

Understanding International Approaches to Enabling Indigenous leadership in Conservation

RES 509: Advanced Topics in Conservation Biology Deniz Coskuner, Macathy Jia & Rory Macklin

Introduction:

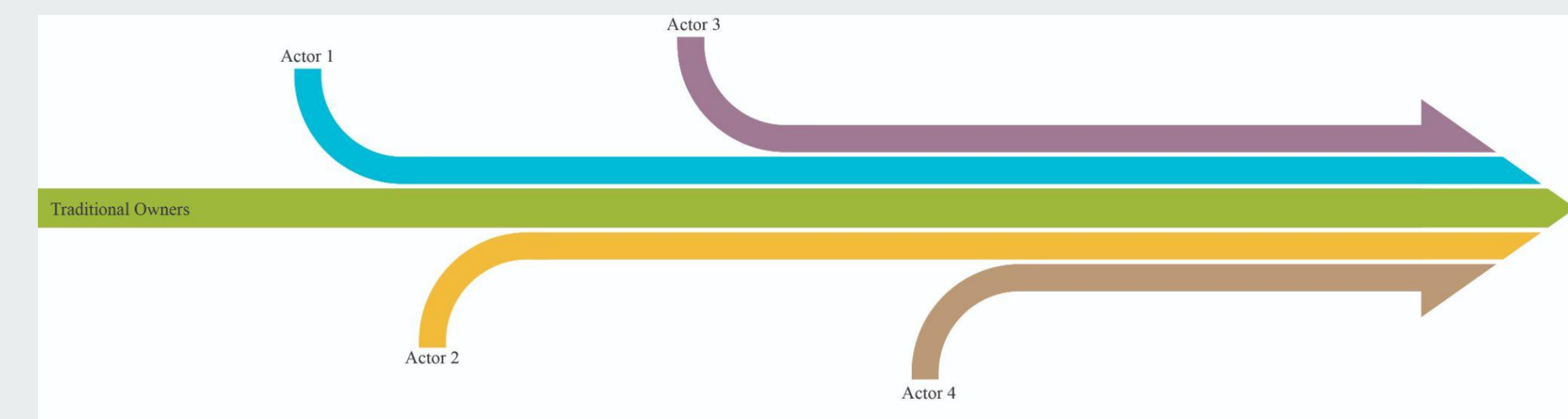
- Canada will have to establish new protected areas and expand existing ones to meet its commitment to protect 30% of land and inland water by 2030 (“30 x 30”).
- The impact on Indigenous communities needs urgent evaluation, as traditional conservation efforts have excluded them and caused harm.
- Indigenous stewardship is now seen as essential to conservation.
- "30 x 30" could provide an opportunity to further reconciliation and conservation goals, but could also reinforce harmful management practices if done carelessly.

International rights-based approaches to Indigenous Protected and Conserved

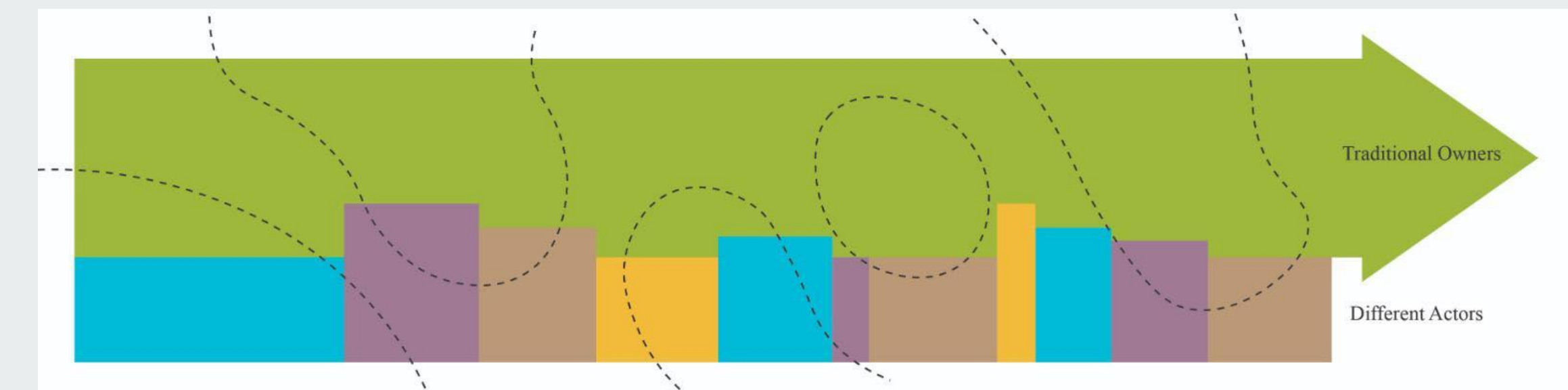
Areas (IPCAs) are investigated, including:

1. **IPCA management through co-management:** Entails multiple stakeholders with different interests who share joint decision-making responsibilities regarding a set of resources or an area based on equal and respectful collaboration
2. **IPCA establishment and management across diverse land designations (cross-boundary management):** A non-legislated approach from Australia that aims to unify different land designations under conservation priorities led by Indigenous traditional owners.
3. **Legal personhood for natural features:** Assigning legal personhood to natural features offers an opportunity to recognize Indigenous worldviews may not hold distinctions between people and nature and protect culturally important landscapes.

