

Project Floodway

2018 Annual Report



Background

“Project Floodway” was a Thunder Bay Police project submitted by Detective Constable Brooke PILLEY #765 in response to Recommendation 115 of the Inquest into the Deaths of Seven First Nations Youths (River Safety Audits). The project began in late 2016.

The project’s goal was to locate, assist, and prevent intoxicated persons from injury near waterways and organize Thunder Bay Police Service efforts by implementing several directives, including:

- Identification of study areas
- Implementation of foot patrols in these areas
- Collaboration with partners on terms of reference and next steps
- Completion of a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) safety audit
- Providing statistics on police incidents and encounters related to waterways

The original incident number was P16072556, though many incident numbers have been created and cross-referenced since to manage the abundance of data.

Study Areas

McVicar Creek (between Algoma St N and Marina Park)

Neebing/McIntyre Floodway (between Home Depot and Balmoral Street)

Lower Neebing River (walk bridges between Northern Avenue and Southern Avenue)

Kaministiquia River (between Dock Street and the James Whalen Tug Boat)

Collection of Data

Data for this report was collected using NICHE RMS¹ and Intergraph I/NetViewer² between the dates of January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018.

Thunder Bay Police Communication Centre dispatched up to three proactive checks of the study areas per day based on priority call volume in Uniform Patrol Branch. Police also responded to public complaints of persons in these areas engaged in what was believed to be unsafe behavior.

Some data was lacking or inconsistent due to insufficient information recorded in clearing remarks or reports (e.g., officers may have responded to a public complaint of six persons drinking near the river but only located four persons and then identified only two by name).

A thorough review of each recorded incident was completed and specific information was gathered in a spreadsheet, including **incident number, date, time, location, names, ages, genders, total involved persons**, and a brief **synopsis** of each incident.

A summary of the information collected during the year 2018 is presented in this report. Summarized historical data is also reported for comparison purposes.

¹ NICHE RMS (Records Management System) is a computer database that records police occurrence and incident information including involved persons, businesses, addresses, telephone numbers, vehicles, and property.

² Intergraph I/NetViewer is a web-based resource that allows TBPS personnel to retrieve dispatch information.

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Data Summary 2018

Average age	36.58
Median age	33
Oldest	73
Youngest	14
# of 22 year olds	9
# of 21 year olds	3
# of 20 year olds	7
# of 19 year olds	3
# of 18 year olds	1
# under 18 years old	4

Total persons	701
Total males	208
Total females	97

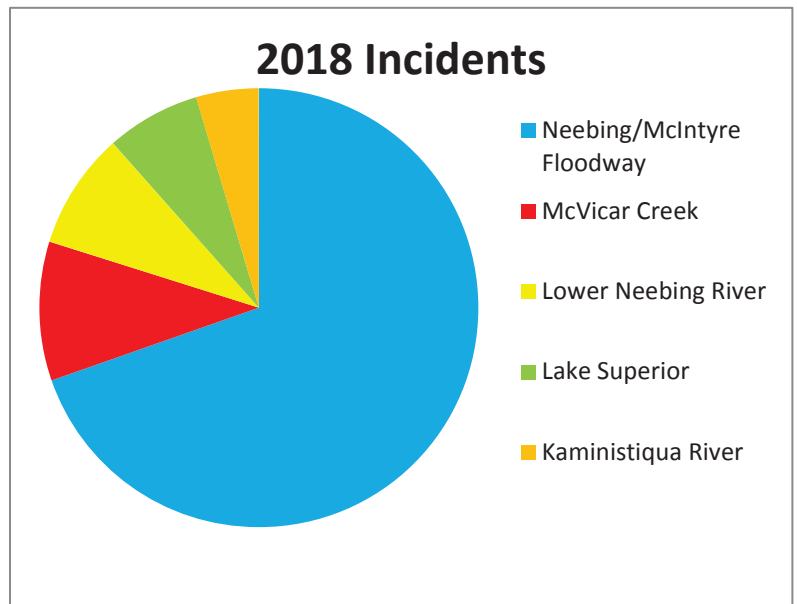
Total incidents	305
Total inc #s	283

Neebing/McIntyre Floodway	209
McVicar Creek	31
Lower Neebing River	26
Lake Superior	21
Kaministiquia River	14

