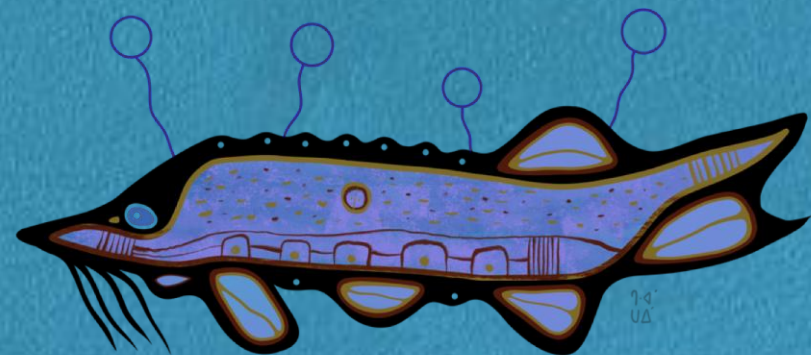




# What is the Current State?

*Water and Wastewater Services managed by individual communities*



1. Lack of Drinking Water Protection Framework
2. Water Operators are under-resourced and under-valued, without enough support leading to reduced motivation
3. Limited operational resources and capacity
4. Communities experience drinking water advisories more often and for longer durations than water systems off-reserve
5. Lack of infrastructure and connection to water facilities

# What risks does this create?

## Individual ownership carries risk

### 1. Legal risk

- Communities could be exposed to legal risk for not meeting employment and regulatory standards.

### 2. Service delivery failures

- Without proper oversight, service gaps can continue, increasing risk with non-compliance with drinking water standards.

### 3. Overburdened workforce

- Water operators and technical staff are under resourced leading to burnout, turnover, and operational errors.

### 4. Infrastructure gaps

- Many water systems have outdated infrastructure increasing operational and health risks.



# Issues in NAN Communities

Many NAN communities are under a current long-term drinking water advisory (LTDWA).

Water operators are experiencing lack of morale and burnout resulting in work not getting done, operators not showing up for work, and lack of operator engagement in water treatment process and sampling.

Maintenance issues in water treatment plants; mechanical, electrical and other process repairs needed. Plants are aging out of service and need replacement or repairs.

Lack of infrastructure to deliver clean drinking water to many community homes. Water delivered by truck to fill cisterns. Need for more water piping to deliver water to homes and community buildings such as nursing stations and schools.

Some upgrades and construction currently underway to improve water treatment facilities and cisterns, challenges with contractors and engineers not engaging and informing community.

# What's a better way forward?

*Water and Wastewater Services managed by a **collective or utility***



1. Water and Wastewater services managed by a central Indigenous-led authority
2. Shared resources and funding
  - Adequate resources
  - Economy of scale
3. Access to better staff training
4. Less liability for Nation Leadership
  - Risk based approach

# Example: AFNWA

The Atlantic First Nations Water Authority is First Nations owned and led

AFNWA was incorporated in 2018 and fully operational by 2022. Owned and operated by First Nations for First Nations.