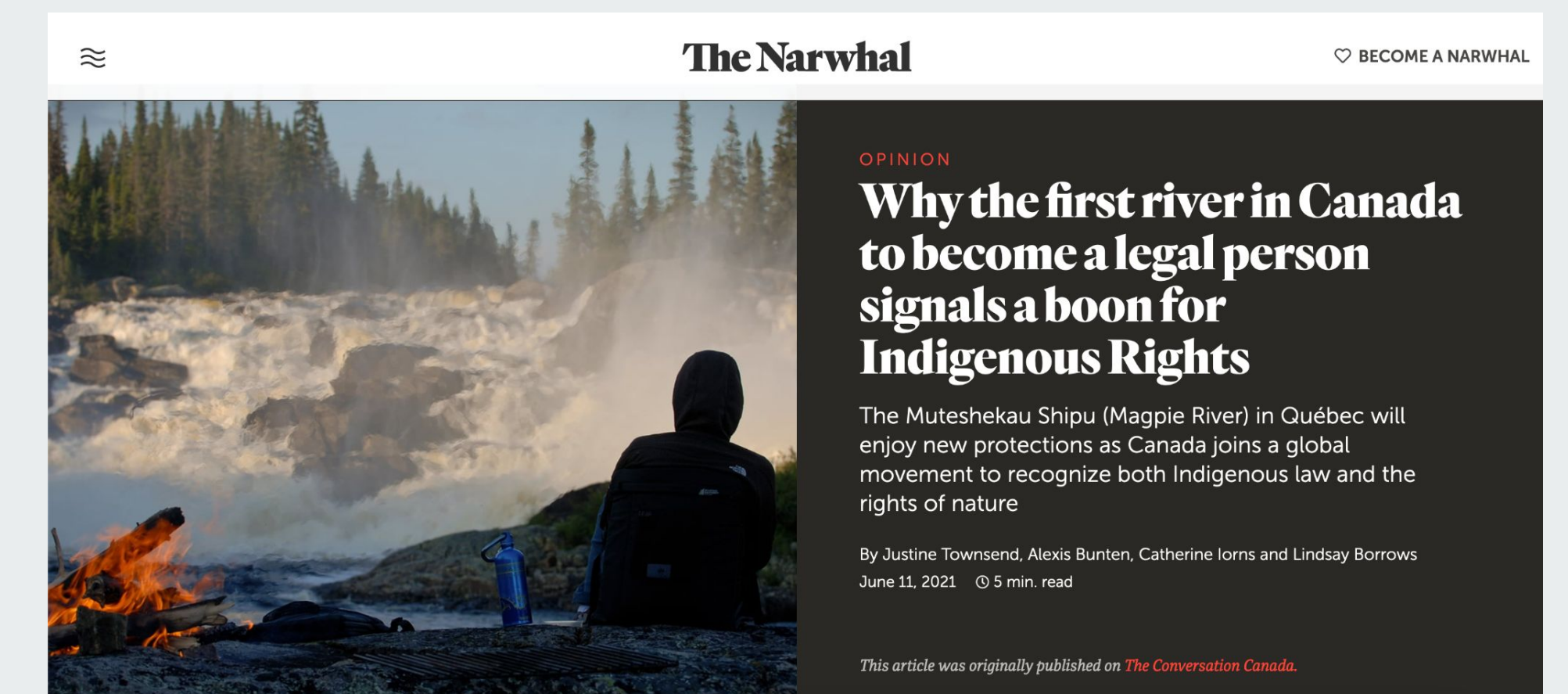
These models and the information gathered are used to make recommendations for Parks Canada as they work to elevate Indigenous leadership in conservation.



A visual representation of a co-management model.



A visual representation of the cross-boundary management process. Dotted lines represent different land tenures.



Recommendations for Park Canada:

1. It is essential that Indigenous rights are the foundation of all future decisions made by Parks Canada concerning conservation and protected areas.
2. To support nation-to-nation relationships that emphasize trust and equity, Parks Canada should work towards the creation of new IPCAs and the maintenance of existing ones.
3. We suggest that Parks Canada be prepared to support Indigenous communities taking a leadership role in diverse and unexpected ways addressing systemic issues which have been generated and are reinforced by historical failures in parks management.
4. Parks Canada can promote social well-being alongside conservation goals, promoting stewardship, local livelihoods, and cultural practices. We recommend ensuring that traditional livelihoods are conserved in protected areas.
5. We suggest that Parks Canada advocates for an “inverted”, Indigenous-led IPCA establishment pathway, similar to Australia’s, to allow for Indigenous peoples to access government funding, and lead with their priorities made centrally.
6. We suggest that Parks Canada looks to integrate pre-existing protected areas into greater IPCA networks, reframing the organization’s resource base under Indigenous leadership.
7. We suggest that Park Canada monitor legislation related to legal personhood for natural features and maintain positive relationships with any existing or future advocating bodies.
8. To ensure effective, and holistic research and monitoring, Parks Canada could prioritize the creation of ethical space where Western ecological research methods can be used in conjunction with Indigenous methods