TAKING CARE OF EACH OTHER: TAKING CARE OF MOTHER EARTH

SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS REPORT ON “RECONNECTING WITH MOTHER EARTH” ELDERS AND YOUTH GATHERING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

NOVEMBER 4TH-5TH, 2017

Prepared by: Deborah McGregor
# CONTENTS

OPENING: eVERYTHING STARTS WITH SPIRIT AND CEREMONY .................................................. 3

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE........................................................................................................ 4
  The Participants, Presentations and Activities .................................................................................. 4
  Report Organization ......................................................................................................................... 6
  Facilitator’s Opening Remarks .......................................................................................................... 6

Presentation Summaries ..................................................................................................................... 7
  Opening Remarks: Anishinabek Nation Deputy Grand Chief Glen Hare and Youth Portfolio Holder .. 7
  Climate Change Action in Ontario: Mark Dunn, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) ............................................................ 8
  Indigenous Women’s Role in Resurgence and Resistance Movements: Juliana Lesage, OFNYPC ... 9
  Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day .................................................................................................. 10
  Ontario First Nation Young Peoples’ Council Activity ................................................................. 11

Workshop Summary and Highlights ................................................................................................ 12
  Dan Longboat: Food Sovereignty ....................................................................................................... 12
  Leadership and Communication: Juliette Deal” ................................................................................. 14
  MOECC: Climate Change Action Plan ............................................................................................... 17
  David Courchene: Natural and Spiritual Laws ............................................................................... 20

Facilitator Reflections and Summary of Day One ............................................................................ 21

Elders’ Remarks and Reflections ......................................................................................................... 22

Elders and Youth Sharing of Knowledge ............................................................................................ 23

PTO WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS ................................................................................................. 24
  Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI) .......................................................................... 24
  Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) ....................................................................................................... 26
  Anishinabek Nation/Union of Ontario Indians ................................................................................ 28
  Independent First Nations (IFN) ....................................................................................................... 31
  Grand Council Treaty # 3 ................................................................................................................. 33
  Six Nations of the Grand River ......................................................................................................... 35

Gathering Reflections, Facilitator Deborah McGregor ...................................................................... 37

Key Recommendations ..................................................................................................................... 38
  Building Community Awareness and Education ............................................................................. 39
  Connecting Young People and Elders (TK) ...................................................................................... 40
  Continued Advocacy to Protect Lands ............................................................................................ 40
  More Gatherings to Share Knowledge and Dialogue ................................................................. 41
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gathering Evaluation</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing Remarks &amp; Next Steps</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Gathering Agenda</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Gathering Participants</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C: Leadership and Communication</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D: Context of Climate Change Policy in Ontario</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E: Indigenous food sovereignty</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OPENING: EVERYTHING STARTS WITH SPIRIT AND CEREMONY

Ceremony and establishing spiritual connections have been emphasized by Elders as being an important part of environment-related gatherings. In fact, Elders have explicitly stated that all gatherings should begin with tobacco as an offering to the ancestors so their presence is felt at the gathering. Ceremony connects people back to their ancestors: grandmothers, grandfathers, relatives. Through ceremony and offering tobacco, their knowledge and wisdom assist to inform the dialogue/discussion that will take place. Elders continue to emphasize the importance of acknowledging the lands, spirits and ancestors through ceremonies. Ceremony and establishing spiritual connections through tobacco also brings participants together in a good way.

As such, ceremony and cultural protocols formed an important part of the gathering. Sunrise ceremonies were offered each morning and were open to all participants and community members. Fort William First Nation’s Chi Animikii Traditional Drum opened and closed the gathering. Opening and Closing prayers were offered and a full moon ceremony conducted. The gathering fell on the full moon and it was appropriate for a gathering that focussed on “reconnecting with Mother Earth” to acknowledge Grandmother Moon (Nookmis-Giiizis). Sharing circles also took place for participants to share their thoughts, insights and concerns regarding climate change and re connecting with Mother Earth.

After cultural protocols and ceremony were honoured, opening remarks were provided by Chief Peter Collins (Fort William First Nation), Anishinabek Nation Deputy Grand Chief Glen Hare, and Ontario First Nation (OFN) Young Peoples Council members. A spirit plate was prepared and offered at each meal and a prayer offered to remind us of our responsibilities to the spirit world and ancestors. The gathering closed with a prayer and drum song.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, Chiefs of Ontario (COO) would like to acknowledge that the gathering took place on the traditional territories of the Fort William First Nation, part of the Anishinabek Nation.

It takes a great deal of hard work to plan and coordinate gatherings and the people that make such events successful should be acknowledged for their commitment. The efforts of the following people are greatly appreciated:

- The Chiefs of Ontario staff, in particular Kathleen Padulo, Alison Anderson and Fallon Andy.
- The Ontario First Nation Young Peoples Council (OFNYPC) members.

In keeping with our traditions, the gathering was opened with ceremony, for which I would like to say miigwetch to:

- Chi Animikii Traditional Drum (Fort William First Nation) for opening and closing the gathering.
- Gordon Waindubence, and all those who assisted and participated, for opening each morning with a sunrise ceremony.
- Rita Fenton and Renee Tookenay for offering opening and closing prayers and conducting the full moon ceremony.
- Rita Fenton also offered prayers for each meal, prepared the spirit plate each morning and assisted with the smudge when necessary.
- COO wishes to acknowledge all others who assisted with these ceremonies.

We also acknowledge and say miigwetch to:

- Estelle Simard for leading the sharing/healing circle
- Tommy and Isabel White for their songs
- Sam Achneepenskum and Valerie Ooshag for leading the vigil for youth.

We would also like to thank the notetakers for their diligence and patience in taking notes throughout this gathering (Holly Pythilla, Tannis Kastern, and Rachel Arsenault). We especially wish to acknowledge the sign language translators Deborah Parliament and Annette Sandy.

COO would like to thank all the presenters for sharing information and answering questions. We thank all the Elders and youth who came prepared to learn and share.
INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Chiefs of Ontario (COO) coordinated the efforts of a collaborative working group, comprised of the Ontario First Nation Young Peoples’ Council (OFNYPC) representatives to advise on the planning of the gathering. See Appendix A for the Gathering agenda. The Gathering represented an effort to share dialogue among First Nation young people and Elders on climate change. The gathering brought together First Nations young people, Elders and practitioners, with the intent of meeting the following objectives:

- To communicate ideas/concerns around climate change
- To learn from each other and share knowledge about how climate change affects our experiences living in our communities
- To learn from Elders about TK and how we can reconnect to Mother Earth to deal with climate change
- To dialogue on how climate change can be addressed in our communities and to contribute to a path forward.

The main goal of the gathering was for youth and Elders to learn from each other about climate change and develop a path forward for how to address challenges faced. The intended outcomes included:

- Contributing to the development of a climate change network to share knowledge and information beyond the gathering.
- Producing a video that communicates main ideas/messages from participants at the gathering.
- Collectively developing a path forward for “reconnecting with Mother Earth” in order to meet climate change challenges.

The Participants, Presentations and Activities

The gathering’s participants consisted of approximately 80 people, including 50 First Nation young people and Elders from across Ontario along with presenters, OFNYPC, and Chiefs of Ontario leadership and support staff. See Appendix B for Participant list. Friday evening consisted of a welcoming by the
Chi Animikii Traditional Drum and an opening prayer. A sharing circle was followed by a vigil for youth who have suffered violence in the Thunder Bay area. The sharing circle, facilitated by Estelle Simard offered an opportunity for participants to share their thoughts on Earth Justice for youth and Elders.

On Saturday, opening and welcoming remarks were offered by Chief Peter Collins of the Fort William First Nation, Anishinabek Nation Deputy Grand Chief Glen Hare, and OFNYPC members. A plenary presentation by Mark Dunn of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change followed the opening remarks. OFNYPC’s Juliana Lesage offered a presentation: *Indigenous Women’s Role in Resurgence and Resistance Movements* to offer a youth perspective on climate and environmental change.

The remainder of the day consisted of the delivery of four workshops, each presented four times throughout the day:

- **Leadership and Communications**, delivered by Juliette Deal of Scouts Environmental. See appendix C for detailed comments offered by participants in this workshop.


- **Context of Climate Change Policy in Ontario**, delivered by Alex Leonard and Cara Babineau of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MOECC). See appendix D for questions/answers and detailed comments offered by participants in this workshop.

- **Food Sovereignty**, by Professor Dan Longboat, Director of the Indigenous Environmental Program, Trent University. See Appendix E for detailed comments and insights shared in this workshop.

Participants were encouraged to attend all the workshops to learn and participate in preparation for the working group sessions the following day. Regional Chief Day offered his remarks at the evening dinner and the OFNYPC developed a climate change activity to assist youth in becoming more fully engaged in climate change discussions.
Sunday opened with Elders’ remarks followed by Provincial Territorial Organizations (PTO) and affiliates group brainstorming sessions on climate change. The highlight of the gathering consisted of the youth presentations of their PTO’s dialogue in the afternoon in the final plenary of the day.

Report Organization
This report represents a summary of the Reconnecting with Mother Earth: Elders and Youth Gathering on Climate Change. The gathering spanned over three days with many hours of workshops, presentations and dialogue. This report provides an overview of key messages and reflections shared at the gathering. It is anticipated that a record of the gathering will be captured as part of a video that will be produced by the Chiefs of Ontario and made available to all participants and First Nation communities in Ontario.

This report will present brief summaries of the presentations and workshops. Key messages will be provided as well as recommendations that emerged as part of dialogue/discussions among Elders and youth. The main emphasis will be on the words shared on the final day which chart a path forward for future action.

Facilitator’s Opening Remarks
The gathering represents an incredible opportunity to share knowledge with each other to address one of the most pressing environmental concerns of our time: climate change. The gathering focused on bringing youth and Elders together to dialogue on how to address climate change in First Nation communities. This gathering builds upon earlier Elder/youth gatherings such as the “Following in the Footsteps of our Ancestors” Elders and Youth Water Gathering held in March, 2015 in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. This Elder/youth gathering is focused on climate change to specifically address the topic of “Reconnecting with Mother Earth” in the face of challenges that confront First Nation communities on a daily basis. The Following in the Footsteps of our Ancestors water gathering provided an opportunity for young people and Elders to discuss Great Lakes water and other environmental challenges experienced at the community and regional levels and to provide an opportunity for Elders to share knowledge with youth. Traditional knowledge shared at the gathering focused on our roles and responsibilities as part of caring and
protecting for the waters. Please see the video of the gathering at http://www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/node/398.

