

Georgian Bay Geopark

Presentation the Township of the
Archipelago

June 19, 2026





WHAT IS A UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK?

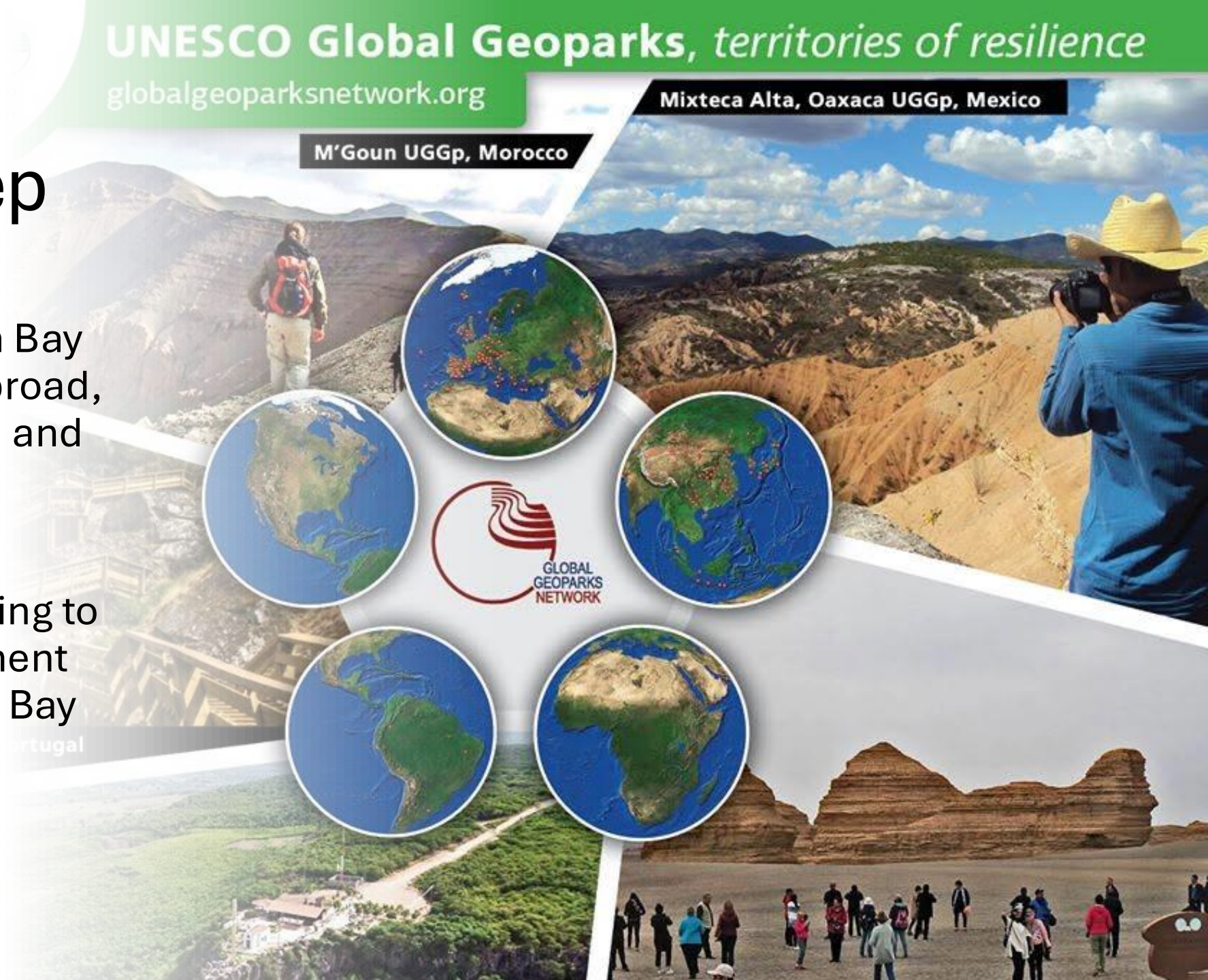
A UNESCO Global Geopark is a single, unified geographical area where landscapes and geological formations of **international value** are **identified, protected, and promoted**.

