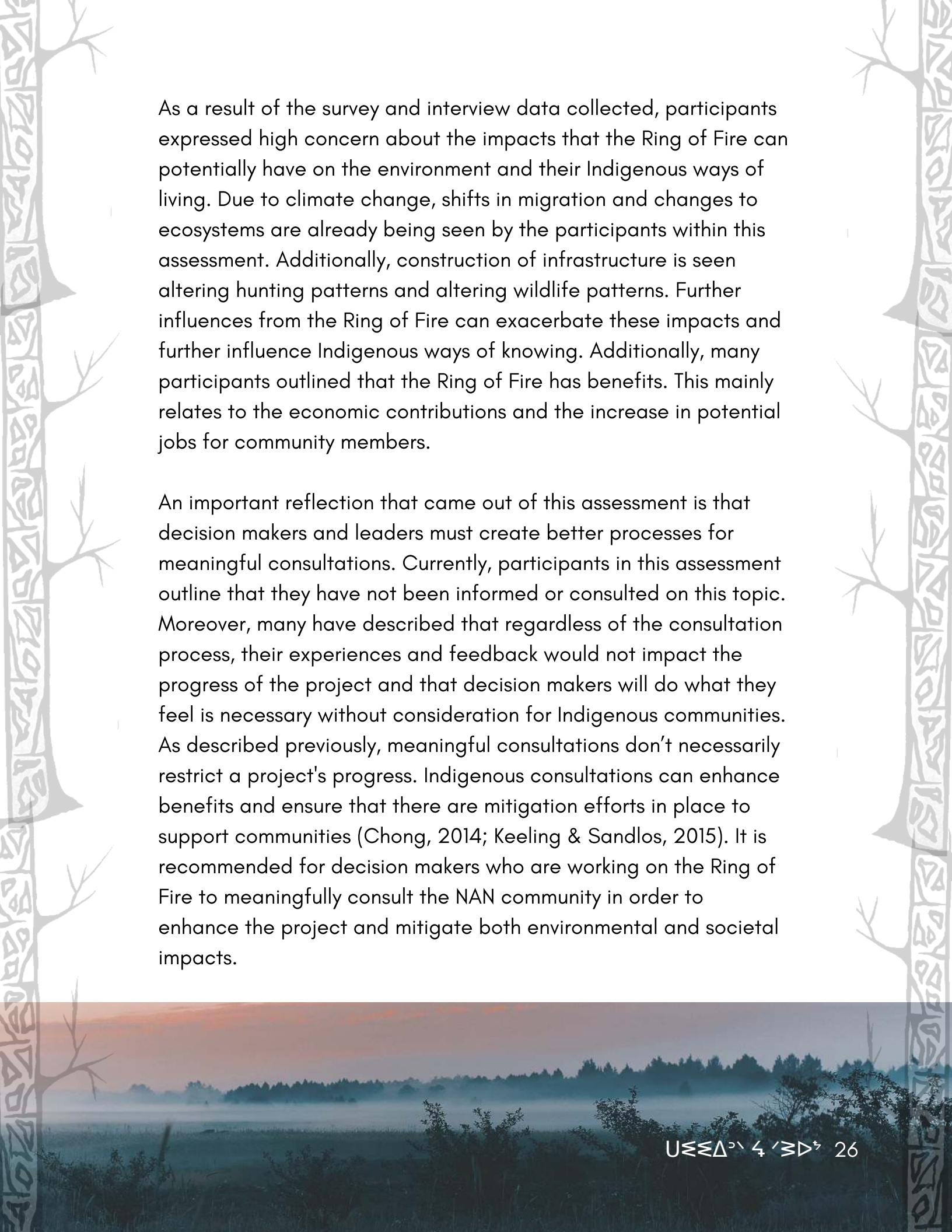




**The original purpose of this assessment was to highlight Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Indigenous people's traditional knowledge and perspective on the Ring of Fire development.**

As previously stated, the objectives of this assessment are:

1. Explore current understandings on how the Ring of Fire development is impacting Indigenous communities.
2. Highlight Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge and perspective on how their land rights are impacted by the Ring of Fire development.
3. Showcasing Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge and perspective on environmental and ecological damage on the Ring of Fire.
4. Outline Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Indigenous peoples' recommendations for the Ring of Fire development.



