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NIIWIN WENDAANIMOK

FOUR WINDS

January
2020

Shoal Lake 40

Washagamis Bay

Niisaachewan

Wauzhushk Onigum

Project Recap

A **Unity Agreement** was signed between the Nations of Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, Washagamis Bay, Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation, and Wauzhushk Onigum Nation in October 2018 to coordinate the Nations' shared experience, concerns, and interests as they relate to the Twinning of the Highway 17 between Manitoba/Ontario border and Kenora. This agreement marked the beginning of the **Niiwin Wendaanimok** Partnership. This newsletter is the fourth one produced since formation of the Partnership.



Manito Aki Inakonigaawin:

Our Teachings, Our Protocol

In this newsletter, we would like to talk about the importance of **feasting a process**. Feasting processes represents our customary engagement protocol. It represents an ongoing celebration of our Anishinaabe identity, which is rooted in our relation to the land. It represents respecting our sovereignty, our right to health and well-being, and our right to livelihood. When we feast in the presence of our leaders, our elders, heads of families, and community members, it brings us together. When we feast in the presence of sacred items like tobacco, feathers, gifts, pipes, and drums, it reminds us of who we are. It reminds that benefits are temporary, but our Anishinaabe identity is here to stay.

Meet the Board!

In this edition, we would like to introduce the Board Members for the Niiwin Wendaanimok Partnership. They are Brenda Chartrand (Washagamis Bay), Erwin Redsky (Shoal Lake 40), Fabian Blackhawk (Niisaachewan), and George Kakeway (Wauzhushk Onigum). We sat down with the board members and asked them a few questions. Here is what they had to say:

Brenda Chartrand



What do you see as the biggest task ahead of you?

The biggest task is making sure that the community understands the rewards and benefits of the project. And that we're approaching this with due diligence.

What do you see as the biggest opportunity ahead?

The biggest opportunity for me personally is capacity development as a Board member of a major corporation. This opportunity will provide me with amazing governance experience. For our Nations, the biggest opportunity is economic development and protection of our traditional lands.

What strengths do you bring to the Board?

The strength that I bring is my compassion for people. I am always looking out for community members and I bring that perspective to the Board. I also bring vision and leadership, along with a passion to complete tasks at hand, dedication, and effectiveness.

What does success look like to you?

Success to me would be beginning and finishing the twinning project.

Erwin Redsky



What do you see as the biggest task ahead of you?

On the political side, the biggest task is ensuring that Crown Ontario continues to listen. On the business side, projects as big as Twinning have lots of opportunities and the big task is to stay focussed. Our joint company has a realistic plan that considers our strengths and weaknesses and, if we're disciplined and realistic, we can achieve success. We're a start-up venture with great future potential. Our biggest challenge will be avoiding distractions while we build the foundation.

What do you see as the biggest opportunity ahead?

The biggest opportunity is exercising our laws –the laws of this land. Manito Aki Inakonigaawin is given to the Anishinaabeg by the Creator as the way humans must think and act in order to live sustainably on this Earth. It's a rare opportunity that the settler governments are prepared to respect our laws and we can demonstrate their strength.

What strengths do you bring to the Board?

As a former Chief and life-long business person, I bring decades of training and experience. I know the theory but I also know what it really takes to succeed. I've built and led teams that accomplished goals that many said were impossible. I know the importance of bringing everyone together

and involving everyone in building and executing inspiring but realistic plans.

What does success look like to you?

Success to me will be showing to Crown Ontario, municipalities and industry that infrastructure projects can be built in our treaty territory without controversy if they respect our laws. Success will demonstrate that Manito Aki Inakonigaawin is a better, more collaborative way forward for everyone. If we can show this, the land and the next generations will thank us.

Fabian Blackhawk



What do you see as the biggest task ahead of you?

The biggest task will be finding a common ground with the relationships that we are trying to build in a manner that appeases our people and respects and honours our traditions. This is not easy but something that continues to drive this team.

What do you see as the biggest opportunity ahead?

The biggest opportunity is long term economic growth and stability as we create and sustain a vehicle to manage our resources.