One of the main recommendations to flow from the "Following in the Footsteps of Our Ancestors Gathering" was to provide further opportunities to bring Elders and youth together to learn about responsibilities to care for the Earth and Waters. "The Reconnecting with Mother Earth Gathering" provided youth leadership, political leadership, knowledge holders, and Elders an opportunity to come together to share traditional knowledge and teachings so that youth can be the agents of change in Ontario.

PRESENTATION SUMMARIES

Opening Remarks: Anishinabek Nation Deputy Grand Chief Glen Hare and Youth Portfolio Holder

Glen Hare stressed the importance of the topic of climate change in First Nation communities. He said that matters are getting more and more urgent over time and that we collectively have to begin to find ways to adapt to climate change. Adaptation has to occur with us, with families, communities and nations.

Glen Hare emphasized that we have to build relationships and share knowledge. We have to share knowledge with each other as First Nations. We have to share knowledge between Elders (traditional knowledge) and youth. Glen also stated that knowledge needs to be shared within the community itself as there is still a general lack of knowledge of climate change. He asserted as well that we have to co-produce knowledge.

Glen underscored the need for youth to listen to Elders. Elders have a lifetime of experience and have obtained knowledge over the years. Youth need to talk to Elders at every opportunity, at gatherings like this, but also at home, in their own community and family. Elders have experienced many changes over their lifetime and they have been witness to many events. They have many stories to share with youth and others. Glen pointed out from his personal experience that what Elders have predicted has come to pass. We have to listen to what they have say.
Deputy Chief Hare also stressed the idea of **unity**. We have to help each other. Meeting climate change challenges requires cooperation, sharing and helping each other. He stated we have to raise awareness of climate change in our own communities. We have to take action now. Environmental issues, such as water quality and quantity, waste management/garbage, and aerial herbicide spraying are all inter-related and many of their effects accelerated by climate change. Chief Hare also shared stories of environmental damage caused by severe weather events, such as the disruption to aquaculture and fish cages (GMO fish escaped into the wild and all the waste from the cages went into the natural water system). He said that exactly what climate change impacts will be are unknown and government officials and scientists make promises that no environmental harm will come, but then “something” always happens.

Deputy Grand Chief Hare closed with emphasizing again the importance of hearing from Elders who have seen all these things happen over their lifetime. We need to learn from them and from others who have something to offer.

**Climate Change Action in Ontario: Mark Dunn, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC)**

Mark Dunn’s presentation “Climate Change Action in Ontario” served as an introduction to the Province of Ontario’s approach to addressing climate change. The presentation provided a brief introduction to the concept of climate change (what it is and why it matters). MOECC drew on research conducted to project climate change in Ontario over next 30 plus years. Ontario’s Climate Change Action Plan involves multiple partnerships and collaborations, including those with Indigenous peoples. MOECC introduced the Province’s Cap and Trade program and invited input into Ontario’s plans via workshops that would follow later in the day. Key highlights of the presentation include:

- Ontario has developed targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 2050.
- Ontario’s Cap and Trade program will generate revenue and is designed to fight climate change
• Ontario’s climate change action plan is designed to reduce greenhouse gas pollution and aid in the transition to a low-carbon economy.

• The five-year action plan is built on collaboration with businesses, industries, municipalities, environmental organizations and Indigenous communities.

• Projected Temperature Changes by 2050s: Far North winters are projected to be up to ~8 degrees warmer, the south up to ~4 degrees warmer, potentially more freezing rain & less snow.

Indigenous Women’s Role in Resurgence and Resistance Movements: Juliana Lesage, OFNYPC

Juliana is a student at Trent University and she presented on her research comparing the struggles of Indigenous women in Canada and Mexico. She found in her research that the failure to protect rights, land and resources has been detrimental to Indigenous peoples’ ways of life. Furthermore, environmental destruction has caused suffering, especially to the wellbeing of Indigenous peoples. She found in her research that the failure to protect rights undermines the ability of Indigenous peoples to live well and maintain their way of life. She stressed that relationships to land and traditional ways of life are vital to the survival of Indigenous peoples. The more the land is degraded the more unwell Indigenous peoples become.

More specifically in relation to climate change, she emphasized that everything is connected: climate change impacts are connected to other environmental challenges. She stated the way forward is to protect the land and respect natural law. She emphasized that as Indigenous peoples “we need to rebuild relationships between families, communities and nations”. She stressed that women are the backbone of many struggles of resistance as they seek to provide a positive future for at least seven generations ahead. She left us with an important message: “Despite the barriers in our way, we will revitalize our traditional lands, knowledge and languages as a community”.

Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day

Ontario Regional Chiefs (ORC) Isadore Day offered his remarks during the dinner. He reminded everyone that the first week of November is treaty awareness week. The Treaties Recognition Week Act was passed in 2016 and designates the first week of November each year as Treaties Recognition Week. Treaties Recognition Week provides an opportunity for teachers to plan learning activities about treaties to promote awareness of treaties in the broader public. He stated that it is now accepted that First Nation rights are to be recognized in any dialogue with the government (federal or provincial). The argument is not about whether First Nations have rights, it is about treaty responsibilities.

ORC Day asked participants to understand and reflect on our treaties in a much deeper and profound way. He emphasized that we need to think about responsibilities as well as rights. We need to think about our treaty responsibilities and how these responsibilities relate to reconnecting with Mother Earth. Isadore Day emphasized that we never gave up our responsibilities to the land and our future. We agreed to share, but we never relinquished our future. We never gave up our children or future generations, we never said to take our children to residential school or to put them in care. We never asked for the Indian Act.

Understanding our treaty relationships in the context of responsibilities is important because we can respond to our concerns, needs, and issues on the basis of our responsibilities to each other, Mother Earth, and future generations. Responsibilities enable us to respond appropriately to challenges we face.

Our challenge is how to build a system of responsibility “to take care of each other” and “to take care of the land” by reconnecting with Mother Earth. Regional Chief Day spoke to the youth about how they are agents of change, they have the capacity to reconnect with Mother Earth. He said we need to have unity among ourselves to care for each other as a way to enact our responsibilities. ORC Day left us with three questions to consider:

- How do you feel and what are your thoughts going forward?
• What is needed to enable a responsibility-based path forward?
• What do you want for future generations?

**Ontario First Nation Young Peoples’ Council Activity**

The OFNYPC prepared an activity for participants to engage in over the duration of the gathering. The purpose of the activity was to raise awareness of climate change and encourage participants to share knowledge with each other. The activity consisted of the following steps:

• Meet one new friend and have a conversation on where you are from, and what the climate and landscape look like in your communities. Take a picture with your new friend and post to any Social Media using #YouthEnviroChange

• Ask an Elder about how the climate has changed in their home region since they were young. Create a post about your discussion and take a selfie with them and post to any Social Media using #YouthEnviroChange

• Take a nature-related picture outside and create a post on Social Media explaining what that picture means to you using #YouthEnviroChange

• Meet a different Elder and ask them what message they wish to share with the world. Share their message, specifically on FACEBOOK using the #YouthEnviroChange

• Using the Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council’s #YouthEnviroChange SNAPCHAT filer, take a selfie with at least 3 people including a member of the OFNYPC and post to our story.

At the conclusion of the gathering, participants who completed the activity were eligible for prizes. It is hoped that through this activity, youth will continue to participate in raising awareness of climate change in their communities beyond the gathering.
WORKSHOP SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

Dan Longboat: Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty means we as First Nations have been provided for by the Creator and by Mother Earth. We have been given everything we need to support our people. It also means we have been given authority to take care of the place where we live. This authority did not come from a colonial government; this authority comes from the Creator and is based on our own laws. Our knowledge and stories provide the mental and spiritual teachings found in our songs; we need to learn to think for ourselves again. The Creator gave us the processes and the knowledge from a place of spirit. Our way of life came from all the animals, from the earth, or it came to our people through dreams, visions and ceremony. Through medicine, our ancestors taught us to keep these teachings. Our knowledge is embedded in our protocols, speeches, and dances. Through Elders we can access a body of knowledge that is connected to something that is thousands and thousands of years old.

Our way of life has often been described as “subsistence,” but in fact, our ancestors flourished. We had our own civilization and governance systems. Our way of life tied us to the land. Self-determination means we have to transmit our culture and we have a responsibility to care for all life.

Our health and wellness have been negatively impacted through colonization, including residential schools, resource exploitation and development, etc. Different ways of seeing the world have been imposed upon our own. Our people have been through crisis, yet we are still here. We must focus on those teachings and ways of life that have sustained us through these difficult times. Dr. Longboat pointed out that as human beings we tend to go towards unhealthy foods, such as sugar, and then diabetes happens. We focus on negative food practises which we pass on to our children.

Our traditional ways of obtaining food connected us to Mother Earth. When we’re hunting we reinforce our connection to our food. We ask animals for their lives for the food; we respect them. We prepare for hunting, so we don’t make those animals suffer. We have certain times we hunt and eat meat. We need
to rebuild the process of understanding to our traditional ways of well being. Understanding the nutrients that were in the positive switches compared to the negative switches we turn on today. That is the stuff that is killing us; we need to return to healthy lifestyles.

Food sovereignty is supported by a governance structure that has leadership informed by spirit. The foundation of a sense of community is built on kindness and compassion. We have to work together to support each other, by going back and learning the ceremonies and learning as much as you can. The more you engage with the natural world and have a relationship with it, the more connected you will be to Mother Earth. Our empowerment comes from the spirit world, natural world, Mother Earth. Dr. Longboat pointed out there are leaders in the natural world, everything in nature has its own leaders. For example, the strawberry is the leader of the berries, and when it’s the right time to harvest the women pick them. When we understand the gifts (food), they listen to us. For example, when we recognize and respect the strawberry by saying its names, strawberries listen. The strawberries know we are thanking them for their gift of food. They will notice we have songs for them where we praise them with thanks.

