



UNDERSTANDING

ENVIRONMENTAL

RACISM

Meet your conversation leaders: Valery Woloshyn

- Pronouns – she/her
- Last name is pronounced wool ocean (🐑 + 🌊)
- Environmental Engineer for 19 years
- Based in Toronto, born/raised in Kingston, ON
- Project Manager for municipal drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure improvement projects
- Mom, step-mom, aunt, wife
- I play kalimba in my husband's band



Meet your conversation leaders: Shannon Kitchings

- Pronouns – she/her/they/them
- Human Rights Specialist
- Based in Burlington/Hamilton/St. Catharines
- Supporting IDEAR work in healthcare/education/arts sectors
- Performing Artist
- Facilitating anti-racism conversations for 25 years



Social Location

- What is your gender, race, age, religion, sexual orientation, etc.?
- Do you have access to clean water and fresh food within walking distance of your home?
- Is there green space in your neighborhood? Do you have access to public transit?
- Is your home located within 5kms of a city waste management facility?
- Do you have reliable internet service?



Defining Environmental Racism

In 1982, Benjamin Chavis, a Black civil rights leader from the United States, [coined the term “environmental racism.”](#)

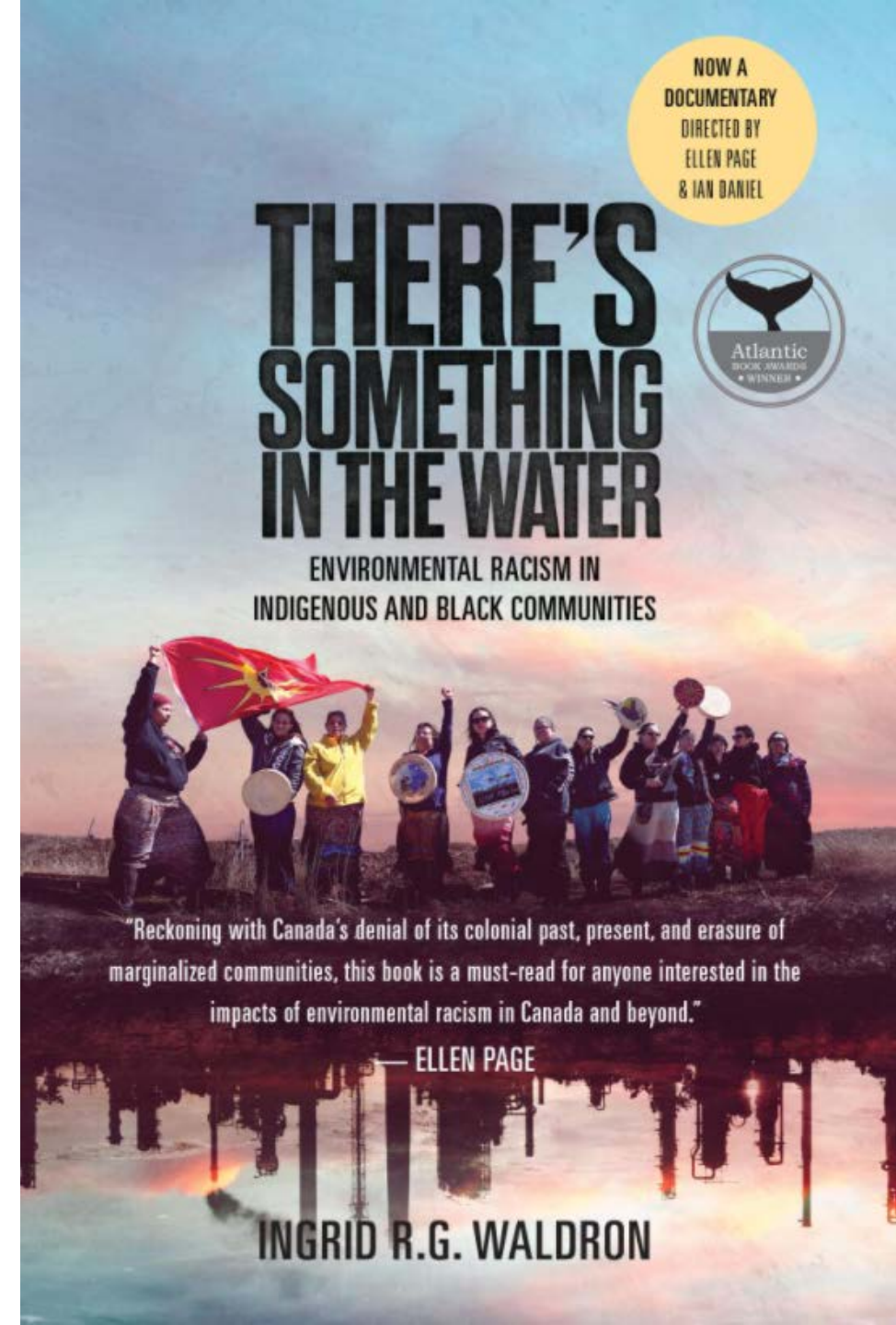
Chavis defined the concept as,

“... racial discrimination in environmental policy-making, the enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of communities of colour for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of the life-threatening presence of poisons and pollutants in our communities, and the history of excluding people of colour from leadership of the ecology movements.”

Not in who's backyard...?

- Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities and Community Health Project (The ENRICH Project), founded by Dr. Ingrid Waldron
- ENRICH is a collaborative community-based project investigating the cause and effects of toxic industries situated near Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities
- ENRICH developed a map that overlays the location of First Nations communities, African Nova Scotian communities, and waste disposal facilities, thermal generating stations, and other toxic industries