Neebing/McIntyre Incidents*

Thunder Center	145
CN Rail Bridge	18
Silver City	1
Balmoral St	0

*Numbers do not total 210 due to insufficient location information



Persons 22 years of age and younger were considered youths as this was the maximum age of students reported by educational project partners.

Total persons and total youths included multiple encounters with the same person.

Police identified 194 persons of 701 total persons. There were 133 unique persons based on known identities. There were 27 youths included in this number.

Of 35 total youths, 27 were identified and 15 were unique.

Youth made up 5% of the total number of persons encountered by police during this project (35/701).

Total incidents included calls for service and subject stops initiated during directed police patrols.

69% of all incidents occurred in the Neebing/McIntyre Floodway study area (209/305), with the vast majority happening near the Thunder Centre.

Data Summary 2017

Average age	35.53
Median age	33
Oldest	69
Youngest	13
# of 22 year olds	13
# of 21 year olds	21
# of 20 year olds	11
# of 19 year olds	3
# of 18 year olds	4
# under 18 years old	9

Total persons	1211
Total youths	61

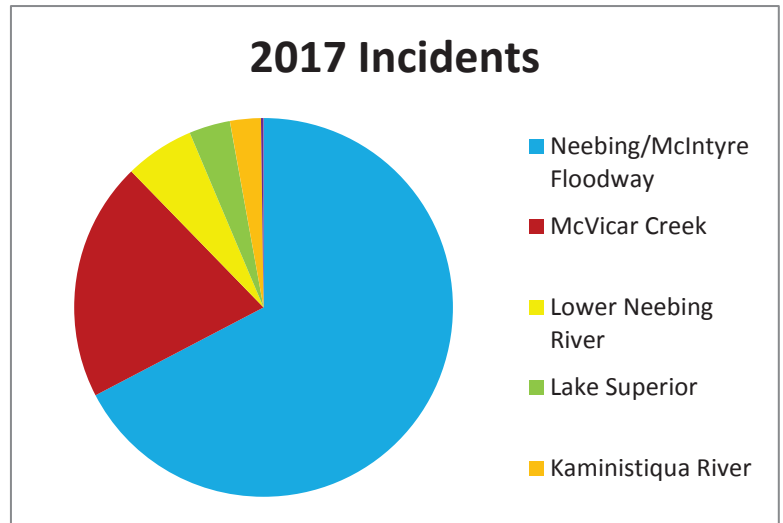
Total males	335
Total females	157

Total incidents	459
Total inc #s	376

Neebing/McIntyre Floodway	307
McVicar Creek	93
Lower Neebing River	27
Lake Superior	16
Kaministiquia River	12
Current River	1

Neebing/McIntyre Incidents

Thunder Center	210
CN Rail Bridge	50
Silver City	15
Balmoral St	5



Persons 22 years of age and younger were considered youths as this was the maximum age of students reported by educational project partners.

Total persons and total youths included multiple encounters with the same person.

Of 1211 total persons, police identified 372 persons and 236 were unique. Youth were included in this number.

Of 61 total youths, 61 were identified and 42 were unique.

Youth made up 5% of the total number of persons encountered by police during this project (61/1211).