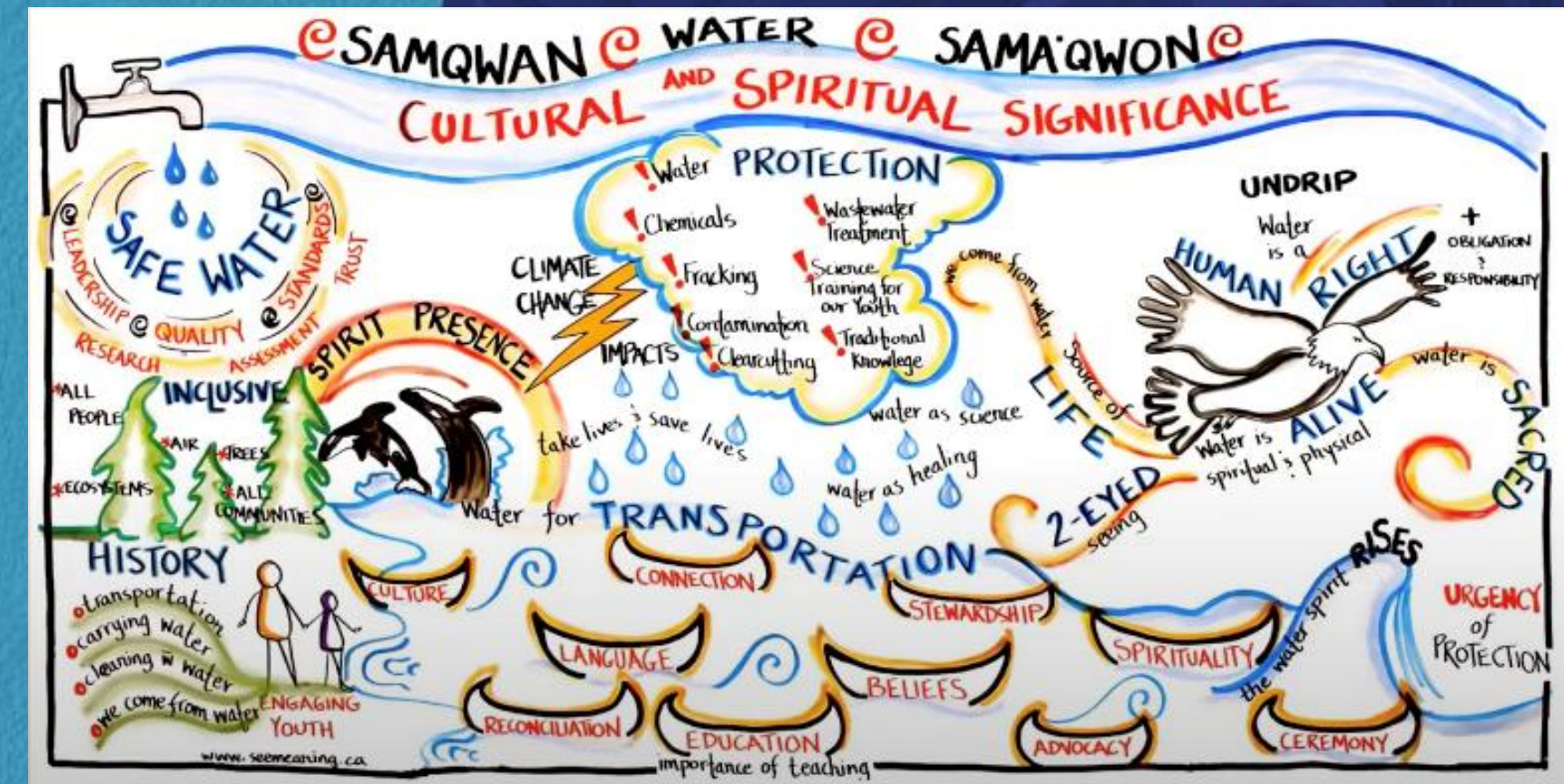
Membership is completely optional. 13 nations have opted in. Planning and operations is governed by board composed of First Nation representative. AFNWA reduced the liability in their communities while protecting public health and the environment.

Entirely government funded, but Indigenous-led through a Board of Directors.

Through the signing of a framework agreement with the federal government, AFNWA self-governs their own water delivery.

AFNWA has negotiated a 10-year funding agreement, which allows them to have predictable funding and long-term planning.

By centralizing multiple system under one organization, AFNWA has the benefit of scale.



AFNWA aligns with First Nations traditional knowledge, culture, and values and uses the concept of two-eyed seeing to guide the way they operate.