The Next Step

Since 2023, the Georgian Bay Geopark has pursued a broad, region-wide consultation and assessment process

With resources now moving to comprehensive engagement and outreach around the Bay

Eventual goal to achieve UNESCO designation



Part of a Global Network

Sharing lessons
learned with more
than 200 Global
Geoparks



Presentation Objectives

Concerns have been
raised and we are listening

Misinformation sourced to
one person's campaign

We are here to correct the
record, and invite further
dialogue

Offer engagement in
planning a Geopark



Who Are We?

Concerned citizens,
largely volunteer

Non-profit, non-
regulatory and voluntary
initiative



Why Such a Large Area?

One continuous freshwater landscape of bays, islands, and channels — sharing water, species, contamination pathways, and ecological fate

The full globally significant geological story

Areas

GBG Zone of Influence: 36,745 km² (Tertiary watersheds)
GBG Core Land: 30,765 km² (Quaternary watersheds)
GBG Core Water: 18,477 km²

Coordinate Geographic System: NAD_1983_Canada_Atlas_Lambert

Source: Draw based on [Ontario Watershed Boundaries \(OWB\)](#),
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (Updated on 2025)



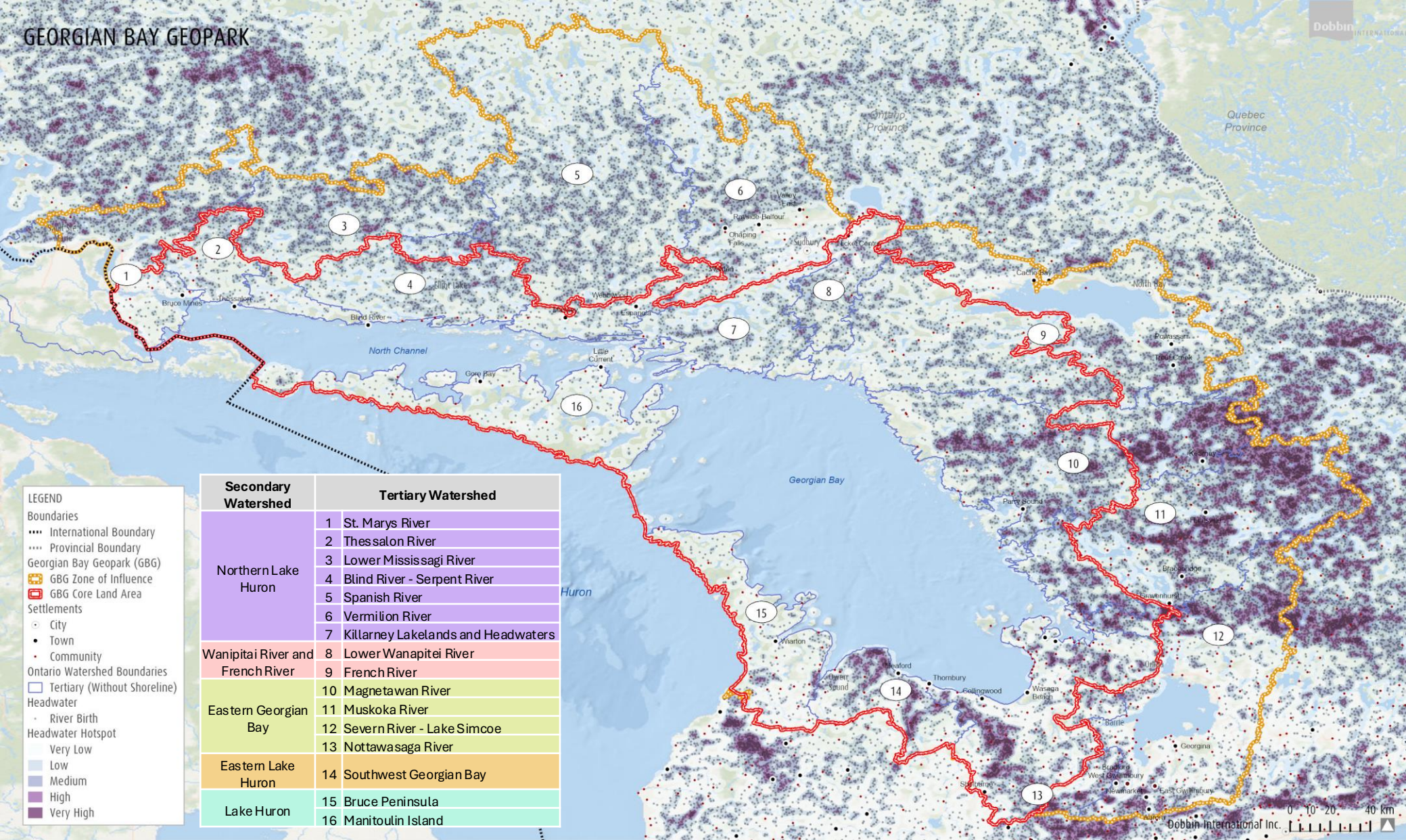
A Basin Under Threat

Rapid expansion of the
Greater Toronto Area,
Intensifying climate
change,
Pollution and invasive
species,
Biodiversity loss,
Overtourism,
Absence of coordinated,
data-driven regional
planning.

ESA: Water sources



ESA: Water sources



What Do We Intend to Do?

Create an educational platform to promote responsible geotourism, destination stewardship and sustainable community development for a region we all love

Provide interpretation of the unique globally significant geoheritage





Indigenous Leadership and Engagement

A structural pillar of the project since inception

Foundational principles established under Indigenous guidance and leadership

Launching comprehensive Indigenous led outreach and engagement

Better Tourism Management

Team of volunteer tourism professionals working expressly to counter the threats of mass/overtourism

Developing tools to educate and influence tourism stakeholders, provide access to resources to adopt sustainable approaches

GEORGIAN BAY GEOTOURISM TOOLKIT



A Collaborative Community Driven Framework:

Managing tourism to ensure Georgian Bay remains a resilient, sustainable, healthy and beautiful place to live and visit forever.



Funded by the Federal
Economic Development
Agency for Southern Ontario

Financé par l'Agence fédérale
de développement économique
pour le Sud de l'Ontario

Canada



BURREN AND CLIFFS OF MOHER

GEO PARK

PEOPLE. PLACE. LEARNING. LIVELIHOOD.

Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism

By adopting the Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism, we commit to a process of continuous improvement in sustainable tourism practice. We observe the following principles and practices:

Working Together

✓ We collaborate with all stakeholders to collectively develop the Geopark as a sustainable tourism destination.

A Cared-for Landscape

✓ We actively participate in conserving our natural and cultural heritage.

A Well-understood Heritage

✓ We offer quality information and interpretation to communicate our stories and the unique character of our place to guests.

Vibrant Communities

✓ We work to ensure that tourism makes a positive social contribution so that it benefits our community as well as our guests. We aim to make our services available to the widest possible audience.

Strengthened Livelihoods

✓ We contribute to the local economy by maintaining and supporting local employment, by sourcing services and produce locally wherever possible, and by engaging with other businesses in promoting our region as a sustainable tourism destination.

Sustainable Environmental Management

✓ We work to an Environmental Action Plan, which includes targets for improvement that are reviewed annually. We have effective systems for monitoring and adequately managing our waste, water, wastewater and energy.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Burren and
Cliffs of Moher
UNESCO Global Geopark

The Code of Practice for sustainable tourism was developed as part of the GeoparkLIFE: Tourism for Conservation Project.





Supporting Conservation

Envision 2030 a data, monitoring, and planning platform — not a regulatory or enforcement instrument

Open-source geospatial analytics platform integrating Indigenous traditional knowledge, watershed data, and ecosystem mapping

Global model for holistic ecoregional stewardship

**Envision 2030: Geospatial Planning, Analytics, and Water
Quality Monitoring Project for the Georgian Bay Geopark**
A Global Planning Model for Regional Stewardship

