

# WAMU-Net in practice: Introducing The Canadian Museum of Water



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Canadian Museum of Water – Musée Canadien de l'eau

[www.canadianmuseumofwater.org](http://www.canadianmuseumofwater.org)

Ontario Museum Association Conference, Nov 21, 2022

# Stated Aims of the CMW-MCE

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## OBJECTIVE

- The Canadian Museum of Water will model stewardship and advocacy for water through a range of exhibits, programs and activities which inform, educate and promote the importance clean, healthy, and sustainable water for everyone.

## GOALS

- To establish a presence online, on the ground, and on the water which positions the Canadian Museum of Water as Canada's primary conduit for the understanding and appreciation of water and the role it plays in our heritage, our culture and our everyday life.
- To work with local and regional culture, heritage and environmental stakeholders to raise the profile of the Canadian Museum of Water as an active participant, supporter and catalyst for water-related initiatives.



The CMW logo water droplets represent past, present, and future.

# What is the CMW?

- We launched the museum online on World Water Day, March 22, 2022.
- We currently own exclusive rights to the canadianmuseumofwater domains (.com/.org/.net/.ca) and have a web presence.
- Board of directors from multiple sectors, FNMI leadership and input a fundamental aspect of governance.
- The “Steel and Steam” exhibit is already up and running on the site, the “I am Water” temporary exhibit is being developed.
- We are now a registered Federal not-for-profit and will have charity status shortly.
- Educational outreach with Tay Township and a Speaker Series has also begun. We have ongoing outreach with the community through social media presence.



## THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF WATER MUSÉE CANADIEN DE L'EAU

at Port McNicoll, Canada

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[Exhibits](#)

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[FAQ](#)

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### The Museum is Currently Online Only

We expect to open a physical location in 2023. The steamship S.S. Keewatin, operated by *Friends of Keewatin*, is currently closed for the season.

[READ MORE](#)



### NEW SPEAKER SERIES DEBUTS - AUG 14, 2PM

Canadian Museum of Water new series: "Walks, Talks, and Learning Opps"

Scientist Aisha Chiandet from the Severn Sound Environmental Association kicks off the Canadian Museum of Water's new series "Walks, Talks & Learning Opps" this Sunday at Patterson Park in Port McNicoll. As the SSEA's senior Water Scientist and Limnologist, Ms. Chiandet will speak about some of the sampling equipment used, what they monitor and provide an overview of water quality in our region based on their research and data.

The program begins at 2pm and is expected to run for 90 minutes approximately.

Future programs in the series will feature naturalist David Hawke leading a nature walk along the Tay Shores Trail on Sunday, August 21 and retired teacher and Georgian Bay historian Michael Blais leading a heritage walk of Port McNicoll on August 28. New programs in the series are expected to continue throughout the fall.

The Canadian Museum of Water -  
Musée canadien de l'eau is a proud  
member of the Global Network of