# NAN Water Agencies or Operational Groups

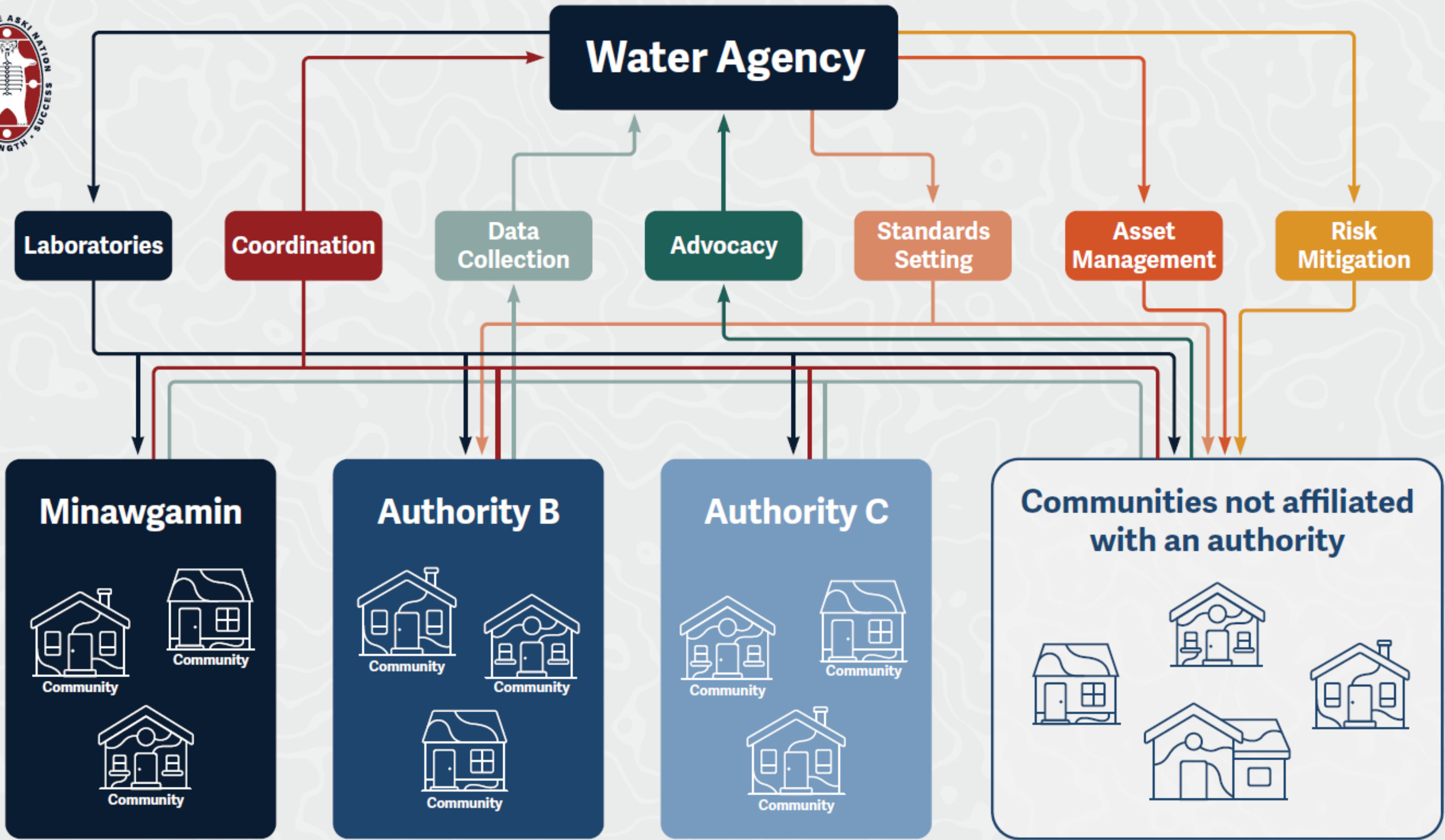
## Benefits of NAN communities working together on water

The areas where a multi-community operational group could support NAN communities are:

- Setting priorities and gauging funding needs
- Monitoring and evaluating government performance
- Information sharing
- Data collection
- Legal risk mitigation
- Networking
- Licensing of operators
- Laboratory testing/remote monitoring
- Standards setting
- Advocacy
- Creating efficiencies of scale
- Asset management services
- Providing support for capital projects
- Promoting innovative technologies

Additionally, a NAN-wide water utility could provide direct water services where support in running community water plants is needed.





# How would this work in Northern Ontario?

Remote communities and vast differences require our own approach



A Hub and spoke model would provide more specialized support to different regions. The Hub would provide technical, operational and administrative support to Tribal Councils and/or communities.

If a NAN Tribal council chooses to opt into a water group, they have options:

- Use their existing Tribal Council structure as the hub for their region
- Create a separate entity to act as the hub for water services

Several Tribal Councils are working together to plan and explore the potential for a regional water service model or a completely separate entity/utility under the name Minawgamin.



# What Happens Next?

**Consultations are in a preliminary stage**

One of the major gaps currently is a lack of data and information on water systems and users within the NAN territory. Gathering data on the needs in communities will be an important next step to help define the roles of a regulatory authority.

As a part of this process, we will be coordinating meetings with leadership and technical staff to discuss their priorities and perspectives on the water systems in their communities.

We are coordinating a follow-up Water Summit meeting in the New Year (2026) to discuss outcomes and progress on infrastructure transfer and developing a new model for water and wastewater management.

We will be meeting with NAN communities to discuss the benefits of infrastructure transfer with community leadership.

# What can you do?

Now is the time to speak up and engage

- Participate in the upcoming engagement meetings
- Share this information with community members, leadership/council
- Have discussions with community water operators and technical staff

