

The Manomin Project's 2023 Fall Equinox Newsletter



@manominproject

Dagwaagin! It is Fall!

Updates

Learning from the land: field work completed

Elder Guy Henry and Jane Mariotti visited the Manomin fields in the upper Winnipeg River this August, where more data was gathered to better understand current conditions. By canoe, they assessed Manomin plants in various parts of the River and flew a drone to take aerial pictures of the distribution of Manomin and other vegetation this growing season.

Elder Guy Henry shared how to navigate a canoe through the stands and harvest Manomin in a good way using ricing sticks and a push pole. Jane now works to summarize the knowledge we have learned in the field in a comprehensive report.



Elder Guy Henry holds Manomin seeds in his palm while wading near the shore. Behind him, a field of Manomin ripens.



Britt Luby's book 'The Gift of Mnoomin' is read with joy. From left to right, Laura Legzdins, Britt Luby and Cheyanne Herder.

Sharing 'The Gift of Mnoomin' with young audiences at the Telling Tales Festival

On September 17, the story of a Manomin seed and its many relationships with Creation was shared with families at the Telling Tales Festival in Hamilton, Ontario.

Children were given Manomin seeds to hold and examine as Cheyanne Herder, from Michipicoten First Nation, read 'The Gift of Mnoomin' and shared Anishinaabemowin translations for key words. Britt, Cheyanne and Laura connected with the audience about Manomin, sharing recipes and experiences. Children repeated words in Anishinaabemowin, and following the reading, asked to know more words, which Cheyanne translated and explained. Many attendees expressed a newfound interest in Manomin and visited Britt after the reading to have their purchased books autographed.

Negotiating relationships

In 2021 and 2022, Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation and the Water Survey of Canada entered into preliminary conversations about the installation of water gauges. Conversations reopened again this August after the Water Survey of Canada clarified that a licencing agreement is a contract between Water Survey of Canada and Niisaachewan First Nation that would give Water Survey permission to build, maintain, and visit the gauges on Niisaachewan First Nation land. Such an agreement requires NO transfer or selling of land. Should an agreement be reached, Niisaachewan First Nation would be compensated by the Water Survey for territorial use.

Also, the Manomin Project remains in contract negotiations with UBC Press as they seek to retain copyright and Indigenous Language Rights. This would help to ensure that Indigenous Knowledge isn't transferred to UBC Press and that Indigenous publishers could seek permissions from individual authors to reprint chapters in their native tongue.



A child grins as Cheyanne and Laura share a page from 'The Gift of Mnoomin'.



Britt introduces some animal relations connected to Manomin.



Cheyanne, Britt and Laura display 'The Gift of Mnoomin'.



Elder Guy Henry shows how to push-pole through Manomin.



Elder Guy Henry and Jane Mariotti.



Manomin grows.

Meet the Team: Chief Lorraine Cobiness



Meet Chief Lorraine Cobiness! Chief Cobiness serves her 8th term as Chief of Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation and continues to oversee The Manomin Project. From this position, she sets research priorities, reviews progress reports, and establishes objectives for research dissemination and use.

Chief Cobiness has experience collaborating with industry and government to manage the Kenora Forest, and she is keen to apply these relationship-building and negotiating skills to water management in the upper Winnipeg River drainage basin.

Chief Cobiness emphasizes that we honour the resource, the teachings and ceremonies, and its sustainability for the future of our children.

What's to come:

Sept. 30
National Day of Truth and Reconciliation
(Orange Shirt Day)

‘The Gift of Mnoomin’ by Britt Luby will be read at the Toronto International Festival of Authors at 10:30am. Britt Luby, Tee Lyn Duke-Copenace and Laura Legzdins will lead an interactive reading and question session.

In the coming weeks
The Manomin Project will be highlighted in a Food Sovereignty-themed episode of the CBC Radio podcast ‘What on Earth’.

The podcast episode for ‘DAMMED’, featuring Councillor Reno Cameron, Britt Luby and Allan Luby is set for release with New Book Network.

The Manomin Anthology will undergo copyediting and typesetting.



Britt Luby signs a shirt at the Telling Tales Festival.

Food for Thought

“We are referred to as the younger brothers of Creation, so like younger brothers we must learn from our elders. Plants were here first and have had a long time to figure things out. (...) Plants are providers for the rest of the community and exemplify the virtue of generosity, always offering food. What if Western scientists saw plants as their teachers rather than their subjects? What is they told stories with that lens?”

- Robin Wall Kimmerer, member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, scientist and author of *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*.

The Manomin Project is a cooperative research program led by the University of Guelph and Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation. This newsletter reflects our responsibility and commitment to knowledge sharing.