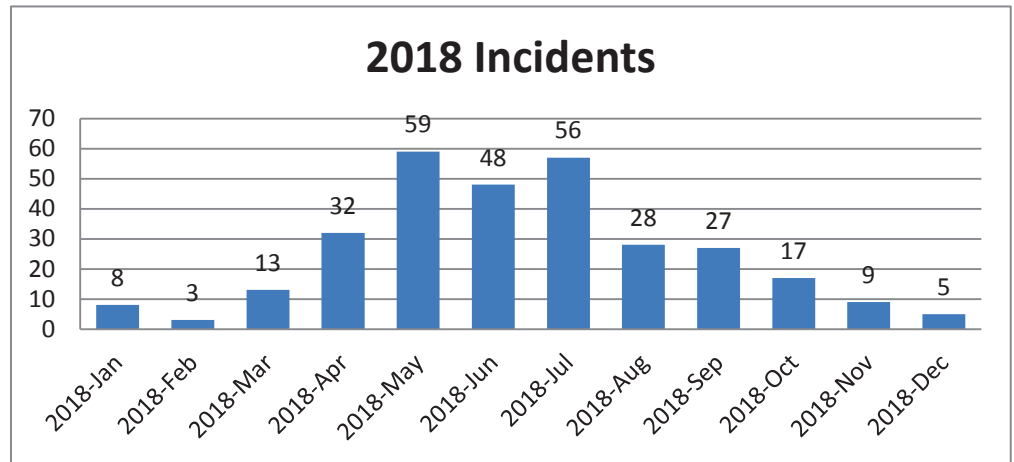
Total incidents included calls for service and subject stops during directed police patrols.

67% of all incidents occurred in the Neebing/McIntyre Floodway study area, with the vast majority happening near the Thunder Centre.

Incident Frequency 2018

Incidents 2018

2018-Jan	8
2018-Feb	3
2018-Mar	13
2018-Apr	32
2018-May	59
2018-Jun	48
2018-Jul	56
2018-Aug	28
2018-Sep	27
2018-Oct	17
2018-Nov	9
2018-Dec	5
TOTAL	305



On average, police attended 0.84 incidents per day in the study areas throughout the year of 2018 (305/365).

During the busiest three months (May to Jul), police attended an average of 1.8 incidents per day (163/92).

Incidents tracked by this project included calls for service and subject stops during directed police patrols.

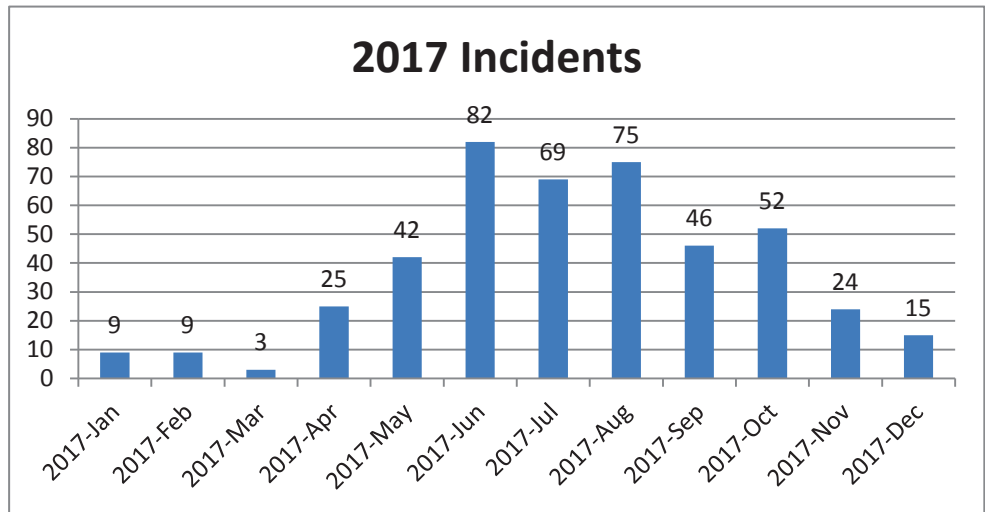
Police attempted directed patrols up to three times per day (only tracked as an incident if someone was encountered). This number was affected by priority calls for service, which could have increased or decreased police presence in the study areas.