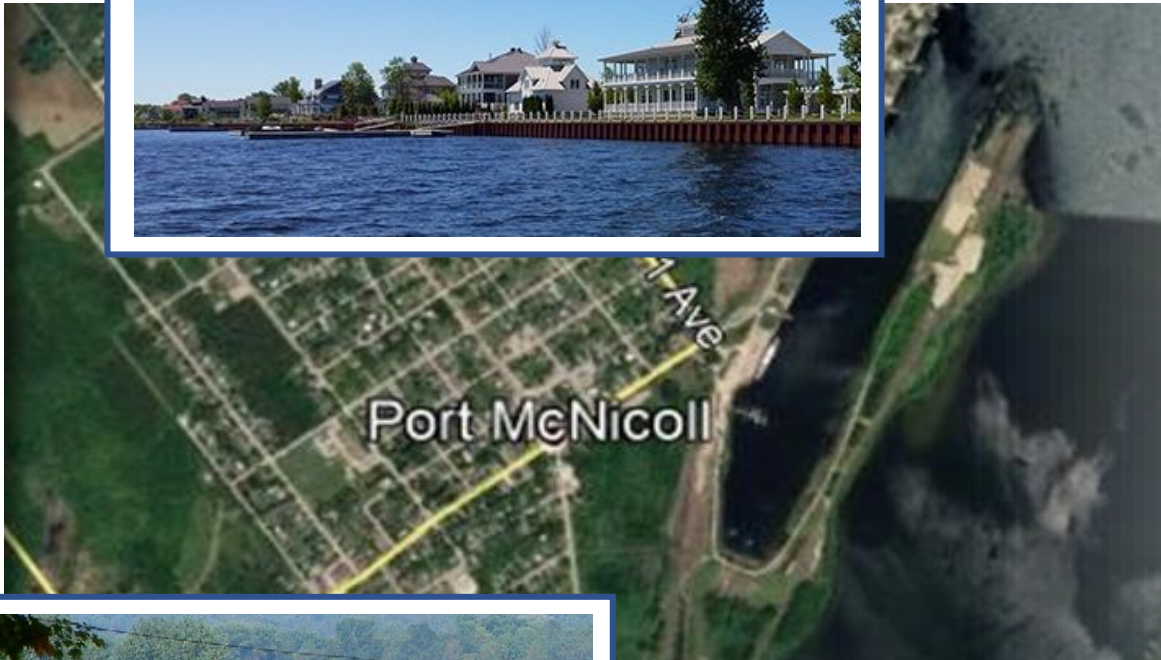


# Why Port McNicoll?

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# Port McNicoll's Key Attributes

- A deep-water port;
- 950 acres of land suitable for development;
- prime position at the bottom of Georgian Bay on the Great Lakes;
- a storied history and heritage shaped by its relationship with water, from the Huron/Wendat to the CP Rail steamship era to a modern Great-Lakes recreation hub;
- 20km from Elmvale, ON, considered by many to have the cleanest water [in the world](#);
- the history of the *S.S. Keewatin* – the only remaining British-built Edwardian passenger steamship in the world.





# First Nations Caretakers

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- Port McNicoll is at the very centre of Huronia, a territory which was and is of great importance to First Nations caretakers including the Wendat (Huron), Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) people.
- First Nations peoples used the lakes and rivers as highways, using them to journey to other lands for trade, hunting, and warfare.





# Arrival of First Europeans

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- The French, then the British used Canadian lakes and rivers to penetrate the vast continent of North America, what First Nations people call 'Turtle Island'.
- Explorer Samuel Champlain first landed in Huronia at Southern Georgian Bay, just a few kilometers from Port McNicoll.
- The first European settlement West of Quebec City was founded in 1639 at Sainte Marie Among the Hurons, a mere 1.5km away from the Canadian Museum of Water.



# The Chicago of the North!

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- From 1907 to 1965 Port McNicoll was known as “The Chicago of the North” for its industry and maritime heritage.
- A major CP rail hub, the *SS Keewatin* and her sister-ship the *SS Assiniboia* provided a vital transportation link between Central and Southern Ontario to the Canadian West.
- Hundreds of thousands of settlers migrated to the Canadian prairies, while much needed grain was sent on the return journey to feed hungry cities like Toronto and Montreal.







# A Water Playground

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- The Great Lakes are now a major tourist and cottaging destination for people from around the world. Hundreds of marinas and harbours cater to pleasure craft operators.
- The transformation of Port McNicoll from an industrial hub to a four-season recreational locale is one of the most recent and dramatic changes in the area's rich history.
- The cruise-ship industry is also expanding, with cruise ship operators moving from one to six companies on Georgian Bay in the next five years.





# To the Stars!

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- As scientists look to discover whether there is life on other planets, water is key to their search.
- Mars Exploration Rover 'Curiosity' is exploring a former riverbed for the first signs of life on Mars.
- Perhaps the first scientists to find life on other planets will be one who has visited and was inspired by the Canadian Museum of Water?