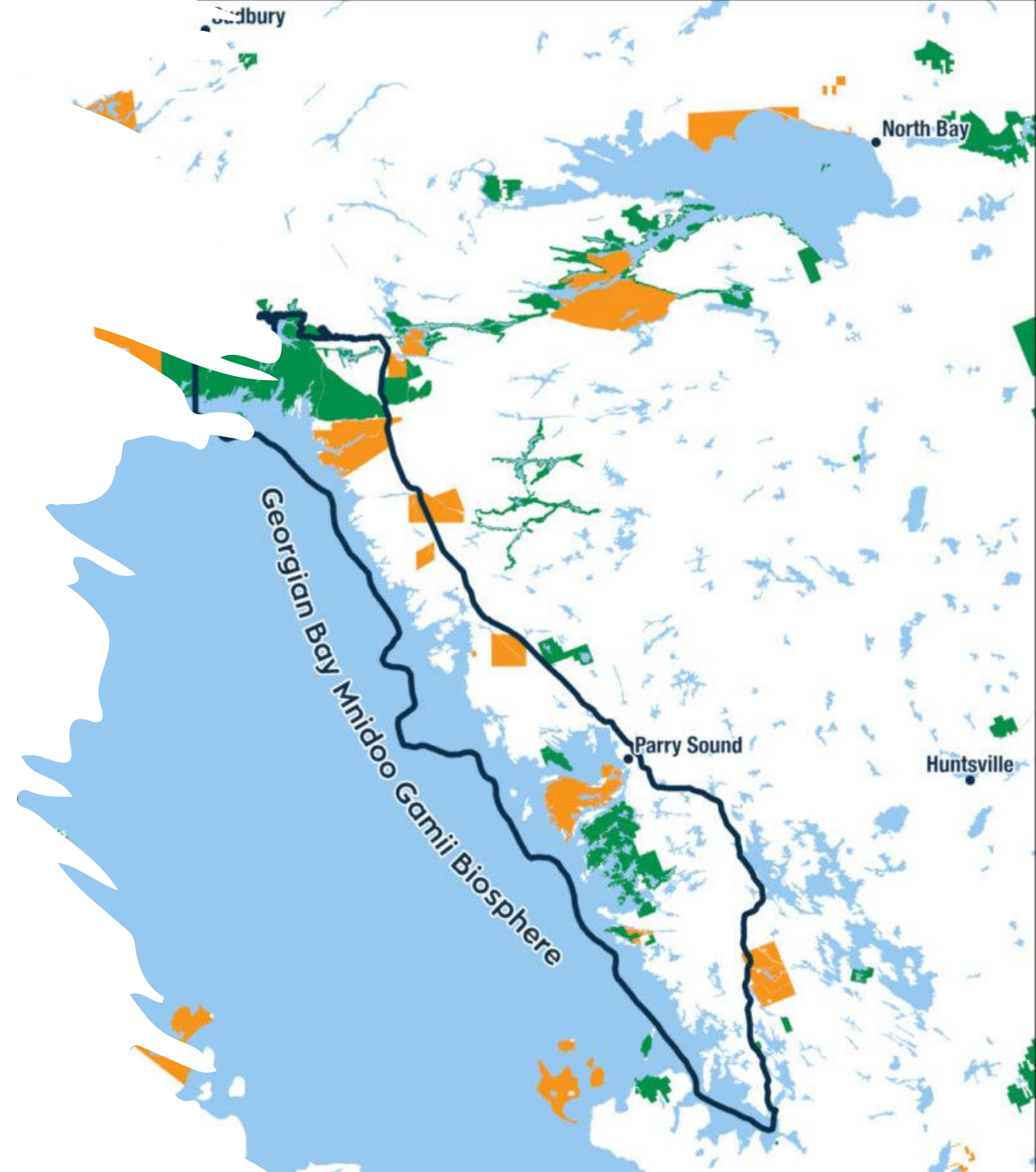


Fill the Governance Gaps

Need basin wide knowledge, engagement and governance

Need to mitigate the cumulative pressures degrading and threatening the region.

Create a governance structure built on stewardship, local identity, science, and accountability.



A Governance Structure With Credibility

Legally recognized
management body
accountable to UNESCO
revalidation.



The Value of UNESCO Designation

73%

Decline in wildlife
populations in
surrounding non-
designated landscapes
over 50 years

1/2

Rate of habitat
degradation inside
designated sites vs.
unprotected landscapes

1st

Designated sites are the
primary global platform
for translating biodiversity
& climate commitments
into action



Benefits to the Archipelago

- Consistence in governance and knowledge across entire basin
- Tools to stimulate geotourism and better tourism management
- More science-based decision making
- Understanding climate change impacts and mitigation options
- Data to make better planning decisions
- More strategic protected area development
- Turning issues into action



Thank you!

We will continue to
engage as we explore
this idea

ESA: Geology

