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PRESS RELEASE

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Sturgeon Spawning Study begins next week

For Immediate Release

(Kahnawake – 16, Onerahtohkó:wa/May 2019) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) wishes to announce the start of the initial phase of a Sturgeon Spawning Study to take place in the vicinity of the Mercier Bridge. Fieldwork for this study will take place between Tuesday, May 22nd and Friday, May 31st.

The Kahnawà:ke Environment Protection Office (KEPO) will be overseeing the study and will be assisted by the consultant GEO Morphix Inc. and a local boatman. The overall study will be taking place over two years. Fieldwork for this year will consist of characterizing the habitat within the St. Lawrence River, including the area of the known sturgeon spawning site downstream of the Mercier Bridge. Additionally, side scan sonar imaging will be used to detect clusters of sturgeon in potential spawning sites. *Note that no sturgeon will be captured as part of these activities.* This work will build upon the earlier sturgeon survey that took place between 2001 and 2003 in order to determine whether the extent of the sturgeon spawning areas have changed over time.

“The work has been deemed necessary by KEPO to ensure that there will be no negative impacts to the sturgeon populations associated with the partial reconstruction of the Mercier Bridge announced in 2017 by the provincial government,” said Ratsénhaiensh Clinton Phillips, who is the Lead on the Lands & territories Portfolio, which includes Environment. “The work may also identify areas within the river that could be enhanced to further promote sturgeon spawning.”

“Consultants involved in the Sturgeon Spawning Study will be accompanied by **community members at all times** while on the Territory and on the water,” Ratsénhaiensh Phillips added.

“It is important to note that there is currently *no plan* for the Mercier Bridge reconstruction project at this time,” stated Grand Chief Joseph Tokwirot Norton. “Nothing can move forward until we are satisfied that all of our concerns are addressed, and all of our ideas are heard. We will ensure that Kahnawà:ke are informed on the progress of this project on an ongoing and timely basis.”

For information on this study, please contact KEPO at 450-635-0600.