Image copyright European Space Agency



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# Long-Term Project

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# Visitor Centre

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- The Visitor Centre provides the space for both permanent and temporary exhibits.

## **What will visitors do here?**

- Interactive exhibits and objects tell the story of water and the community. It will focus on human history and culture in association with water and why water has made Port McNicoll the place it is today.

## **What will visitors learn here?**

- How water has influenced society and culture and how Port McNicoll serves as a microcosm for humanity's experience with water.





# “I Am Water”

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- The “I Am Water” Exploration Centre presents visitors with a personification of water and asks visitors to create a relationship with this embodiment.

## **What will visitors do here?**

- Interactive displays connect a visitor with water as a character – as giver and taker of life, as sustainer, as provider, as a mother, as a teacher and sage, as an artist, a conveyor, and a partner.

## **What will visitors learn here?**

- Visitors will leave with a sense of connectedness - water is not human, but it is alive, affected by human decisions, possessing knowledge and even secrets, it performs functions, has a character, and can create, maintain, or even destroy life. Visitors will understand the role water plays in their life and have a greater respect for it.



# Institutional Partnership and Lab School

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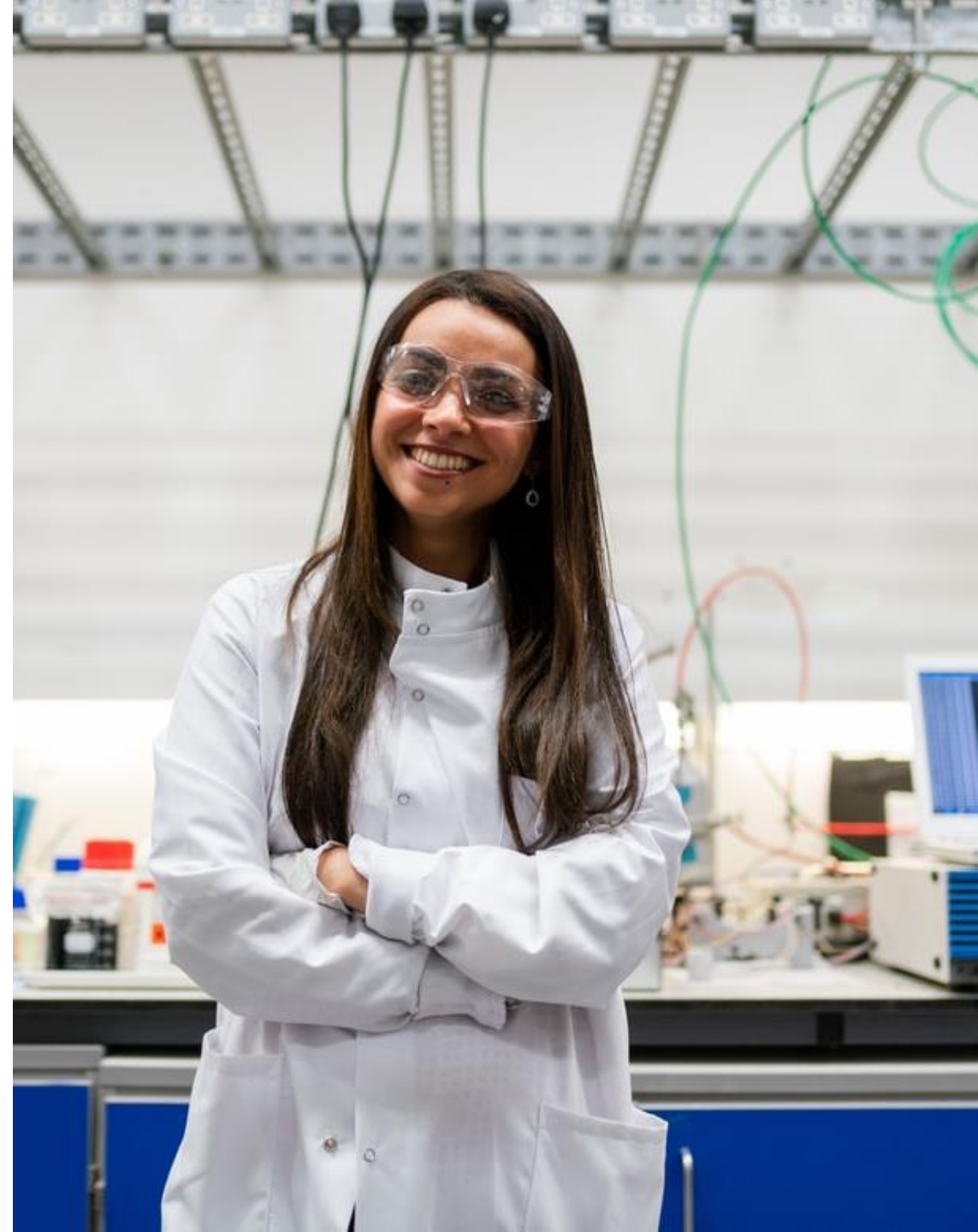
- A state-of-the-art training facility for teaching of seamanship, plus a research and conservation centre for the Great Lakes.

