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Who make it all happen!

NIIWIN WENDAANIMOK

FOUR WINDS
PARTNERSHIP

June
2019

Shoal Lake 40

Obashkaandagaang

Niisaachewan

Wauzhushk Onigum

An Introduction: The Unity Agreement

Since 2010, the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) has been in the process of developing a plan to “twin” (double-lane) Highway 17 between the Manitoba border and Kenora as part of an effort to reduce traffic and increase road safety. MTO recognizes that Highway 17 is located on the traditional territory of the Nations of Treaty 3 and has affirmed its responsibility to consult communities who may be affected by the project.

In order to coordinate their shared experience, concerns, and interests, the Nations of Shoal Lake 40, Obashkaandagaang,

Niisaachewan, and Wauzhushk Onigum signed the **Unity Agreement** in October of 2018. This agreement marks the beginning of the **Niiwin Wendaanimok** (‘Four Winds’) Partnership.

In the spirit of reconciliation, MTO has agreed to partnering with the Niiwin Wendaanimok moving forward on the

twinning project. Although the nature and terms of this partnership are still being negotiated, it means the Niiwin Wendaanimok will consult its own people to understand potential social, environmental, and cultural impacts, provide its own reporting, and directly contribute to future decisions on the project.

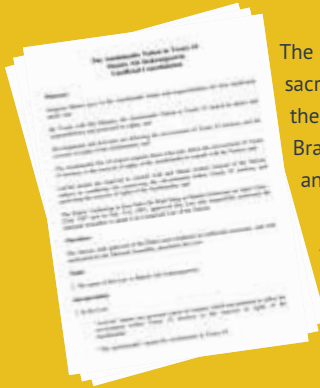


Chiefs Redsky, Sinclair, Skead, and Cobiness with the signed Unity Agreement (Oct. 2018)

To keep community members informed of project developments, the Niiwin Wendaanimok will provide monthly updates through this newsletter. Read on to learn more about the project, who your Community Coordinators are, and how you can get involved.

Meegwetch!

M.A.I.



The Manito Aki Inakonigaawin (MAI) is the sacred Law of the Anishinaabeg informed by the seven Grandfather Teachings of Humility, Bravery, Honesty, Wisdom, Truth, Respect, and Love.

Although it has been in effect since Time Immemorial (and is therefore unwritten) a portion of the Law has recently been translated to written form. This expression of the MAI is called the

Resource Law and is intended to be both equal in force and compatible with the contemporary laws of the Crown.

Resource Law and Safe Passage through Anishinaabe Lands

The MAI is being used as the basis for a Treaty-based relationship with the Crown. MTO has agreed in principle to observance of the principles embodied in the Resource Law in exchange for safe passage through Anishinaabe lands, including:

- Bona fide and meaningful traditional and contemporary consultation
- Minimizing and mitigating environmental effects
- Process funding
- Satisfying Crown obligations and proponent responsibilities
- Maximizing benefits and minimizing negative the effects to the Anishinaabeg in Treaty 3
- Commitment to a joint process that will activate spiritual guidance and protocols.



The Niiwin Wendaanimok in action.

Here are a few of the activities and meetings conducted thus far.

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Drum Ceremony at the Wauzhushk Onigum Roundhouse



Elders Meeting at Wauzhushk Onigum



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The Highway 17 Twinning Project

The Highway 17 Twinning Project is planned to move forward in several phases, though the specific dimensions of each phase is currently under review. With that said, MTO is considering twinning the highway between the Manitoba border in the west to the western extent of the Kenora border in the east.

MTO had begun to conduct some environmental and socioeconomic study and prepared several potential design alternatives closest to the Manitoba border. These works

are being revisited as a result of the Niwiin Wendaanimok Partnership.

Decision-making on these and future works will be informed by a "Harmonized Impact Assessment" which will be based upon the Anishinaabe Aki Kakendamowin. This process will give careful consideration of potential environmental, social, and cultural impacts according to the principles embodied in the MAI.



Anishinaabe Aki Kakendamowin

The Anishinaabe Aki Kakendamowin (AAK) refers to the documentation of the knowledge and practices associated with the care and protection for all life on the lands, in the soil, the skies, and the waters of the territories of the Anishinaabe. This process is directly informed by the Kaagakiwe Inaakoni-gewin (The Teachings) and will be used to support decision-making on the Twinning Project.

The process involves storytelling, mapping, interviews with community members, and archival research to record and understand the relationships that the Anishinaabe of the Niiwin Wendaanimok have with the land - from the ancient past to the present.

This relationship can have to do with a number of traditional and present uses of the land, including ceremonies, hunting, fishing, trapping, sacred sites, traditional tools and technologies, celebrations and historic moments, feasts, medicines and harvesting, and many others.

The AAK Team is currently conducting mapping meetings, archival research, and interviews with community members to build this record and understanding. Their work has just begun - and they need help connecting with knowledge keepers in your community!

See page 4 of this newsletter to find out how you can become involved.



A Closer Look...