As a result of the survey and interview data collected, participants expressed high concern about the impacts that the Ring of Fire can potentially have on the environment and their Indigenous ways of living. Due to climate change, shifts in migration and changes to ecosystems are already being seen by the participants within this assessment. Additionally, construction of infrastructure is seen altering hunting patterns and altering wildlife patterns. Further influences from the Ring of Fire can exacerbate these impacts and further influence Indigenous ways of knowing. Additionally, many participants outlined that the Ring of Fire has benefits. This mainly relates to the economic contributions and the increase in potential jobs for community members.

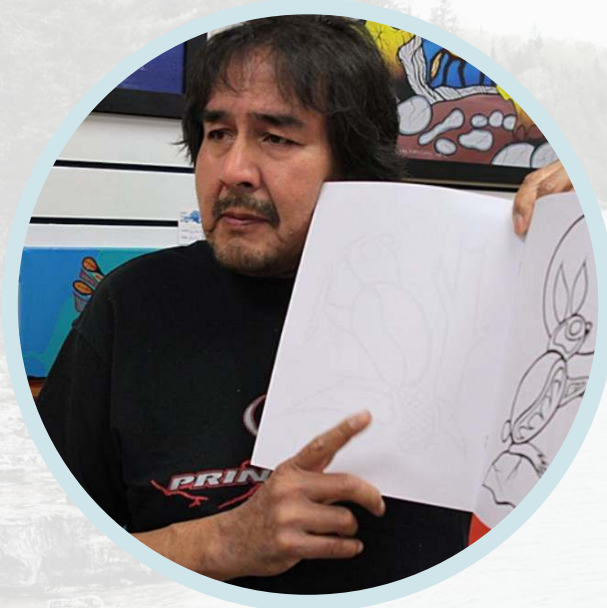
An important reflection that came out of this assessment is that decision makers and leaders must create better processes for meaningful consultations. Currently, participants in this assessment outline that they have not been informed or consulted on this topic. Moreover, many have described that regardless of the consultation process, their experiences and feedback would not impact the progress of the project and that decision makers will do what they feel is necessary without consideration for Indigenous communities. As described previously, meaningful consultations don't necessarily restrict a project's progress. Indigenous consultations can enhance benefits and ensure that there are mitigation efforts in place to support communities (Chong, 2014; Keeling & Sandlos, 2015). It is recommended for decision makers who are working on the Ring of Fire to meaningfully consult the NAN community in order to enhance the project and mitigate both environmental and societal impacts.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & REFERENCES



*In honour of*  
**RINGO FIDDLER**



In light of Ringo Fiddler's passing, the researcher's of this report would like to honour his memory by showcasing his artwork through out this report. With Ringo's permission, all images in this report is based off artwork created by Ringo Fiddler.

***Miigwetch Ringo***

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Ringo Fiddler was born in Kenora, Ontario and raised in Sandy First Nation, Ontario. He was a self-taught artist that specializes in Nature Woodland Style.

The images have a deep and spiritual meaning as they were told to him by his grandfather and elders in his community. The feather represents love for all creation, the wolf tracks represents strength, bond and endurance. The colour red represents summer and black represents spring.





## Acknowledgements & Contributions

This assessment is in honor of Ringo Fiddler. Miigwech Ringo for allowing us to use your art as inspiration for the report.

Thank you to the research team Joseph Duncan, Aleksandra Spasevski and, Creedon Tait for dedicating time and effort to the assessment.

Thank you to *Donna Kroocmo* and the *Wequedong Lodge* for allowing the research team to hold interviews.

Special thanks to Sierra Club Canada Foundation Staff members for supporting this assessment process.



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