It was known, but not tracked by this project, that incidents originating from or leading to a study area could create further incidents in nearby areas (e.g., police may respond to a pan-handler at a busy intersection who is moved along and then attends a nearby business and becomes unwanted, who is moved along again, only to end up intoxicated near the riverbank and dealt with a third time).

Incident Frequency 2017

Incidents 2017

2017-Jan	9
2017-Feb	9
2017-Mar	3
2017-Apr	25
2017-May	42
2017-Jun	82
2017-Jul	69
2017-Aug	75
2017-Sep	46
2017-Oct	52
2017-Nov	24
2017-Dec	15
TOTAL	451



Incidents 2016

2016-Nov	1
2016-Dec	7

On average, police attended 1.2 incidents per day in the study areas throughout the year of 2017.

During the busiest three months (Jun to Aug), police attended an average of 2.5 incidents per day (226/92).

Thunder Bay Police began tracking incidents late Nov 2016.

Data Interpretation

Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS) responded to 305 incidents in the Floodway Project Study Areas during the year of 2018. In comparison, TBPS responded to 451 incidents in 2017. There was a 32% reduction in year-over-year incidents between 2018 and 2017.

Project Floodway only tracked incidents where people were reported or located near a waterway or if there was some indication they were heading toward or away from a waterway. For example, the project did not broadly track intoxicated people outside businesses in the Thunder Centre, but may have if they were found outside a business near the McIntyre/Floodway riverbank. Conversely, a fight originating at McVicar Creek would be tracked, even if the involved parties were located several hundred meters away from the incident location in a residential area.

The author was satisfied that most incidents occurring in the study areas were captured in this report, however, admits some may have been missed due to improper cross-referencing by communications staff, unreported incidents by police officers, or author error.

At least 701 total persons were involved in project-related incidents in 2018, which was a 42% reduction from the previous year (1211 total persons). The total number of persons is only an estimate based on available information from public complaints and officer reports. Where a “group” of people was reported, the author rounded the total number of persons down to two so as not to inflate statistics. Therefore, the total person number is skewed to the low end.

TBPS identified 194 of 701 total persons in 2018, of which 133 were determined to be unique. Police encountered 61 individuals more than once and four persons were encountered at least five times each.

Of the total number of persons identified by gender in 2018, males outnumbered females by a ratio of 2.1 to 1, which was consistent with the previous year.

The average age of persons identified was 36.58 in 2018 compared to 35.5 in 2017. The median age remained consistent at 33 years. The oldest person identified was 73 and the youngest person was 14. Educational partners in this project identified the maximum age of students enrolled in their programs as 22 years old. Police identified 27 of 35 youth tracked in this project and found there were 15 unique youths. Youth made up 5% of the total number of persons tracked in 2018; consistent with 2017.

Study Area Breakdown

Of the study areas tracked, the Neebing/McIntyre Floodway was again the most frequently occupied in 2018 (69% of all incidents), followed by McVicar Creek (10%), the Lower Neebing River (9%), and the Kaministiquia River (5%). While not identified as a study area in the original Project Floodway proposal, TBPS responded to many incidents at Lake Superior/Marina Park (7%) in 2017 and 2018, so these numbers were also tracked.

For comparison, the most frequented areas in 2017 were Neebing/McIntyre Floodway (67%), McVicar Creek (20%), Lower Neebing River (6%), Lake Superior (4%), and Kaministiquia River (3%).

Nearly 70% of the incidents in the Neebing/McIntyre Floodway in 2018 occurred near the Thunder Centre, which was consistent with the previous year. It should be noted that there are several bridges crossing the floodway near these locations and unlawful users of the space were commonly found on, under, or near bridges. Furthermore, beer, spirits, and other alcohol-based intoxicants are highly accessible in this area due to the abundance of businesses distributing intoxicating products.

Incident Types and Frequency

Of all 2018 project-related incidents there were 47 incidents of *possible* life-saving intervention and 6 incidents of *probable* life-saving intervention by TBPS and our emergency medical service partners. The interpretation of *possible* and *probable* was made by the author based on a subjective review of each incident. The year-over-year discrepancy can be attributed to a difference of situational circumstances and opinion. Factors included severity of intoxication, level of consciousness, proximity to a waterway, outdoor temperature, indicia of crime or violence, and whether medical attention was required.