Using a combination of high-resolution maps, markers, and audio recordings, the AAK team is documenting Anishinaabe relationships to the land.



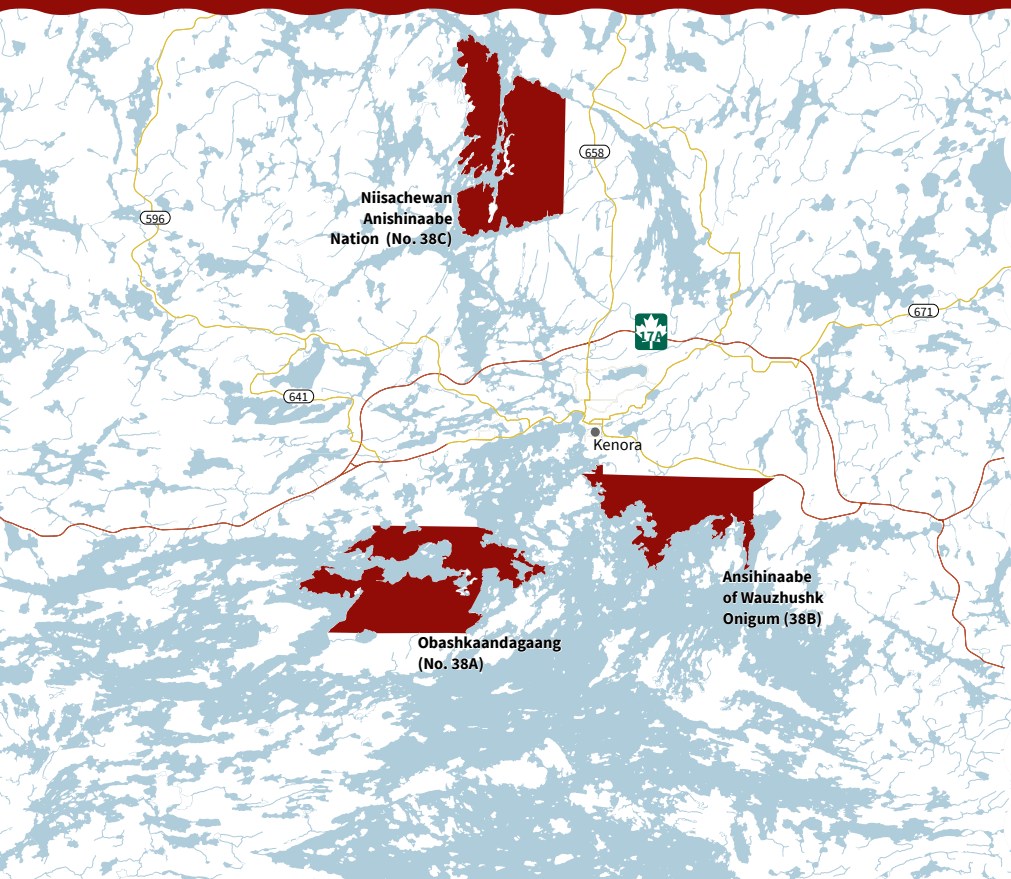
Lake of the Woods Museum Archives

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Mapping & Storytelling Sessions at Shoal Lake 40

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**YOUR LOGO
HERE**

The Niiwin Wendaanimok Logo Contest

First Place: \$250.00 in gift certificates and their design printed on all Niiwin Wendaanimok materials.
 Runner-up prize: \$100.00 gift certificate.

Judges will be looking for a design that embodies the spirit of the Niiwin Wendaanimok Partnership.

Contact your Community Coordinator for more information.

Documenting the A.A.K.

The Anishinaabe Aki Kakendamowin (AAK) Team is building a Geographic Information System (“GIS”) database that will contain shapes and lines symbolizing the areas of the land identified by community members.

Using audio recording transcripts from meetings, they will link the words of community members directly to this GIS database so that so that we can better inform the project by having a full picture of the relationship to lands - from location, to significance, to their evolution over time.

Next Steps...

The Niiwin Wendaanimok team is continuing to meet with MTO officials to share updates and refine the partnership arrangement.

In the meantime, the Anishinaabe Aki Kakendamowin (AAK) team will be setting up meetings in each community to meet with their knowledge keepers over the course of the spring, summer, and fall. Meetings may take the form of a group mapping exercise or a one-on-one interview.

In addition to meetings, the AAK team will be continuing its archival research.

Many of you have conducted “Traditional Land Use” studies in the past, for example, as part of Flood Claims studies. The AAK team wants to minimize the chance for repetition. They know your time and knowledge are valuable!



Want to get involved?

Get the conversation started!

- Ask your family, friends, and neighbours about what stories they might tell.
- Find old photo albums, artifacts, drawings, or audio and video recordings.
- Remember the stories you've heard and think about their significance to the land.
- The AAK Team will be in touch to start setting up sessions very soon! If you'd like to set up a meeting, contact your Community Coordinator (see below).

Meet your Community Coordinators!

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!