## **What will happen here?**

- Students from the local college/university will use the facility for some or all of their coursework with a focus on experiential learning. The centre will be available to the general public on special event days.

## **What will visitors learn here?**

- This will be a world-class centre for marine research focusing on the Great Lakes. Lectures and internships would be offered to students from other colleges and universities.



# Severn Sound Environmental Research Centre

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- Georgian Bay represents the largest, freshwater ecosystem wholly within the province of Ontario. In the US, all eight states bordering on the Great Lakes and several universities have shoreside facilities where they actively monitor and research water quality. Canada has no such dedicated facilities to fulfill their respective water quality mandates on Georgian Bay.

## **What will happen here?**

- The Environmental Research Centre will use the bay as an active learning laboratory. Environmental and ecological studies and research conducted locally by partner institutions can benefit from a waterside location with access to laboratories and watercraft to maximize their program offerings.





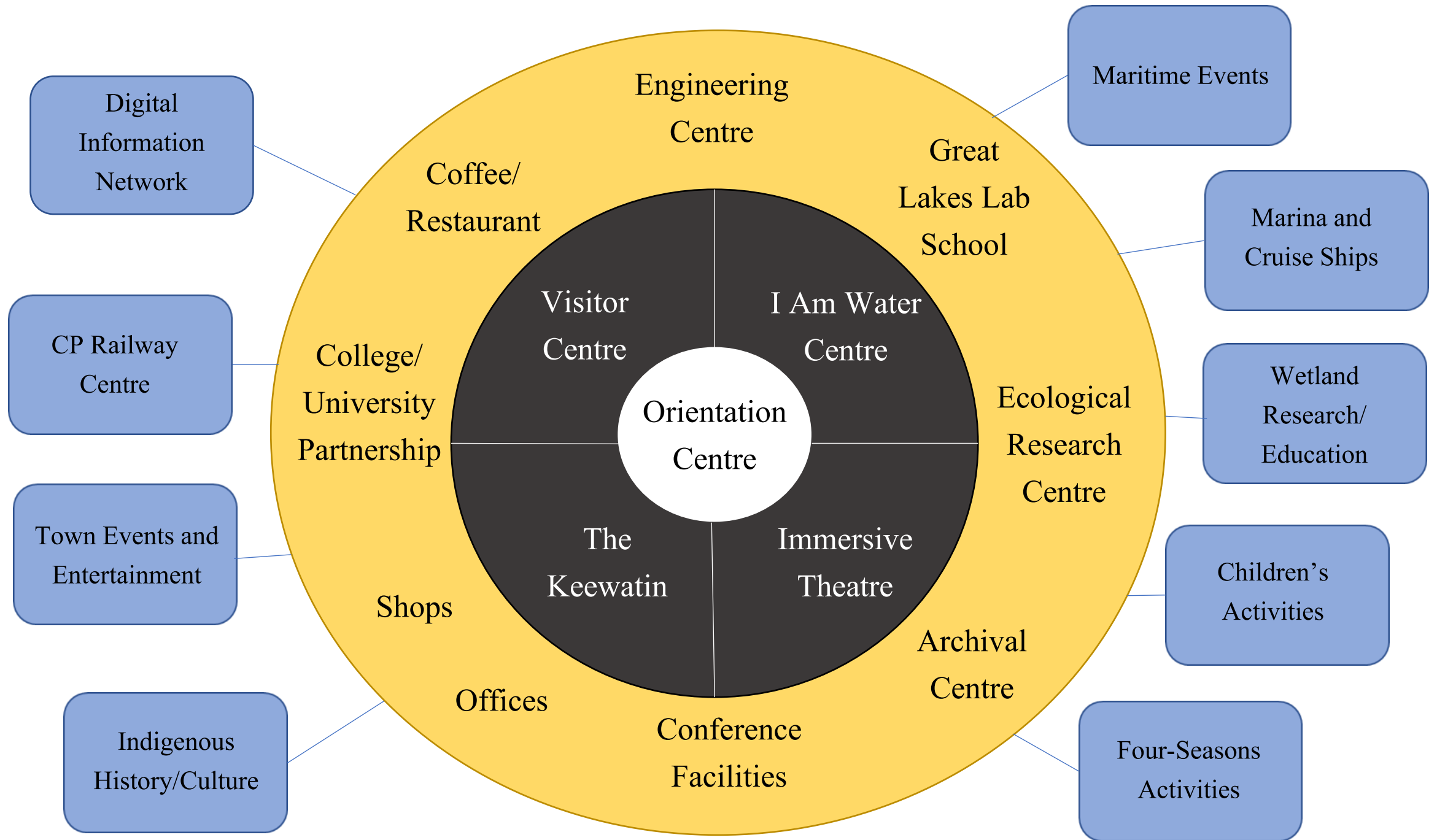






Image copyright Hicks Partners and Ian Malcolm Architect





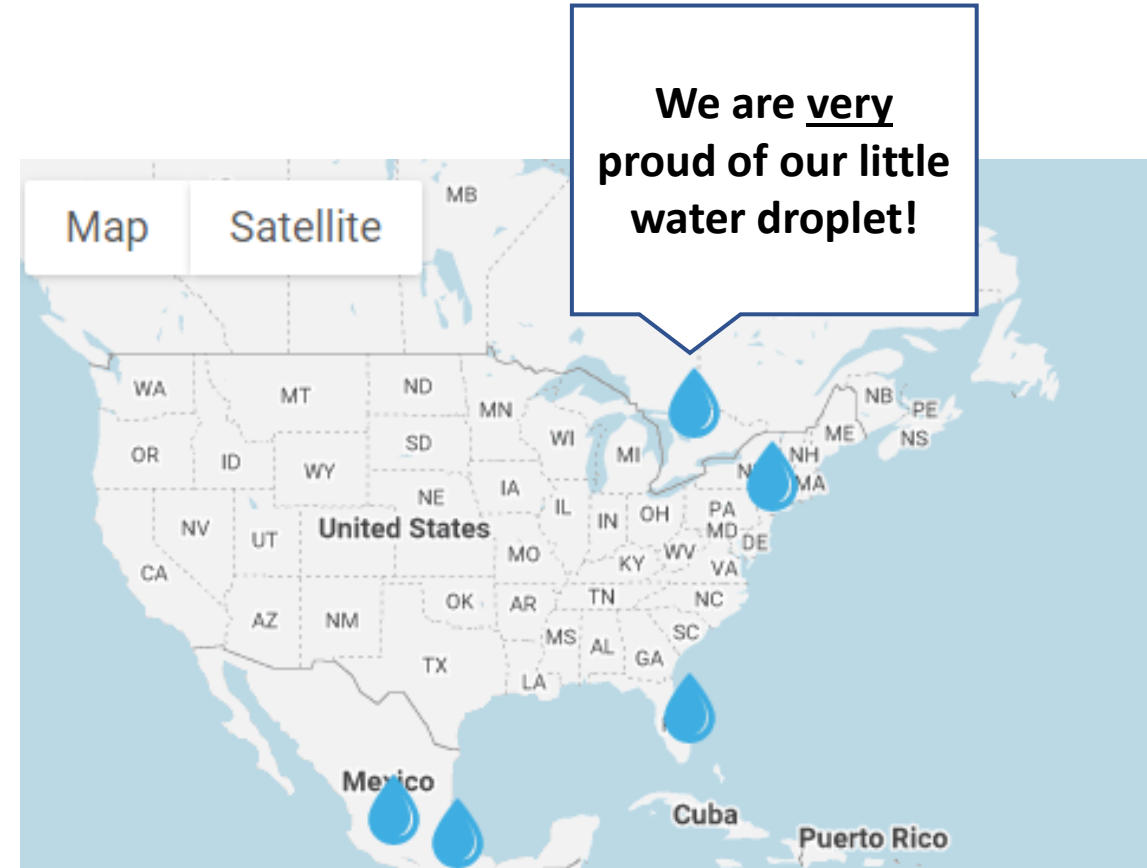
An aerial photograph of a dark, turbulent ocean with white foam from the waves. The sky is a pale, hazy blue. The text 'WAMU-NET' is centered in a white, sans-serif font. Below the text is a white, hand-drawn style wavy line.