There were eight water rescues in 2018 compared to five in 2017, considered to be *definitely* life-saving interventions. This year, 75% of water rescues were in response to persons in mental health crisis attempting to commit suicide or stating they wanted to die.

In total, at least 20% of all tracked incidents in 2018 resulted in some measure of life-saving engagement by police, fire, or ambulance (61/305).

Many incidents involved persons who were intoxicated and either unconscious or sleeping near rivers. In those cases, subjects were either transported to a place of safety, the Detoxification Centre, the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, or arrested for public intoxication, warrants, and breaches. In most cases where persons were consuming alcohol or had recently been consuming alcohol but were not intoxicated, they were moved along to a safer place and cautioned for risky behavior.

In several cases, persons were completely sober and lawfully using the space. These numbers were likely skewed toward the low end due to the public and police not reporting numbers of persons lawfully using the space.

A monthly breakdown of incidents seemed to follow a similar pattern in 2018 compared to the previous year, with the exception that May 2018 was busier and August 2018 was less busy. On average, May 2018 was slightly warmer than the previous year (11°C versus 8°C), which could explain the increase in occupancy. However, August 2018 was slightly warmer than the previous year (17°C versus 16°C) and there was a 63% reduction in incidents. Based on this information, the author believed weather may have been a factor of occupancy, but it was not the sole determinant.

It should be noted that Uniform Patrol Branch conducted a separate project of directed patrols in the business areas along the Neebing/McIntyre Floodway during the summer of 2018. This increased police presence likely had an impact on the number of incidents and people tracked by this project during those months.

Conclusion

It was impossible to find causal and correlational relationships between variables in Project Floodway as it was not designed as a controlled experiment or submitted to rigorous statistical analysis. The realities of policing in a city with randomly occurring priority calls would make it problematic to execute such an experiment without dedicated resources and TBPS cannot dedicate additional resources due to a high volume of priority calls. Furthermore, officers were not tasked gather information on the social variables influencing human behavior in these incidents.

With that said, this data offers insight into the lawful, unlawful, and social activities occurring within the study areas, the number of people engaging in such activities, and the areas of highest incident frequency. This information also highlights the amount of resources being deployed by TBPS, where the resources are being deployed, and which members of our community could benefit most from services provided by the Northwest Community Mobilization Network.

This project also helps TBPS fulfill its commitment in responding to Recommendation 115 of the Inquest into the Deaths of Seven First Nations Youths, which concluded in June 2016. While youth were the driving force behind Recommendation 115 and Project Floodway, it was encouraging to see that youth only accounted for 5% (35/701) of the total number of persons encountered in the study areas even if that number remained consistent with the previous year. It was also possible that youth simply moved to more remote locations to consume intoxicants as they had a greater fear of police and risked facing greater consequences from parents and educators if caught. Additional efforts in education and enforcement could help reduce this number in the future.

The City of Thunder Bay implemented a number of recommendations from the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) report submitted by Barry Horrobin and Stephen Lynn in May 2017. In 2017, the City made an effort to improve lighting, thin vegetation, and remove graffiti in the area of McVicar Creek, which might correlate with the 10% reduction of incidents in that area in 2018. Continued implementation of the CPTED recommendations could reduce incidents even further.

Finally, ongoing efforts of TBPS and Street Outreach Services, Bear Clan, and educational on-call workers possibly had an impact on the number of incidents reported in 2018. The City also facilitated a mail-out awareness campaign to citizens living within the study areas. While the additional eyes and ears in these areas could have resulted in more calls for service, it may have actually caused a net decrease because unlawful users of the spaces were discouraged from risky behavior due to the extra attention from non-police interactions. Continued reporting and media releases would likely keep up this momentum.