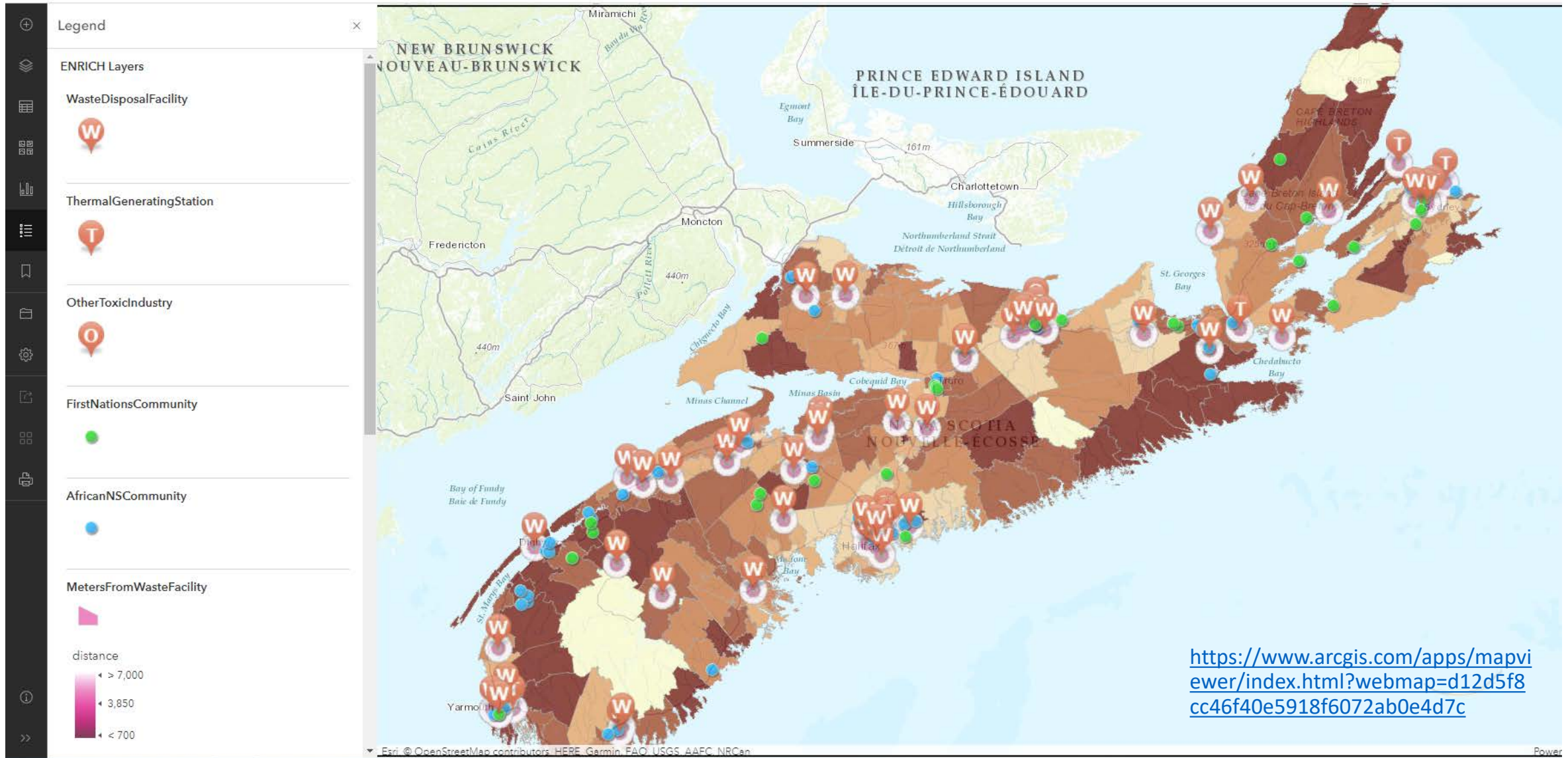
<https://www.enrichproject.org/>



Not in who's backyard...?

ENRICH Project - Toxic Facility Siting Nova Scotia

Open in Map Viewer Classic



Detroit Urban Farming

- Detroit, situated in the most food insecure county in the U.S. (“food desert”), has a long history of urban farming
- Detroit is a predominantly Black community
- Vacant lots are routinely used for community gardens