What strengths do you bring to the Board?

I bring a creative perspective that is protocol-driven and rooted in tradition.

What does success look like to you?

Success to me will be the ability to create and implement a vision that honours and celebrates our collective sense of identity in a manner that Crown Ontario understands and respects for all future activities in our territories.

George Kakeway



What do you see as the biggest task ahead of you?

The biggest task is going to be implementing our strategic plan and determining how we would use our existing resources to achieve the goals and objectives we have set out for ourselves.

What do you see as the biggest opportunity ahead?

The biggest opportunity that I see is the opportunity to implement an Impact Benefits Agreement which is informed by the Manito Aki Inakonigawin and celebrates our identity as Anishinaabe peoples.

What strengths do you bring to the Board?

I bring knowledge, experience, and a deep understanding of the Manito Aki Inakonigawin, and advice on how the MAI can inform all aspects this relationship with the Ministry of Ontario.

What does success look like to you?

Success to me would be seeing the Manito Aki Inakonigawin informing all aspects of our process; the environmental, the economic, the procurement, and all other aspects critical to celebrating our Anishinaabe identity.



Key Updates

The Partnership has been busy undertaking the **Anishinaabe Aki Kakendamowin (AAK)** and building an understanding of how the proposed project will impact our lands. These meetings will continue over the months to come.

We also compiled **photo albums** for each community which document your respective journey so far. Copies of these have been shared with each community. If you have not received a copy and would like one, we encourage you to contact your community coordinator to request one today!

A ceremony was held in the Roundhouse at Wauzhushk Onigum to **feast the process** on November 24, 2019. Elders from all four communities participated in this celebration. Meetings for this project will continue, and we encourage you to participate and continue to share your views on this important project.



Eco Impact Award!

In December 2019, our efforts resulted in a nomination for an Eco Impact Award. This award recognizes environmental excellence and innovation. A record number of submissions were received from across the country and we are proud to announce that we were one of the four finalists recognized at the Eco Impact Awards event in Calgary on January 23, 2020. Even though we didn't win, we are very proud of this recognition and will continue to push boundaries and strive for excellence!



Harmonized Impact Assessment

In our last newsletter, we talked about a new and exciting approach to understanding the potential impacts of the Twinning Project called **Harmonized Impact Assessment**. This approach is rooted in the **Manito Aki Inakonigaawin** and incorporates best practice principles of Impact Assessment in a unique way that places the well-being of our peoples at its core. Our **Harmonized Impact Assessment** approach has received significant attention. On January 21, we were invited by the **Impact Assessment Agency** to make a presentation on this approach. The Niiwin Wendaanimok is hopeful that this effort will continue to gain traction across our territories, so all future decisions are rooted in our traditions, protocols, and ceremony.

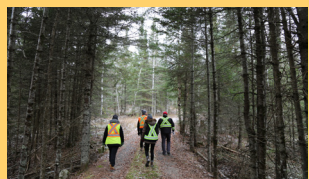
The Niiwin Wendaanimok in action.

Here are a few of the activities and meetings conducted since the end of October.



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Preliminary Site Reconnaissance



06

Wauzhushk Onigum Impacts Discussions



13

Niisaachewan Impacts Discussions



04

Shoal Lake 40 Impacts Discussions



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Washagamis Bay Impacts Discussions



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Project Planning Session



Community Coordinators

Shoal Lake 40

TANIA BRUYERE
tania.bruyere@gmail.com
 (807) 464-1567

DARYL REDSKY
elkclan@hotmail.ca
 (204) 979 7759

Wauzhushk Onigum

TERRY SKEAD
tjskead@hotmail.com
 (807) 407-5603

Niisaachewan

BERNICE MAJOR
bmajor@niisaachewan.ca
 (807) 548-5876

Obashkaandagaang

MARVIN SINCLAIR
mjpsinclair@gmail.com
 (705) 255-7840

The Niiwin Wendaanimok Community Coordinators are responsible for setting up meetings and managing logistics in each community. If you'd like to contribute to the project or know a friend or family member who might (including catering or assisting with distributing fliers or other support), please give your Community Coordinator a call!