WAMU-NET

# WAMU-Net and Us

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- We are now an official member of the Water Museums Global Network, the only Canadian member (so far)!
- We are an example of what a WAMU-Net member museum in Ontario can be.
- Our hope is to be a ‘lighthouse’ (sorry!) for Ontario, Canada, and indeed North America for the organization.
- Although only 8 months into our project, WAMU-Net has provided multiple benefits to assist in our development, such as....





# Instant Recognition

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- Membership in WAMU-Net at launch afforded us instant recognition and allowed us to immediately make an impact in the heritage, water advocacy, and environmental community.
- Complete with a team of professionals from across the political, heritage, history, tourism, finance, and business sectors, it has also afforded us extra credibility.
- Added benefits in terms of our ability to attract partners and investment.



# Global Presence

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- Membership in WAMU-Net has assisted with one of our three major goals – local engagement, national remit, **global presence**.
- Membership allows for participation in WAMU-Net events and exhibitions (example: *I Remember Water* exhibition).
- Local and national organizations and projects hoping for greater exposure have asked for association with the CMW (example: Elmvale Groundwater study initiative).



[About](#) [Exhibition](#) [Life](#)



## CURATORIAL NOTE

A new "culture of water" cannot grow without memory. Memories, whether they are sensory or emotional, short-term or long-term, material or immaterial, are fundamental to our existence as individuals and as collective societies.

