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NIIWIN WENDAANIMOK

FOUR WINDS

August
2020

Wauzhushk Onigum

Washagamis Bay

Shoal Lake 40

Niisaachewan

Project Recap

The Niiwin Wendaanimok Partnership formed in October 2018 when the Nations of Wauzhushk Onigum, Washagamis Bay, Shoal Lake 40, and Niisaachewan signed a **Unity Agreement** to coordinate their shared experiences, concerns, and interests as they relate to the Twinning of the Highway 17 between the Manitoba/Ontario border and Kenora ("the Project"). This is the sixth newsletter produced since the formation of the Partnership.

On February 5th, 2020, a **Memorandum of Understanding** (MOU) was signed between the Partnership and the Government of Ontario to guide the engagement process in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation.

Since May 2019, the Niiwin Wendaanimok has undertaken the **Anishinaabe Aki Kakendamowin** (AAK), referring to the documentation of the knowledge and practices associated with the care and protection for the land, sky, soil, and water. This knowledge has been used to identify and assess potential impacts of the Project through a new process being termed a **Harmonized Impact Assessment** (HIA). The HIA document was brought into ceremony for endorsement in each of the four communities between July 21-24, 2020. See Page 2 to learn more!

Since March 2020, the Partnership has been developing an online mechanism for virtual engagement to safely continue the

AAK in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. AAK interviews are proceeding in new ways with a web map survey and virtual interviews, in addition to continuing to meet in-person when we can safely. See page 3 for details on how to get involved.



HIA Ceremony in Wauzhushk Onigum, July 23, 2020

4

Treaty #3 Nations

2,232

community members

at least

2.13

million acres of traditional territory

HIA Ceremonies Mark First Step in Ceremonial Plan

Elders and community members have advised that a Ceremonial Plan is necessary for guiding the actions and decisions of the Twinning Project in a manner that is respectful and aligns with the MAI. To initiate the Ceremonial Plan, a ceremony was held in each of the Niiwin Wendaanimok communities from July 21-24, 2020. In the presence of the Ogichidaa, Francis Kavanaugh, as well as Elders and community members of Wauzhushk Onigum Nation,

Washagamis Bay First Nation, Shoal Lake 40 First Nation and Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation, the HIA document was brought into ceremony for endorsement. To ensure participant safety, numbers were kept small, socially distant and with personal protective equipment available. Together, these four ceremonies formed the first step of a process that affirms and recognizes your important work to uphold our traditions and our teachings.



Manito Aki Inakonigaawin (MAI) Our Teachings, Our Protocol

In this newsletter we would like to talk about the importance of the drums and drum songs. Drums are sacred and brought out for important events. You know you're on the right track when the drums come out. It is important to have the drums to mark important milestones in any process. The circle of the drum represents interconnectedness, equality, and continuity. The beat of the drum is powerful in its ability to draw people together. It represents the heartbeat of the Anishinaabeg and the heartbeat of Mother Earth. By providing an opportunity to connect with the spirituality of the land, drum songs remind us of the customary protocols and responsibility to protect our lands, skies, waters, and each other.

Four common songs in drum ceremonies are the Grand Entry Song (or Pipe Song), the Women's Song, the Give Away Song, and the Travelling Song. Other songs include the Honour Song, the Water Song, and the Healing Song. Each has a distinct role in ceremony. The Grand Entry Song (or Pipe Song) begins the ceremony by offering a time to communicate with the Creator and the Spirits through smudging and smoking the pipe. Following this, the Women's Song serves to honour women and recognize their fundamental role in the creation of Turtle Island. After the giving and receiving of gifts, the Give Away song is sung to represent the principles of reciprocity, generosity, and gratitude. Finally, the Travelling Song concludes the



ceremony and offers protection over those travelling away. Drum songs may differ from ceremony to ceremony or from community to community. Throughout Phase 2 of the Anishinaabe Aki Kakendamowin, we will be documenting drum songs in each of the communities. No matter which song is sung, the drum provides a reminder of our sacred teachings and our responsibilities to the land and each other.

The AAK provides a valuable opportunity to safeguard traditional knowledge for future generations. As a key principle of the MAI, the team is looking for ways to promote education of this knowledge. All future newsletters will include traditional teachings shared by you, our community members, during the AAK. This month's edition will focus on fishing.

During the winter months, setting a gill net required additional equipment. To *ziibaaskobijige* (set a gill net underneath the ice), a *bagonezigwa'igan* (auger) was first used to drill two holes in the ice. To guide the fishing line underneath the ice, an ice jigger was used. Once the line was in place underneath the ice, the gill net could be set in place.

Fishing remains an important part of Anishinaabe culture, subsistence, livelihood, and recreation. We thank the community members for sharing these important stories and teachings with us. What would you like to learn about next? The AAK team is looking for meaningful and useful ways to share traditional knowledge with the communities. These may take the form of infographics, traditional story books, games, or educational programs. We'd love to hear what you'd like to see. Please let us know if you see us working in the communities, during AAK interviews, or pass along a message through your Community Coordinator.



Word cloud created from AAK interviews showing the most common words in stories related to fishing.

Indigenous Guardians Art and Photo Contest

To enter, please include your full name and age, your community, and a short description of your art. Email your submission to: admin@niiwinwendaanimok.com

The Niiwin Wendaanimok Partnership is on Facebook! Be sure to follow our page for updates, current news on the project, upcoming events and contests, and a chance to give us your feedback.



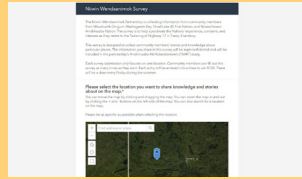
The Niiwin Wendaanimok in action.

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



06

Online AAK Begins



21

Ceremony in Washagamis Bay



23

Ceremony in Wauzhushk Onigum



27-28

Meeting with Chiefs and Technical Team



20

Ceremonial Teachings



22

Ceremony in Shoal Lake 40



24

Ceremony in Niisaachewan



29

Meeting with MTO



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Shoal Lake 40

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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 of family member who might (including catering or assisting with distributing fliers or other support), please give your Community Coordinator a call!