

## NIPIGON BAY – LONG TERM MONITORING PLAN

### Introduction

Through the Remedial Action Plan for Nipigon Bay, the governments of Ontario and Canada completed several science and monitoring projects to assess ecosystem health. In a Great Lakes Area of Concern, the focus is on specific components of the ecosystem, known as beneficial use impairments. For Nipigon Bay, the impairments were related to the loss of fish and wildlife habitat, impacts to fish and benthos populations, and aesthetic factors which limited recreational opportunities. The restoration targets for each of these impairments have been met; however, there is a mutual interest on behalf of the government agencies with a role in Great Lakes management, non-government organizations and local stakeholders in long-term monitoring in Nipigon Bay.

Future monitoring will be completed under programs that have a broader Lake Superior focus but, in some cases, specific objectives for Nipigon Bay. For example, fish contaminant monitoring and fish community index netting programs are implemented by the Government of Ontario throughout the Canadian side of Lake Superior and results are reported by blocks or zones, such as Nipigon Bay. Data collected at the index stations located in Nipigon Bay, through the fish community index netting, and Coaster Brook Trout and Walleye programs will build on data collected through the Remedial Action Plan. Over the long-term, these programs will help track the ongoing recovery of Nipigon Bay and inform resource management decisions such as those related to sport and commercial fishing.

Through the Lake Superior Lakewide Action and Management Plan, intensive monitoring is completed every five years. Though much of this effort focusses on the open water of Lake Superior, the results and long-term trends are of interest to Lake Superior communities and other stakeholders. In addition, priorities of the *Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health*, include providing opportunities to foster and enhance the appreciation and awareness of the Great Lakes as well as opportunities to collaborate with First Nations and Metis. There is significant local interest in these priorities and discussions regarding how they will be implemented in the Nipigon Bay area are underway.