<http://detroitagriculture.net/about/>

<https://why.org/segments/detroits-urban-farms-engines-growth-omens-change/>



First Nations Drinking Water Advisories

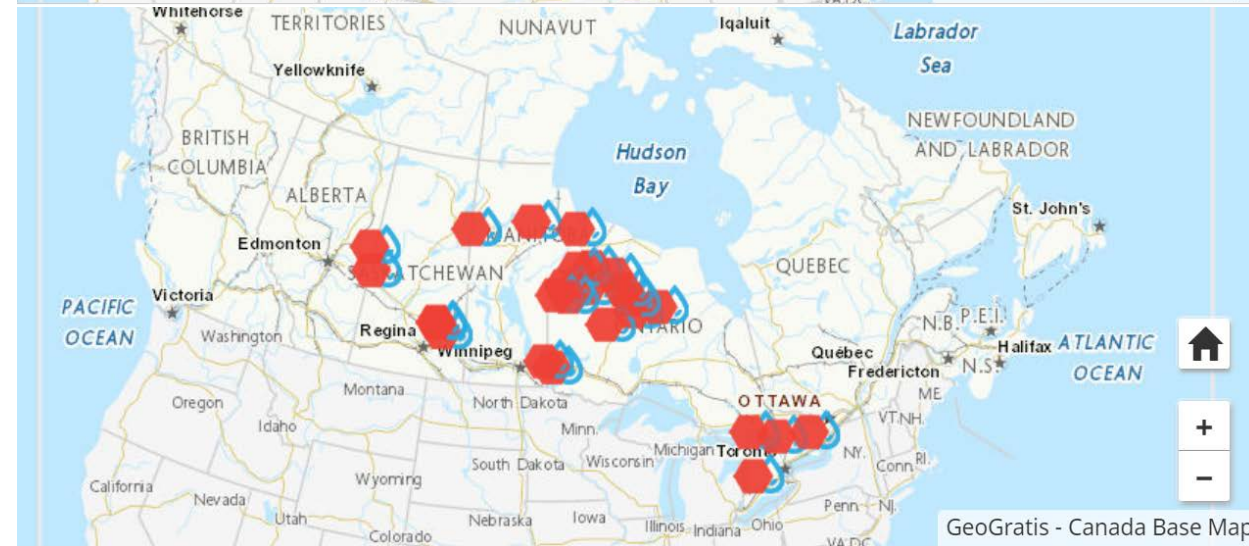
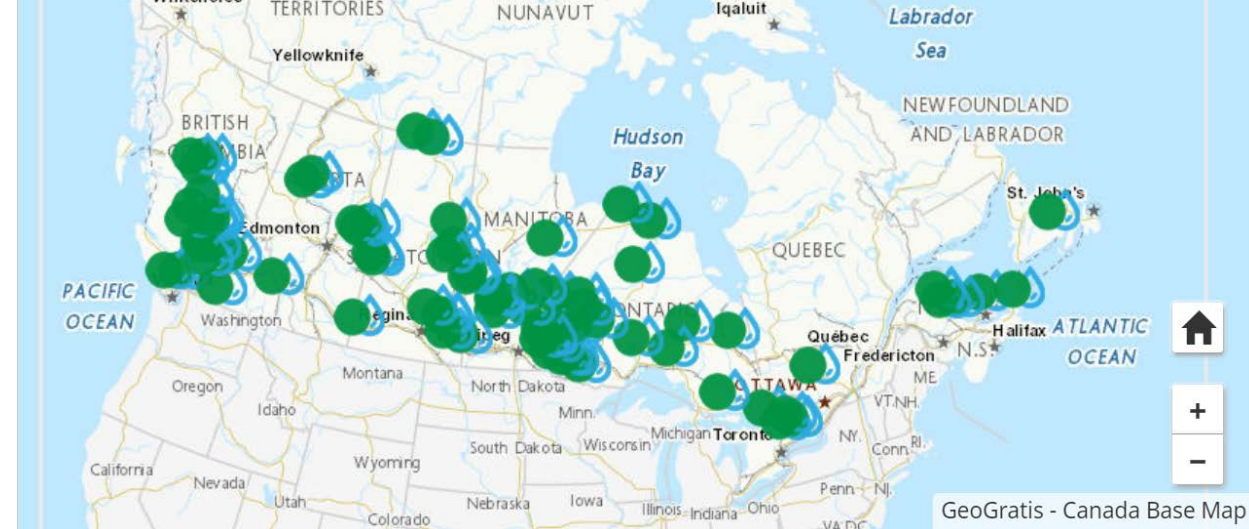
- 2010 The UN declared water and sanitation a human right
- Long-Term Drinking Water Advisories (LT-DWA) is more than 12 months
- Full generation of residents in some communities have never had safe tap water
- Federal government does not count small systems, actual number higher

<https://canadians.org/fn-water>



<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1506514143353/1533317130660>

[Map of long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on reserves \(sac-isc.gc.ca\)](#)

[Tip of the iceberg: The true state of drinking water advisories in First Nations | News | University of Calgary \(ucalgary.ca\)](#)



Advisories

128		LT-DWAs lifted since November 2015 on public systems ISC financially supported in lifting the LT-DWA
36		Current LT-DWAs on systems ISC financially supports in lifting the LT-DWA



Wet'suwet'en Pipeline Conflict

- Some Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs oppose the Coastal Link Pipeline construction through their traditional territory
- RCMP repeatedly intervenes and arrests protestors

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/wet-suwet-en-coastal-gaslink-pipeline-1.5448363>

What can we do?

- Learn about environmental racism
- Grow food
- Donate to organizations making change
- Vote and hold elected officials accountable
- Share resources if and when you have them
- Choose to put your money towards ethical goods and services
- Amplify and support marginalized voices, speak up



Resources

- “There’s something in the Water”
 - Book written by Ingrid Waldron ([Fernwood Publishing](#))
 - Movie:
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10864040/> (also [Netflix](#))
- Podcast: What about Water? With Jay Famigletti
- Podcast: “Seeing White” by Scene On Radio with John Biewen and guest Chenjerai Kumanyika
- Graphic Novel: Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt by Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco
- Book: Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer