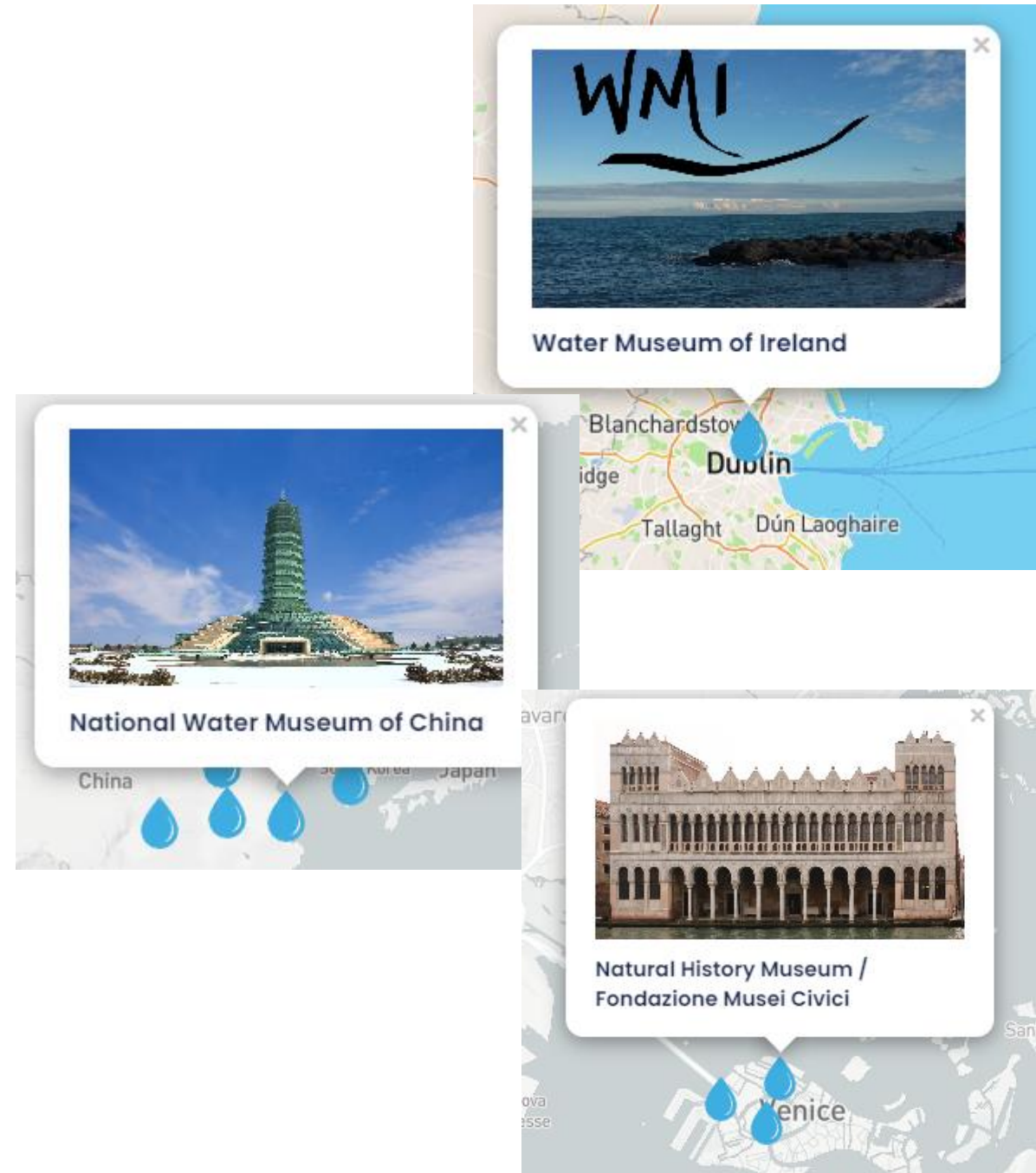
The curatorial team of *I Remember Water* selected some meaningful **images that recall our past water memories and reflect on pathways that can help us shape our water futures.**



# National/International Connections

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- Our board have been able to make connections we would not have been able to make without membership in WAMU-Net.
- Some come to us because they hear about us through WAMU-Net, others we have been introduced to by other museum professionals.
- Benefits include: advice and input on current and future exhibits, cultural connections, information for newsletters and social media blasts, collaboration on advocacy, potential partnerships, and simply...productive discussions.



# Key Takeaways

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- The CMW-MCE is an ambitious idea that incorporates Port McNicoll's geographic and historical attributes for a national museum with a water theme. The concept is timely, as water awareness and advocacy is becoming a lot more important to Canadians.
- WAMU-Net has been an integral part of our project from the day of launch, and continues to assist us fulfil our mission, objectives, and goals.
- The CMW demonstrates the potential benefits of membership in WAMU-Net to Ontario museums, big or small, established or startup.







**THANK YOU**

presented by

**Dan Travers, PhD**

**The Canadian Museum of Water**