We can strengthen ourselves, families and community by respecting the berry family.

Dr. Longboat emphasized the importance of our languages. Language is opening the door, the key to rebuilding our relationship with the land and the creator. Every time we use our language those beings are listening -they’re helping us. Because these things have a spirit they are alive. Say prayers for our language.

Colonization is not just in the past, it’s alive here today and in our cupboards. If we want to be sovereign nations we must be the ones in control of our food, land, ceremonies.

- Exercise our own personal sovereignty, autonomy and Independence, we have to exercise our inherent right to choose our sustenance/food. Dairy, cheese, wheat/grain is not our food; it has made our people sick with chronic illnesses.
- We must recognize the authority of women and help support, honour and strengthen life
- We have a responsibility to take care of ourselves, others and future generations. We have a responsibility to care for all life.
- We maintain our connection to the Creator and Mother Earth through ceremony, water, land, coming together (gathering) and supporting life.
- Elders are our doctors, our educators, we have to respect and to recognize the authority of our elders.
- Asserting our authority and jurisdiction does not mean we exclude others.
- How do we take care of each other and connect with the physical world and the spiritual world?
- Canada’s food guide is not applicable to us. We have different needs, our bodies have adjusted to different foods over countless generations. We are eating genetically modified foods, foods full of drugs given to animals.
- We have to revitalize our diet to help prolong good health for our people.
- If we don’t have health and wellbeing nothing else will matter; we need to look at the capacity of food.
- Our knowledge comes from a place of spirit. We need to recognize our helpers (spirit) through language, culture and ceremony.
Leadership and Communication: Juliette Deal

Workshop Participants

In this workshop facilitated by Juliette Deal from Scouts Environmental three questions were posed to the group to consider. These are:

1. What are the impacts or concerns within your communities?
2. What does climate change mean to you/your community?
3. What forums are currently being used by your community to talk about climate change and what you’d like to see?

In response to these questions, participants raised a number of environmental concerns facing their communities as well changes they are observing. Health impacts are being experienced by communities dealing with environmental degradation. Participants stated communities are in a difficult position of opposing projects that will cause environmental harm while recognizing the need for economic development and providing employment to people in the community. When talking to Elders, they do tell us the changes that are occurring. The losses they are talking about are immense. Participants emphasized that we need to follow our own laws, for example, Treaty 3 has Manito Aki-Inakonigaawin (The Great Earth Law).

In relation to the levels of knowledge of climate change, it varies depending on the community and the segment of the community. Participants observed that climate change is discussed in some communities but not others. In communities where climate change is discussed, participants observed that there is a lack of information they can use. There is little in terms of climate change information specific to First Nations. Furthermore, even if people are talking about it, not everyone understands what the words “climate change” mean. There have to be better ways to communicate what is meant by climate change.

“It’s troubling that they rape the land for the sake of development and it’s very disheartening and troubling and it’s not just government and industry, it’s our own people too”

“It’s not aware of the impacts of climate change”

“Our future generations will feel the impacts, especially with water”

“Elders are often forgotten about in these kinds of discussions”

“We would like to see an opportunity to go to each Elder and gather information and valuable knowledge”
Participants noted that where climate change is discussed, there is little action. Some youth participants pointed out they are learning about climate change in school. Gatherings, forums where people can talk and share knowledge and experiences are important. Youth and Elders meetings are important. First Nation languages were emphasized as important in communication.

Communication occurs in a number of ways in communities, depending on who you are trying to reach. Word of mouth, visits, face-to-face communication are still important. In some communities, communication by radio is an important way to share information. Many communities have a newsletter and information is shared that way.

It was pointed out that social media is one way to communicate information about climate change. Everyone has a mobile device so media and Facebook etc. can be used and everyone has access. BUT there is also great potential for information to be misinterpreted and used in sending mixed messages. The information may not be correct.

Elders in the session spoke about the importance of learning “what the ancestors knew,” or traditional knowledge. This is critical. There has to be a way to communicate this, and doing so in our own languages is best. If we want to revitalize our own teachings, we need to pass on that knowledge to young people and those generations to come. **The Elders put a priority on the fact that TK that should be communicated to the young people.** We need to foster identity development in the youth (e.g., getting a spirit name). There needs to be a focus on how to bring Elders and youth together to share knowledge. Youth can also be leaders and take other youth and children under their wing.
### Key Messages

- There is little First Nation-specific information on climate change.
- People talking and forums like this help
- Chiefs and also youth and Elders need to meet with each other
- First Nation languages are important, as well as learning about our history, our own version of treaties, etc.
- We have the Manito Aki-Inakonigaawin (The Great Earth Law) which tells us spirit is in everything.
- Not everyone knows what “climate change” means, even when talking about it.
- There is great potential in using social media, but there is also great potential to get incorrect information this way.
- The Elders emphasized the importance of teaching and passing on traditional knowledge to the young.
- **Educating and creating awareness about climate change needs to be age-specific and it must consider our culture and history of colonization.**
- Climate change communication is not just about “what is climate change” but the kinds of choices that we make that are environmentally destructive. e.g., even through phones and computers (how people like to communicate). We need to think about the environmental impact of these devices.
- People forget about Elders with their communication. Elders have the TK and they know the changes through their lifetime of experiences.
- What about a virtual site to connect youth and Elders so that it can be brought to other communities via the internet?
- Forms of communications that would help are Cristie Belcourt and her social media site - water is life campaign - it is very effective and we need more of those kinds of sites on different topics
- Maybe a youth-Elder council to get info and having a dedicated person in the community to be sure that the support system is there to help achieve what we’re trying to do
MOECC: Climate Change Action Plan

Cara Babineau (Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Indigenous Relations Branch), Alex Leonard (Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Engineer), and Mark Dunn (Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Director of the Indigenous Relations Branch), delivered a workshop outlining Ontario’s Climate Change Action Plan. Participants were asked what community priorities are and how community action can be supported. How can climate change gases be reduced for the future?

Participants raised numerous concerns around climate change impacts they are seeing in their communities. Representatives from the north are observing insects and invasive species they have not seen before due to climate change (e.g., more wood ticks). Other much needed species such as bees are scarce. The invasive species outcompete the existing species, affecting the birds and fish and ultimately people as our food sources are diminished. Wildlife is impacted, for example the bears are awake longer as they look for food (e.g., when snow is on the ground; they are usually hibernating by then).

Protecting water is important especially in light of climate change. Areas such as Lake of the Woods and the Great Lakes do not have the same level of protection. US and Canadian laws are different. The current legal framework does not protect the waters. There is already contamination along waterways that First Nations depend on, such as the English-Wabigon River system. People experience ill health from contamination.

Participants also pointed out that extreme weather events (e.g., ice storms) are impacting communities and people need to be prepared for emergencies. There are concerns around how many communities are prepared for emergencies related to climate change.

First Nation representatives pointed out that the ability to access climate change mitigation or adaptation funding (e.g., Green Ontario Fund) is limited due to capacity and jurisdictional issues. Funding requirements are challenging as a certain percentage needs to come from each of the federal and provincial governments. Jurisdiction will remain an issue. Housing is a federal “responsibility”. This presents unique challenges for First Nation communities.
First Nations are experiencing health impacts associated with climate change and believe health and well being needs to be an important consideration, not just money and the economy.

Youth pointed out that MOECC does not seem to have any Indigenous people working for them. Youth also pointed out that Ontario’s Climate Change Action Plan has a box that requires them to “collaborate with First Nations,” but the box is empty.

Federal and provincial governments make a lot of money off our lands; supporting our sustainability should be a priority. Representatives expressed concern about decreasing wildlife populations in their area (e.g., moose). This in turn impacts food security. With clearcuts and poor forestry practices the moose population is declining and First Nations have to decrease their hunting, but First Nations did not cause the problem.

What are the impacts of alternative energy, such as windmills? How are they disturbing the earth and waters? There is not enough information to make informed decisions about alternative energy.

Consultation, accommodation and consent are not occurring for developments that impact First Nation lands. There are multiple projects taking place in our territories and we lack the capacity to fight them all. The projects add to significant and cumulative impacts that contribute to climate change. Federal and provincial climate change plans and strategies do not address this reality.

**Key Messages**

- Climate change is going to affect First Nations faster than the rest of the population.

- Climate change must be considered holistically. First Nations experience the impacts of climate change holistically; everything affects everything else.

- Water quality and quantity is a widespread concern among many First Nation communities.

- Communities are different, you cannot assume they are all the same. They have different existing challenges brought about by the history of colonialism and environmental destruction/contamination and each community has to be understood on its own terms.

- Concerns were expressed about the cap and trade system, that it will cost more money in the long term.

- Wind and solar are expensive alternatives and many people do not have the funds upfront to pay for alternative energy sources. Solar was expressed as preferable to wind energy.

- The Green Ontario fund may have funding opportunities for First nations. MOECC is more interested in funding community wide plans rather than individuals. First Nations participants pointed out that not all communities have plans nor the capacity to develop them.
• Access to climate change mitigation and adaptation funding and programs will remain a challenge, as First Nations have to navigate between federal and provincial governments.

• Environmental changes observed by First Nations include: poor soil quality and produce not as abundant or of the same quality; seasonal weather changes (snow comes later and/or is of a different quality, summers are warmer and people burn more); severe storm events; increase in fires; poor quality meat from animals (animals are sick and have worms in their flesh); disruption to winter roads or ice not freezing on waterways impedes travel;

• In terms of awareness of climate change we have to be mindful of different ways to communicate e.g., sign language. First Nations are willing to share knowledge to teach others to take care of Mother Earth, it is not just a First Nations responsibility. We have to bring back our traditional teachings and teach those responsibilities in school for everyone.

• Ontario Climate Action Plan, especially the cap and trade scheme, is designed more for urban spaces and people. For example, community retrofit does not address traditional food security (healthy fish and animals, plants, etc.) and how to monitor their health. The Cap and Trade program is risky as it is based on the market. It is not communicated in a clear, accessible and transparent way.

• We did not cause these problems. First Nations see and experience them differently. Greenhouses or community gardens do not address the declining moose population (our food source).

• Money does not really solve these problems. The environmental destruction has to stop.

• Governments do not listen to us, and then we have to protest the threats to our lives and lands.
David Courchene: Natural and Spiritual Laws

Knowledge Keeper David Courchene, from the Turtle Lodge: International Center for Indigenous Education and Wellness, offered teachings he has learned over his lifetime as a practitioner of Anishinabek traditional ways of life and as a ceremonial leader. He shared stories with the workshop participants on the value and importance of traditional knowledge and natural law.

He emphasized the following points through storytelling:

- It is critical in this time of climate change to understand and take up our traditional roles and responsibilities toward Mother Earth.

- Natural law involves a reciprocal relationship with Mother Earth. If we engage in beneficial activities (water and land protectors) for the Earth, positive and good things will happen with the Earth. If we are neglectful of our duties and engage in negative activities, then bad things will happen to the Earth and ourselves.

- Natural law is straightforward, good actions will produce good results; bad behaviour will produce negative outcomes.

- Mother Earth can survive without us but we cannot survive without Mother Earth.

- By fulfilling our roles and responsibilities as Anishinabek you are not only helping Mother Earth, you are also helping yourself and future generations.

- Other activities take our attention away from learning and acting on our responsibilities. Formal education takes us away from caring for the land and waters. We need to learn our own laws, knowledge, and protocols as Anishinabek. We can learn other ways (education, science) but not at the expense of our own identity and way of life.

- People ignore their responsibilities in the name of economic development and other distractions.

- Natural Law, protocols and knowledge are key to our future survival.
Mr. Courchene, after sharing his experiences and stories he learned from Elders and knowledge holders in his lifetime, utilized a sharing circle format for the remainder of the workshop. Participants in the circle were encouraged to share their own stories, experiences and knowledge they obtained in their own families and communities. Participants shared stories about their own experiences with colonization, oppression and how traditional teachings, ceremonies and land-based activities helped them overcome adversity in their lives. Youth and Elders’ personal stories are not included in this report as per sharing circle protocols.

**FACILITATOR REFLECTIONS AND SUMMARY OF DAY ONE**

It is always important to acknowledge our ancestors and spirit world. Here, we acknowledge the traditional territories of the Anishinabek, in particular the Fort William First Nation, Chi Animikii Drum, Ceremonies, Songs and Prayer that have been conducted to support all delegates at this gathering to consider the important topic of climate change. We were reminded today of the gifts that have been provided to us from Mother Earth. We were also reminded it is part of our identity and responsibilities to take care of the Earth and to keep future generations in mind in our deliberations.

Elders pointed out we have to consider the four elements: fire, air, water and earth. We have to keep our treaties and treaty relationships in mind. We have to understand and honour the treaties and our responsibilities.

Despite colonization (historical and ongoing), we still have traditional knowledge to share to build our own communities. We have learned a great deal from the Elders who came to share their stories, knowledge, and experience. Some people remember similar gatherings like this being held decades ago, yet we continue to face similar changes. We can learn from the Elders’ experiences, many of whom were leaders for decades. Their work is ongoing and we should continue to support them. We need to **LISTEN** and acknowledge and respect their wisdom and lived experience. We heard about the importance of using our own language to express our knowledge and to assist us in reconnecting with mother Earth. This includes sign language.
An important theme to emerge over the past day is **UNITY**. Unity means helping and taking care of each other.

We ask that you consider what you have learned today, reflect on the words shared in the workshops, in ceremonies, over dinner, during breaks etc. and come prepared to share your ideas tomorrow. Everyone has knowledge to share, everyone here has important contributions to make in the deliberations to take place tomorrow a.m.

- You are agents of change. You have responsibilities to connect to Mother Earth.
- We want you to really think about what these responsibilities are in a deep and profound way.

We ask you to consider the future that you want. What future do you want for future generations?

Think about what needs to be done to re-connect with mother Earth. How will we take care of the land?

**Elders’ Remarks and Reflections**

Elders offered remarks on the final day. Basil Greene and Betty Maracle expressed grave concern regarding the wellbeing of current and future generations and how these concerns are related to environmental degradation. The youth are taking their lives and this is related to historical and ongoing colonialism and lack of connection to the land/waters. Intergenerational trauma is prevalent and it affects the present generation, especially the young people. It will affect future generations as well if we do not do something about it. The wellbeing of our people is related to the wellbeing of Mother Earth. The more the earth is disrespected and disregarded, the more the health of the First Nations peoples suffers.

Many Elders and people in the communities suffered at the hands of residential schools and these abuses continue in the current education system, where our young people are not being taught their own history, language and culture. Our children are still taken away through the child welfare system. We continue to lose our children and young people.

The challenges we face as a people will continue if we do not root our future in our own laws, protocols, cultures, traditions, languages and ceremonies. We have to know who we are and what our responsibilities are to **each other and the Earth**.
Our laws, culture, and language are what keep us strong, and we have to ensure these are passed on and practised by current and future generations. The stronger we are, the more able we will be to deal with climate change.

We have a responsibility to teach young people so our knowledge can be passed on to future generations. That will be what keeps us strong.

**Elders and Youth Sharing of Knowledge**

Youth and Elders worked in small groups according to their PTOs to dialogue and share knowledge intended to contribute to developing a path forward. All 4 PTOs and affiliates were represented; including Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI), Independent First Nations (IFN), Six Nations of the Grand River, Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN), Anishinabek Nation/Union of Ontario Indians (UOI), and Grand Council Treaty #3. All working groups were asked to discuss/respond to a set of guiding questions developed by the OFNYPC. Participants were asked to share concerns specific to their communities relating to climate change. The groups had the morning to brainstorm ideas and share knowledge with each other. The working group facilitated the opportunity for the sharing of knowledge between youth and Elders. Participants gathered in working groups and recorded responses on flip charts. The group discussions were then presented by youth to the plenary, so knowledge could be shared with all delegates at the gatherings.

The presentations by youth delegates of each PTO’s and affiliates discussion was the highlight of the gathering. Elders and youth had an opportunity to participate in the workshops, engage in the discussions/dialogue and share experiences, expertise and ideas. The group work offered an opportunity for Elders to share their traditional knowledge of the land with youth and youth in turn to share their ideas, concerns and knowledge about climate change. The working groups offered opportunities to apply knowledge gained at the gathering to make recommendations on a path forward.

Many common issues emerged, and topics for future conferences were gathered to use for planning purposes. The views and observations of the Elders combined with the curiosity and concerns of the youth made for an interesting compilation of information.
To guide the discussion each group was asked to respond to the following questions:

- What is your connection to the land?
- What does climate change mean to you and how does it impact your life?
- How can your connection guide approaches to climate change?
- What effects of climate change have you seen in your community?
- How you like would to see climate change dealt with?

A summary and highlights of each PTO presentation follows below.

**PTO WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS**

**ASSOCIATION OF IROQUOIS AND ALLIED INDIANS (AIAI)**

**What is your connection to the land?**

- Giving thanks to all Creation
- We are the caretakers
- Need recycling programs
- Renewable energy and lighting are needed
- Water levels are fluctuating – and past 2 years water levels were high
- Effects to snow and runoff have been seen
- Training our own people to look after our water and resources - and especially women
- Protect land and sacred resources
- Just because we live near cities doesn’t mean we can’t go green.
- It impacts us in a wholesome way.
- Acknowledging interconnectedness to all things.
• Going back to spiritual ceremonies. Importance of giving thanks for Creation. We have turned to pharmaceuticals.

• Merge our traditions in a modern way. We need to become more self-sufficient.

• Jurisdiction over the land and resources.

• High water levels; houses are ruined by flooding and we have no money to fix them.

• Our people aren’t in the mindset to care for lands and traditions.

• Zebra mussels – invasive species. Sport fishing impacts communities.

How can your connection to the land guide you?

• Impacts us in a wholesome way

• Acknowledge our interconnectedness

• Need to look at variety of approaches

• Going back to ceremonies

• Use the energy within

• Important to give thanks to Creation

• Our people have seen the changes on our waters

• We have turned to pharmaceuticals instead of depending on our own medicines

• Need to figure out how to release dependence on “settler ways”

• Emerge in a more modern way

• Become more self-sufficient

• 2 worlds are intertwined

• Be educated to be able to talk to government about jurisdiction over our lands and resources
How would you like to see your connection to the lands reflected in strategies and also what effects of climate change have you seen in your community?

- High water levels
- Houses ruined by flooding with no money to fix them
- In past flooding so bad can’t get to school
- Addictions – people are not of the mindset to care for the land
- There are invasive species
- Fishery our main employer - affected by sport fishing
- FNs have received little from our lands

Path Forward:

- Making our voices heard and asserting our voice.
- More proactive and assert our place in Canada.
- Original instructions and clan systems.
- More annual gatherings.
- A Statement from youth and elders.
- More proactive at tables with government
- Original instruments we used were the Clan systems
- Everyone has voice and no one is above
- More annual gatherings
- Need a statement from both youth and Elders

NISHNAWBE-ASKI NATION (NAN)
What is our connection to the land?

- Lived there most of our lives
- Sun, water land and air
- Families still live in territory
• Being surrounded by grassroots people
• Care about the land, water, air, animals and people
• Animals depend on us because Mankind is the one taking away land but we can be ones to save the land
• We come from three parts of NAN: Central, eastern and western. We only answered what we thought was important.

Climate Change Impacts
• The geese migration changed. Water patterns changed.
• Lots of northern communities rely on diesel for power
• The snow has changed, snow in the past, we could travel throughout the land because it was crustier. Now we can't travel on the land because snow is fluffy.
• In NAN, water levels are high. Effects how some communities get materials to their homes.
• The partridge are slowly disappearing. Moose are moving more north because of climate change.
• The earth has shifted so this has affected the geese migration and other changes have occurred as a result, as well as being able to use the stars for navigation
• Energy efficient ways to help reduce use
• Snow used to be easy to travel on to cross the land - the Elder said - because there was a crust that held up the snow machines but now all the snow is fluffy
• Some regions had forest fires this summer.
• Water levels increasing and decreasing
• Water was low in some areas and high in other places – makes things unpredictable
• It effects how communities get materials to their homes cause of winter roads disappearing and seasons shortening
• Winter road season has shortened at least a month and lots of communities rely on them to get housing materials and food, etc.

Path Forward

• Straightforward answer is awareness because a lot of people don’t understand what climate change is. Conferences such as this can help.

• Awareness because lots of people don’t know
  • Hold conferences like this. Love - love isn’t greedy or selfish
  • We can all work together
  • Monitor the land, water and animals to see changes happening
  • Research what is and isn’t working to preserve land and what we can do

• Changing to energy-saving options

• I put down love because it’s not greedy or selfish and we could all live together.

• A lot of communities up north rely on diesel to power our houses. Energy efficient materials for housing.

• Solar panels, etc.

ANISHINABEK NATION/UNION OF ONTARIO INDIANS
Climate Change Impacts

• Companies/industry directly impact our community’s relationship to the land.

• Ensuring our activities on the land continue

• The overall health of mother earth. Negative impacts on the earth and the environment.

• Floods caused by dams on rivers and working with those responsible so that community members don’t have to leave their homes for this.

• Impacts our local foods, medicines, and plants.
- Mercury in the water and aerial spraying
- Access to traditional medicines and foods is degrading due to development

**What does climate change mean to you and how does it impact your connection to your land?**

- Water Quality: E.coli has detrimental effects on traditional lifestyles of our people. An increase of bacteria like E.coli and botulism in water impact well-being
- Lack of communication between our people and representative bodies.
  - Not having great access to traditional practices like hunting
  - Polluted water and eroding banks
  - To be utilizing medicines in the proper way and not disrespecting them
  - Our language provides stronger, deeper connections to the environment
  - Systems we are reliant on
- Accountability is paramount
- Ensuring our activities on reserve don’t impair our abilities to protect land
- Protesting construction and development of operations that will have negative impacts on land and environment
- Identifying operations that have direct impacts on communities like dams on rivers that flood
- Find proper solutions so communities don’t have to leave when there’s flooding
- Being more assertive in what our people want
- Ensuring our people are aware of ancestral roles without fear of social repercussions in communities
- Issues of water in environment - and chemical pollution that is rampant in communities
• People are reliant on trapping, hunting, fishing
• Want community consultation with people like healers, hunters, medicine people
• Lack of communication with our people and government bodies
• Over-commercialization of local resources

Path Forward

• Incorporating traditional laws when addressing role of climate change
• Getting back to the land to promote more awareness.
  • Change the way company dispenses information. Getting back to traditional foods because processed and convenience foods have adverse effects on population
• Reconnecting with all aspects of culture – language, traditions and getting back to the land will inspire awareness.
• Ensuring we are more assertive in our roles and be more forward in holistic and positive way and be mindful of interconnectedness of land and water and people
  • Realizing our resurgence and revitalization is an inevitability
• Continue to act on shutting down harmful operations like a mine
• Changing legal acts for accountability for companies being required to dispense information to nearby communities as the activities directly impact people and land and there are prolonged impacts.
• Respect must be highlighted as foundation of how we carry ourselves through our life, for taking our food and medicines and acknowledging the spirit.
• Getting back to protocols like offering tobacco and acknowledging spirit
INDEPENDENT FIRST NATIONS (IFN)

How does climate change affect your community?

- Wild rice is affected in how it is harvested and the amounts and some areas have completely lost it
- Hunting, trapping and migratory patterns are affected
- Landscapes and development
- Wildlife populations also are affected like geese flocks are smaller and fewer
- Communities with roads and development have traffic and exhaust and new roads being built with gravel pits and pipelines, etc.
  - Food is more scarce and difficult to harvest
  - Food is gone for animals too
  - Other animals are coming in
  - Forest fires
  - Sick trees and new diseases coming out
  - Cultural decline and that affects language and culture
- Wild rice harvesting. Trapping and hunting
- Wildlife formation, geese flocks are fewer.
- The medicines in the water and on the land are becoming polluted and they’re becoming scarce and harder to find. As the land declines, so we decline.
- We don’t fully realize what the impacts are going to be yet.
- We’re going to be the least set up to adapt.
- The land and the water will lead us to adapt.
- A lot of the pollution that’s going on. Hydro dams and mercury pollution on lands, developments from industry,
- Some approaches that we’ve seen include green teams, community burning. Dumps require better management. Sewage treatment.

- Communication protocols. Making things really clear.

- These are some things that we’re already doing ourselves. Water traffic and pollution from that. Access to skills and training on how we can engage better on climate change.

**Connections to our land and impacts?**

- We don’t fully realize impacts because things are still changing

- But we will probably be most impacted and less ready to adapt but we are resilient

- Example of the Lake Nipigon pollution – lots going on like hydro dams and mercury poisoning of the land – the White Dog River is impacted

- Paper mills and development are happening

**Path Forward**

- Green teams
- Spring cleaning with youth
- Community gardens and grass burning
- Controlled burns
- Recycling
- Dumps requiring better management is an issue
- Solar power
- Enhance consultation procedures in our territory
- Communication protocols for government

**How would you like to see climate change addressed in your community?**

- Land and cultural activities - some we do already
- Include people in northern communities as there is pollution created there
- Also access to skills and training on how we can engage better with climate change issues

GRAND COUNCIL TREATY # 3

How is climate change affecting your community and ideas to help?

- We have a responsibility as stewards of the land
- Respect things in our own world
- Carry on what was given by Creator
- The Great Earth Law and enactment of it
- Realization of interconnectivity of universe
- Call for action as things need to be done
- Community action plans
- All because of volatility of weather
- Have water tested more frequently
- Basic survival skills for all
- Wild plants and berries are affected
- Treaty 3 conservation
- Wildfires, intense storms, horizontal lightning
- Change in animals
- Contaminated water and that affects the fish and plants by the water
- Renewable energy curriculum for secondary schools
- Newsletters and updates
- Develop climate change resource material

How to reconnect with Mother Earth:

- Begin cultural camps seasonally
- Teaching traditional medicines and how to identify them for use
• Language and teachings
• Beginning to teach and show how to give to Mother Earth
• Bring back naming ceremonies, etc.
• Focus is to try to connect with your Anishinaabe name because the Creator needs to know who you are – and everything starts with your name

Connection to the land?

• We are the first people
• We carry the Creation and other stories
• Language and cultural traditions
• People live off the land
• Need to understand my language
• We’re strong cause we have a will to try to learn language, etc.
• One of our Elders was asked and had a story – that back in the day Elders connected with land, water, winds, trees and could tell what weather would come without technology that we have now
• We wondered how - how do spirits know the storm is coming?
• Animals knew but how did we?
• Recognize climate change strategies
• Understanding the values of life
• More education for cultural teachings in schools like curriculum
• Elder teachings as well
• Purpose for ceremonies and teachings
• Remember to offer tobacco in teachings – is often forgotten
• The responsibilities would include being stewards of the land.

• Responsibility given to us by the Creator. That’s the Great Earth Law. Enactment thereof.

• Realization of interconnectivity of the universe.

• Diet, wild game and plants should be included.

• Efforts on floods and wildfire. Starved animals, changed behaviour in animals. News updates. Development resource material.

• Cultural camps, seasonal. Teachings, traditional medicines. Language teachings and everything that comes with that. Children to carry on our culture. Bringing back naming ceremonies.

• In order to reconnect with the land, people need to know who you are.

• Creator knows Anishinaabe name. We’re the first people. We carry the Creation story. Language and traditional teaching.

• We’re trying to learn our language. Having a desire and a will to learn the language.

• How are we actually going to interact with the spirits. Recognizing climate change strategies.

• More education for cultural teachings in schools.

• Can include Elder and ceremony teachings. Understanding which ceremony is specific for what.

SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER

Our responsibilities are:

• We will only take what we need

• Will protect Mother Earth and recycle

• We have a connection to land

• Mother Earth communicates with us telling us when to hunt and pick medicine
• Our Longhouse follows the season

• Our connection is the food, water, and telling us when to hunt and when to go for medicines.

• Connections to mother earth and animals.

Environmental changes noticed:

• Less snow

• Sleigh riding - there are patches of grass showing

• Less ice to go skating

• The Grand River is dirty and contaminated

• More wood ticks and Lyme disease

• Shorter winters

• Summer temperature fluctuates

• Dump is overflowing

Community initiatives:

• Have recycling in school and public places like baseball diamonds, restaurants

• We have greenhouses and two “earth ship” houses

• Healthy eating programs for traditional foods

• Forestry replantation and traditional medicines program

• “Waste Less” programs

• Try to revitalize it through Six Nations Youth Council

• Dump needs to be addressed

• Look at other programs to see what works

• No plastic water bottles maybe
GATHERING REFLECTIONS,
FACILITATOR DEBORAH MCGREGOR

The work from each group revealed that much knowledge was shared at this gathering among youth and Elders and it was beautiful to see this happen. On behalf of the Chiefs of Ontario, we want to thank you for your hard work and commitment. We acknowledge this is a busy time of year, especially for students, and we appreciate the commitment you have shown to your community and future generations. We acknowledge your compassion for future generations and thank you for coming here to share your ideas, knowledge and insights.

We are grateful for the Elders, knowledge keepers, Grandmothers, and Grandfathers who have come to share their knowledge and experience with young people.

The focus of this gathering was on “Reconnecting with Mother Earth”, and from this, other related matters emerged. Historical and ongoing colonialism continues to impact communities and their wellbeing. Many communities experience crisis after crisis and continued disruption of their connection to the Mother Earth through resource development/extraction. Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day indicated that we have to focus on life, on our own laws, protocols, traditions, knowledge and spirituality -on our strengths. The young people, children and future generations are our strength.

Reconnecting with our own identity, history and treaty relationships came up time and time again. Youth and Elders alike felt that through being grounded in our identity, through reconnection with land, through youth cultural camps and land-based activities, youth leadership will strengthen our individual and collective ability to handle crisis, including current and future challenges such as climate change. There was a significant willingness from the Elders to reconnect with the youth through initiatives like youth-Elder mentorship programs.

Asserting and enacting First Nation sovereignty and self-determination is especially relevant in climate change discussions. The importance of several key areas as they relate to sovereignty and community leadership were outlined by Professor Dan Longboat: culture-language-life; ceremonies-spirituality-mind; governance; water-land-life;
community-social-education; economy; and health & wellness were outlined as the key elements if Indigenous peoples are to take care of themselves, others and Mother Earth. This message was reiterated time and time again by youth and Elders, including as noted above, support for health and wellness/leadership programming related to reclaiming traditional roles and responsibilities being key to climate change adaptation. The need for further discussion/education was apparent as many participants are experiencing and observing first-hand climate change impacts, made worse by historical and present environmental challenges (from forestry, mining, degraded water, etc.).

**Key Recommendations**

Eighty or so participants shared many ideas as part of the path forward from this gathering. Great emphasis was placed on getting youth out on the land to learn from Elders and the land itself. More specifically in relation to climate change, participants noted that the concept (what it means, how it is defined, how it impacts First Nation communities, etc.) is relatively new and there is a lack of awareness and education about it at the community level. It is not well understood and this puts First Nation leadership, communities and their members at a disadvantage. What we do know is that First Nations will be impacted differently than others and more profoundly in negative ways.

Elders and youth pointed out there need to be increased opportunities to share knowledge and experience with each other, either through more gatherings, workshops, training, conferences, or social media. Increased awareness of our roles and responsibilities are required in an effort to reconnect with Mother Earth.

The following recommendations reflect common themes that were identified as well as key recommendations offered by the participants as part of the workshops and final plenary sessions. It was pointed out that there is no single solution to climate change and that creativity and innovation are required. Many suggestions were offered by Elders and youth at the gathering. Four central recommendations emerged, each to be described in more detail below: Building Community Awareness and Education; Connecting Young People and Elders (TK); Continued Advocacy to Protect Lands; and More Gatherings to Share Knowledge and Dialogue.
BUILDING COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

The participants pointed out based on their own experience that there is little dialogue and knowledge-sharing occurring at the community level. Climate change is not a topic that is discussed in a fulsome manner. It was also noted that when climate is discussed, it is not specific to the First Nation context. Governments, ENGO’s, etc., have climate change information but it is not presented in a way that First Nations can relate to. Participants know that First Nations will experience climate change differently than other people and this has been given neither sufficient nor appropriate attention. Some ideas shared in the Communication and Leadership workshop on how to share knowledge about climate change include:

- Distributing information door-to-door
- Town meetings and annual events – more social and communication driven
- Give people tobacco to come out and talk about it – have food and potluck
- Informal conversations to inspire knowledgeable members who are keenly interested in environmental issues
- Sharing circles
- Add the closed caption/transcript on any media
- Use the TV for the communication
- Including accessibility services in public (e.g. sign language)
- More information sessions offered in the community about climate change
- Utilize existing media (radio shows, VHF radio)
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
- E-mail
- Newsletters
Many participants pointed out in the other workshops and brainstorm sessions that more gatherings are beneficial as knowledge can be shared among communities as well. It was felt that in order to begin to address climate change, people have to know what is meant by it and how it impacts communities. Furthermore, communities need to begin to plan for climate change and it has to be a community effort with the involvement of Elders, youth and children.

**CONNECTING YOUNG PEOPLE AND ELDERS (TK)**

Youth and Elders agree that learning ancestral, traditional knowledge (TK) is critical to our long-term survival. TK has served our ancestors and communities and will continue to do so if we are prepared to learn and enact our responsibilities. Elders and youth both agree that learning our own legal traditions/systems/laws, ceremonies and knowledge is of high priority. The main way offered to learn TK is through land-based activities.

It was felt that learning about and from the land will assist First Nations in addressing climate change impacts. The current education system does not foster this type of education. Learning from Elders is a priority because First Nations want to continue to hunt, fish, and gather medicines (practice the way of life that sustained them for thousands of years). The key to First Nations survival is not a “greenhouse” to replace traditional activities on the land (food sovereignty), but the ability to exercise traditional roles and responsibilities to Mother Earth, to exercise our treaty rights, enact sovereignty and self-determination. Young People and Elders called for more opportunities to get together to share knowledge with each other.

**CONTINUED ADVOCACY TO PROTECT LANDS**

Gathering participants expressed concerns regarding unsustainable development in their territories. Past and current industry and environmental contamination continues (forestry, mining, hydro-electric development) and has had tremendous negative impacts on First Nations people, communities and their lands. Participants also pointed out the impact of such activities on the plants, wildlife, fish and Mother Earth in general. These activities continue and unless they
are dealt with, First Nations will continue to face environmental injustices. Participants pointed out that climate change makes all past and present environmental challenges worse.

Governments (federal and provincial) continue to let environmental destruction and degradation occur (with future threats looming, such as the siting of high level nuclear waste on First Nation lands) and expect First Nations to continue to bear the burden of negative impacts. As Elders and political leadership pointed out at this gathering, environmental destruction is directly related to the economic, social and cultural challenges First Nation communities continue to experience.

Therefore, to adequately address climate change, First Nations must continue to advocate to protect the lands and waters (Mother Earth) and assert treaty rights. It is not an option; it is a responsibility. Advocacy also includes advancing First Nation education (including public schools where most children/youth attend school) that includes knowledge of First Nation history, treaties, culture, traditions and knowledge. Elders and youth also mentioned that advocacy also occurs in research and program development. There is an enormous gap in research and programs that are First Nation-specific. Mainstream or government-sponsored plans, strategies and programs intended to address climate change do not serve First Nations.

MORE GATHERINGS TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE AND DIALOGUE

Participants wish to see more opportunities to share knowledge and experiences among young people and between youth and Elders. Elders have experience and expertise to share with young peoples. Young people also have knowledge to share with Elders. Young people are learning about climate change in school and have experience with different forms of media (social media) to enable communication. Young people can share this knowledge with Elders. Gathering participants enjoyed learning from experts, such as Professor Dan Longboat and David Courchene, and participating in ceremonies. Participants agreed that it is important to focus on ceremonies, protocols, language, natural law, etc., as this knowledge if not shared will be lost. Both
youth and Elders emphasized that on-the-land activities should be part of any future gathering.

Youth raised concerns that they will not be able to pass on traditional knowledge to future generations if they are not currently learning it. Traditional knowledge (natural law, protocols, language) needs to be shared with youth.

Future gatherings should include more community people in an effort to raise awareness about climate change.

**Gathering Evaluation**

Overall, participants rated the gathering as good/excellent (100%) and their expectations were met (100%). The best and most repeated and useful feature of the gathering was “information gathering,” followed by “networking” and “learning resources”. The participants enjoyed the presentations/workshops and rated them good/excellent and felt knowledge shared was of interest to them. However, participants did state that more time in circles or working groups with Elders and youth to facilitate engagement would have been well received.

In response to the question “How could we improve your experience of the gathering?”, participants called for more discussion/dialogue among PTOs, and not just within a PTO. To facilitate networking/dialogue, break time in between workshops would have been welcome. Participants enjoyed group sessions but felt more time for question and answer would have generated more information-sharing. A common response to this question was to honour protocols throughout the gathering: e.g., by keeping the drum present every day at the gathering, serving traditional foods, conducting more ceremony on the land, and offering more time for Elders to share their knowledge/experience/teachings.

Responses to the question “What topics should we have spent more time on?”, focused on learning more traditional knowledge/spirituality/land-based activities/prophesies/culture. More emphasis on language and teachings was asked for. Participants indicated that additional information on climate change and its impacts on Indigenous peoples is needed. More discussion of treaty rights (especially hunting, fishing, harvesting) and how climate change impacts these rights is needed. More opportunities for youth to share their experiences and knowledge was also raised.
Additional comments from youth and Elders include:

- I really enjoyed this conference of Elders and youth - there should be more of these
- More circles to share our understanding of our Creation and first instructions; and help us understand what are our prophesies because in our prophesies are advice, guidance and direction to help us move forward with love and respect
- Bring in more youth
- Sharing circles are an excellent tool when used appropriately. Being aware of the number of participants and types of questions should be an indication of where a sharing circle would be appropriate.
- Enjoyed the meeting and group work
- Once an Anishinaabe understands who they are and where they come from, they learn to live within western society as Anishinaabe. This will create balance within the self.
- We need to accept that no one is going anywhere
- Good to see all participants in the workshops and not only one person speaking
- Continued gatherings on specific topics
- Have a child interaction corner/consider daycare

Overall, young people and Elders alike enjoyed the gathering and appreciated the opportunity to share with others and engage in more directed dialogue through the brainstorming/working group sessions.

**CLOSING REMARKS & NEXT STEPS**

Your input for future gatherings is most welcome. There will be a video created of the gathering and the evaluation will guide planning for future gatherings. We want you to remember that you are the ancestors of future generations. You are currently the descendants of our ancestors. How are
we honoring our ancestors in our current decisions that impact future generations? What kind of ancestor do you want to be?

We hope that you will act on this gathering by:

- Sharing what you learned with others through your own networks
- Sharing what you learned with your community and leadership, youth and Elders who could not be here.
- Acting on responsibilities to protect and care for Mother Earth.

We leave you with the following questions to consider:

- How will you take care of each other?
- How will you take care of Mother Earth? What will you do?
- What future do you want for future generations?

*Remember: your words and actions can hurt others, or they can be medicine.*

The gathering ended with closing prayers and a travel song by Chi Animikii drum group from Fort William First Nation.
# APPENDIX A: GATHERING AGENDA

November 4 and 5, 2017

November 3, 2017 – Vigil for Youth & Sharing Circle

Best Western Nor’wester Hotel and Convention Centre, Thunder Bay, Ontario

## AGENDA

### Friday, November 3, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00pm</td>
<td>Registration / sign up for break outs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opening Prayer and Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Chi Animikii Traditional Drum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Rita Fenton &amp; Renee Tookenay</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Deborah McGregor</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rules and Supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Valerie Ooshag &amp; Mark Hill</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Vigil for Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Sam Achneepenskum, Valerie Ooshag, Edward George</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15</td>
<td>Sharing Circle On Earth Justice for Youth and Elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Estelle Simard</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 11:00 pm</td>
<td>Movie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>What We Do in the Shadows</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Saturday, November 4th, 2017
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6:30 am | Sunrise Ceremony  
_Gordon Waundubece_ | Kaministiquia room   |
| 7:00 am | Sign in                                                            |                     |
| 8:00 am | Breakfast                                                         |                     |
| 9:00 am | Opening Prayer and song  
_Rita Fenton & Renee Tookenay_ |                     |
| 9:10 am | Welcoming remarks:  
1. Fort William Chief, Peter Collins  
2. Ontario Regional Chief  
3. Deputy Grand Chief Glen Hare  
4. OFNYPC  
5. MOECC |                     |
| 9:40 am | Ministry of Environment and Climate Change  
Mark Dunn & Cara Babineau  
Provincial overview of Climate Change |                     |
| 10:00 am | Youth Presentation  
Juliana Lesage |                     |
| 10:45 am | Wellness break |                     |

**Breakout sessions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11:00 | Juliette Deal  
_Dave Courchene  
Mark Dunn & Cara Babineau  
McGillivray | Leadership & communications  
Natural & Spiritual Law  
Context Brainstorm  
Amethyst room  
McKenzie A | Kaministiquia room   |
| 12:00 | Lunch provided | Environment 2015 video | Kaministiquia room   |
| 1:00  | Juliette Deal  
Dave Courchene  
Mark Dunn & Cara Babineau | Daniel Longboat  
Food Sovereignty  
Point Du Meuron |                     |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>Wellness break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15</td>
<td>Juliette Deal</td>
<td>Dave Courchene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership &amp; communications</td>
<td>Natural &amp; Spiritual Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>McGillivray</td>
<td>Amethyst room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15</td>
<td>Mark Dunn &amp; Cara Babineau</td>
<td>Context Brainstorm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership &amp; communications</td>
<td>Natural &amp; Spiritual Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>McGillivray</td>
<td>Amethyst room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Context Brainstorm</td>
<td>McKenzie A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Dinner provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>OFNYPJC Activity</td>
<td>Mark Hill &amp; Valerie Ooshag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Grandmothers Full Moon ceremony</td>
<td>Renee Tookenay &amp; Rita Fenton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AGENDA**

**Sunday, November 5th, 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>Sunrise ceremony</td>
<td>Gordon Waindubence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>Sign in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Youth and Elder Reflections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30</td>
<td>Regional Climate Change Brainstorm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>Wellness break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Regional Climate Change Brainstorm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photo scavenger hunt – photo voice last chance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00</td>
<td>Roundtable Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>Summary of gathering - OFNYPC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluations &amp; Draws</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opening Prayer and song</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Rita Fenton &amp; Renee Toolenay</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: GATHERING PARTICIPANTS

First Nation Elder and Youth Participants

Sam Achneepineskum
Sheldon Adams
Pascal Arden
Raven Barberstock
Harvey Bell
Cassandra Bomberry
Kelsey Borgford
Billy Boucher
Sam Cameron
Deanna Carpenter
Ocean Cherneski
Ernest Cobiness
Ernest Cobiness Jr.
Holly Cody
Lance Copegog
Donna Debassige
Mike Esquega
Stephanie Feletto (MIRR)
Dan Friday
McKenzie Henhawk-General
Basil Greene
Crystal Hardy
Larry Henry
Tiana Leggiona
Sadie Hill-Maracle
Sabina Ijaz (Turtle Lodge)
Dominique Ireland
Delores Kelly
Ben Koostachin
Brandon Kory
Jolena Kwissisens
April Lesperance
Jordan Loon
Danya Maclaurin
Gracelyn Maclaurin
Jayse Mandamin
Betty Maracle
Hillary McGregor
Kevin Okimaw
Kylan Ostberg
Deborah Parliament
Alyssa Sainnawap
Priscilla Simard
Rose Sky
Agnes Stone
Evelyn Stone
Winonah Thompson
Joseph Tippeneskum
Nils Toset
Isobel White
Tommy White
Jade Whilloughby

**Ontario First Nation Young Peoples Council (OFNYPC)**
- Mercedes Bomberry (OFNYPC)
- Edward George (OFNYPC)
- Mark Hill (OFNYPC)
- Alarice Keesick (OFNYPC)
- Juliana Lesage-Corbiere (OFNYPC)
- Megan Logan (OFNYPC)
- Shane Monague (OFNYPC)
- Candace Naveau (OFNYPC)
- Valerie Ooshag (OFNYPC)
- Richelle Ritchie (OFNYPC)

**Elders**
- Rita Fenton
- Renee Tookenay
- Gordon Waindubence

**Chiefs of Ontario Staff**
- Alison Anderson (COO)
- Fallon Andy (COO)
- Dan Morriseau (COO)
- Sydney Oakes (COO)

**Workshop Presenters**
- Cara Babineau (MOECC)
Mark Dunn (MOECC)
Alex Leonard (MOECC)
Dave Courchene (Turtle Lodge)
Juliette Deal (Scout Environmental)
Dan Longboat (Trent)

Workshop Note takers
Holly Pyhtila
Tannis Kastern
Rachel Arsenault

Sign Language Translators
Debora Parliament
Annette Sandy

First Nation Leadership
Chief Peter Collins
Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day
Deputy Grand Chief Glen Hare

Facilitator
Deborah McGregor
APPENDIX C: LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

Overview: Three sessions comprised of Youth and Elders responded to the following questions:

1. What are the impacts or concerns within your communities?
2. What does climate change mean to you in your community?
3. What forms your community is currently using to talk about climate change and what you’d like to see. (How is your community talking about climate change and what would you like to see?)

Impacts and Concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Access to health care is a concern because there are high levels of cancer in our area. Diseases were found in beaver, mink and muskrats. In Treaty 3, we have done some things about climate change but there are also other issues to deal with like the gold mine and the concern over arsenic and its link to cancer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>There is concern over pipelines going through the northern area and possible leaks. Deforestation is a concern particularly in an old growth pristine forest. Tailings have been dumped into our lakes over the years and a diversion was created. Also, now you see the oil on top of the water.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We have a water reservoir and people from town dump there but our garbage goes to the city dump. Even paint and building materials get dumped there. Recently a mound of dirt was put there but it’s still a problem. Also, there is the problem of seepage. Recycling depots need to be put up and knowledge about recycling because the garbage is just being buried over. There used to be a blueberry patch close by and we used to all pick there. My mom made blueberry jam from there to take us through the winter. But they blasted the rock and destroyed the berry patch for development. It’s troubling that they rape the land for the sake of development and it’s very disheartening. It’s not just government and industry but it’s our own people too.

We are affected by rules such as the rule that doesn’t allow us to build too big because it could impact the water. And yet, the water is already polluted by others.

At university in computer science we did a project where we took apart 15 computers to get the pieces smelted and found it was incredibly difficult. Lots of the pieces were not recyclable – so we learned that industry needs to change not just individuals. We also discussed the great pacific garbage patch and the washed-up garbage from the hurricanes. It’s a small island and where do you put the garbage and what is it going to cost? We live in a money driven age but we don’t even get to hold it for long so it’s not really worth anything.

There’s a cesspool about 15-20 miles from our reserve and I shot a few ducks and my cousin said he just saw them at the cesspool so I threw them away (joke 😊)

If the road got finished it would help but it would also bring in more drugs.

Wabigoon (?) is one of 9 communities who applied to be a nuclear waste storage community but there are aquifers and also 5 water systems impacted. It’s potentially a huge issue.

There is concern over nuclear waste storage in the east.
| Leadership | When industry comes in they abide by provincial and federal laws while First Nations people go by old ways and there is anger over government/industry telling people to follow regulations.  

First Nations leaders need to get together with a plan otherwise the government will conduct individual settlements but that doesn’t help future issues or other people.  

There should be a First Nations response planned for a spill etc… because First Nations people often don’t have plans and just react to what happens.  

Our leadership is not aware of the impacts of climate change and our future generations will feel the impacts especially with water.  

These projects offer funding for education etc… but people need money, jobs, and food so they accept the funds. We are being co-opted - we consent but we are supposed to be protectors. |
|---|---|
| Impacts | Metis harvesting rights will impact us. Sharing is part of our principles and they are a part of our history but, because of scarcity, the Metis and Native people fight between themselves. Some are prepared to go to the Supreme Court in this fight although white men have more rights to hunt than Metis.  

We used to live as one but now we fight. It started when the missionaries came and they said the traditional people were bad.  

Justin Trudeau was in Edmonton last month talking about climate change but also supporting the tar sands to boost the economy. One question asked was – how can you acknowledge climate change and yet exploit those resources? Trudeau said we need to make choices. But when we pick and choose we take away jobs and change lives. How do we move those people to another profession? |
### Environmental Impact

The snow melted in January, one of the coldest months of the year. Carrying water and wood helps you learn. In the days of hauling water, you could scoop water from the lake and drink it but you can’t now because it has to be purified.

We take our computers and phones etc… for granted. When they break you throw them away or recycle them but the recycling process is not good because its pollutes the water. We look at a finished product as a resource as opposed to waste. It is a mindset change. We need to question where all these products came from. Parts of these products are made from the earth.

We are fighting for a dump and a corn field so that would impact us. Climate change has impacted us more in the last couple of years.

### Wildlife

I noticed a decline of ducks and geese.

Before the roads there used to be turtles swimming when you paddled from Winnipeg to Kenora but now they are gone.

### Communication

**Discussion/Information/Awareness**

We are not discussing it much.

Everyone is talking about climate change but not everyone understands what the words mean. Is there a way to communicate some of these effects?
Some communities are not discussing climate change. There is awareness but no action planning.

There is no information or awareness in our community. There is very little information or discussion in my community about climate change because other things are a priority.

Treaty 3 is trying to create awareness about climate change.

In summer, we do garbage pickup days and it is broadcast in our newsletter.

I recall that Hollywood people chained themselves to help raise awareness of the issue with Grassy Narrows.

We use the radio quite a bit to communicate. Also, use word of mouth and it gets around quickly.

Education

Elementary kids are learning about sustainability and renewable resources in school. When kids get older and go to university we will talk about how to reduce carbon and non-renewable resources and how to change that and identify the goal. We need our young people educated to learn what it is and how to change it.

I learned about climate change in school because I did a grade 10 project on it.

We need to start teaching our kids about what our ancestors know and what their reason was for living on traplines in certain seasons and by lakes etc… Most kids don’t understand so we need to get those teachings to the next generation. We have knowledgeable Elders but there’s a gap because kids don’t know the language so we need to teach our children the language.
We have a school program where it only took 2 weeks to make a jingle dress. Sometimes you just show how to do something and it just happens even though things aren’t written or organized. However, there is a communication barrier for even a 2 week program in the school.

| Youth Involvement | It’s hard to get young people out to participate because there’s so many other things they could be doing. Identify the ones in the community who are willing because getting them involved will create a snowball effect and inspire others to get involved.

Youth will be the leaders of the future. We need to reach out to urban First Nations youth too.

We don’t have a lot of knowledge carriers. Knowledge carriers have to walk a certain way and so asking the young people to do it is important because it would benefit them the most. |

| Language and Culture | Saying Manitou Aki Anakanagawin (sp?) means – there is a spirit in everything

There are a lot of teachings about the water and stories like those about the mermaids and forgotten clans which aren’t talked about anymore and are being forgotten.
My parents used to put red sticks in the water every spring because there was a spirit in the water and they still put tobacco in the water now. These traditions need to be kept.

Language is important because if you don’t know the language you cannot visit your spirit properly.

I lost my language in residential school and to recover our language we need family oriented language immersion. |
I received my Anishinaaabe name when I was 40 and is important that young people have their own Anishinaabe name.

When we talk to Elders they tell us that change is happening with the land and how much has changed with the land including loss. We are told what we can do to bring it back.

The Anishinaabek Nation preamble says the Creator gave us sovereignty but we forgot how to apply it. The last line of the preamble talks about the future.

We will celebrate the past, present and future. Learn about the true history that’s not in the history books right now - like wampum belts. I have a different interpretation of the 1850 treaty and those signatories. We need to learn about the interpretations because history is important.

**Suggestions**

Agreement from the entire group that a workshop just on water is a priority**

Bring in experts and people affected by water crises and community members who are directed impacted.

Use simpler language when discussing climate change. Forums like this help because people discuss issues.

We need to talk about current issues not the past.

Chiefs, youth, and Elders need to meet with each other.

Create a youth-Elder council to get information out and dedicate a person in the community to ensure a support system is there to help achieve what we’re trying to do.

Get youth to take even younger children under their wings and teach them.
Ask the youth which Elder they want to sit with because they might not be comfortable with some Elders. A lot of programs have that kind of interaction with traditional courses but what’s missing is stuff on environmental change etc…

Maybe there could be a community based mentorship program that can travel to other communities? It should be personal and interactive and in my community, it’s a “walking forward” cultural camp. The camp could be a good way to start talking about climate change and make learning about environmental changes a cool thing to do.

Elders are passing on and that means 80 years of knowledge is gone with them. Go to each Elder and gather information and valuable knowledge. Create an Elders’ council and more Elder’s gatherings to use their knowledge and sacred teachings. Go and pick Elders up at their house and do more things with them. Do not forget about them. Get them involved. Involve youth also so they will get that information from them and not have to wait to get that knowledge.

Everyone has a mobile device so social media like Facebook can give everyone access to information. However, information is sometimes misinterpreted and social media ends up sending mixed messages.

Forms of communications that would help are Kristie Belcourt and her social media site such as the “water is life” campaign. This site is very effective and we need more of those kinds of sites on different topics.

What about a virtual site to connect youth and Elders so that discussions can be brought to other communities via the internet?

To get people to respond to climate change you have to show them how it will affect them personally. For example, ask them if they want to get bottled water from the store because their source is polluted. When the river over flowed and almost flooded people started to understand the problems. It has to be personal or maybe use a simulation to help people understand
the impacts of climate change. How do you reach young people? Through their phones? How do you convey the message? Maybe include age appropriate curriculum - give choices and make understanding climate change a requirement of passing. People will understand it that way. People need to be grounded before they will do something about climate change.

Anakanagaywin (sp?) is the first environmental law. It has been through ceremony and discussion but our bands do not use the law when engaged in negotiations. Often money comes first in decisions. Leaders should know their identity. The Elders knew about identity. I didn’t understand until I was 21. These conferences need to put more emphasis on those who don’t really know why they’re here or what they are here for – so more dialogue is needed. It is important to know who you are and your Creation story.

Create a resource group to become the community knowledge base

---

**Flipchart comments**

**What does Climate Change mean to you and Your Community?**

Education about the laws of nature in our community.

In Biigtigong Nishinabeg, climate change has affected our community. For example, we would cross the Pic River in the winter time to climb Tobacco Mountain when the ice froze over but now we’re losing that connection and can’t climb that mountain anymore because its unsafe. To Biigtigong, climate change means trying to find our connection with the land – to be able to use the land in our territory for traditional values and practices. Miigwetch.

In Six Nations, I have been told that we have an oil pipeline running under our community, or that we agreed to the construction of one in our community.
What are your concerns about climate change?

Fort William First Nation:
Climate change could affect the quality of life for future generations. It can also impact the living environment in which cultural values thrive.

Mishkeegoogaming First Nation:
Climate change has affected the weather which is causing low water levels. We are seeing fresh water streams drying up as a result of these low water levels. My community relies on these fresh water streams.

Six Nations:
Climate change/greenhouse gas effects has resulted in more wood ticks in the summer/spring and wood ticks can spread Lyme disease.

Oneida Nation of the Thames:
An oil pipeline affecting the Thames river.
A waste dump and a corn field. Also, water is affected by arsenic from the mines, there is air pollution from mills, and destruction of Mother Nature’s cycle

What forms/methods of communication does your community use to talk about climate change?
town meetings, annual events, sharing circles, informal conversation, radio shows, VHF Radio (hand held), school, Facebook, Instagram, twitter, newsletter, email, other – Dallas Goldtooth’s network

Which ones would you like to share?

Distributing notes door to door
Town meetings and annual events. These are more social and communication driven
Give people tobacco to come out and talk about climate change. Provide food and have a potluck.
Informal conversations with inspired knowledgeable members who are keenly interested in the preservation of environmental issues

Add the closed caption/transcript on any media

Use the TV for the communication

Include accessibility services in public

Have more information sessions offered in the community about climate change.

What would you like to learn about climate change?

The effects of climate change at international, national, regional and local levels.
How climate change affects fish and fish migration.
How does climate change affect the corn field?
What changes will happen in the community?
The general reverberations on traditional and cultural practices.
How other communities have tackled this issue in their community and what worked and what didn’t (specific programs/initiatives/movements).
What can people in our community do to stop or slow down climate change?
Learn everyday things that people do that contribute to climate change.

What would you like to do with this knowledge?

Inform people who may not know
Use this knowledge in my artwork
Use this knowledge to inspire the next generation
Set up the network – Dallas Goldtooth’s network ways
Become an advocate
Express environmental justice
Teach others
Use the knowledge to help the community

Teach my kids about climate change, and how to live in a way that is kinder to mother Earth

Find effects on moose meat

**Workshops you would like to see (about what?)**  Fort William First Nation, Six Nations of The Grand River

**Educational campaigns (about what?)**

The impact of oil pipelines and how they get approved

**Funding (for what?)**

More funding to provide more opportunity for youth
APPENDIX D: CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY IN ONTARIO

Provincial Government: Cara Babineau, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Indigenous Relations Branch, Alex Leonard, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Engineer, Mark Dunn, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Director of the Indigenous Relations Branch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indigenous Youth and Elder Delegates</th>
<th>Ministry of Environment and Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Response: Invasive species can survive in northern climates because of climate change. For example, bugs from Asia, which has a warmer climate, have been seen up north. What is this doing to native species? New invasive species are taking away from existing species and now the bee is going extinct. This impact goes up the food chain to the birds and the fish that we depend on for hunting and fishing. As food supplies get diminished in the wild, the food supply for humans is diminished as well. Climate change is going to affect First Nations a lot quicker than the rest of the population. We can limit the effects of climate change if we use the gas card concept and create a “luxury card”. With gas cards, First Nations get PST removed from their gas totals. With a luxury card, people should get taxed 7% more which would discourage people from spending. Instead of only taxing the big companies, tax the people as well. Gas emissions cause greenhouse gases. I work at a gas station and it says that we sell 25,000 litres of gasoline per day. If we add more taxes on that, people will be discouraged from using gas so much. Leave the carbon tax to industries like paper mills. We need to cut down at the grass roots level as well. Also, governments can legislate companies to make hybrid cars. Invest in research and testing. There is a conflict with the Metis nation. The Métis nation is requesting hunting and fishing rights, but this in inadvisable for Treaty 3. Lots of people are getting hunting and fishing licenses but is there enough food left over for this First Nation treaty right? Granting the Metis hunting and fishing rights would be like stealing from the First Nations. They did not sign treaties, and yet they are asking for our treaty rights. Elder, GCT#3: Our first snow fall was October 21 and the bears were still awake searching for food. The food in the forest is very scarce, so now the bears are dependent on the garbage dump for food. When they do that, they don’t get very</td>
<td>What are the community priorities and how can community action be supported? How can climate change be reduced for the future?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fat and when they don’t get fat, we can’t use their medicines. Also, the bear itself cannot survive. It probably won’t make it through winter.

The second concern I have is around the Great Lakes. Much of our fresh water is located around the Great Lakes. We have Lake of the Woods and Rainy Lake and both are situated by the U.S. border. While Canadian law protects half of these lakes, people from the U.S. can do whatever they want to these lakes and nothing happens to them. If you don’t have protection for the whole lake, then there is contamination. Laws should apply to the whole lake. Tributaries that flow from Lake Superior go all the way down. There’s a metal of some sort that prevents you from drinking the water. The contaminants in water need to be dealt with. The prophecy of drinking bottled water is happening. Also, there are families that can’t afford to buy bottled water.

Youth, Nipissing FN: I come from a heavy fishing community. This was our main source of food. In the 1960s, we had a lot of factories on the water and now our water is very sick and the fish we catch are mutated. Look at each community individually and we need to develop connections.

Youth, GCT#3: If left unchecked, the things the Elder reported on are going to happen fast. Couchiching can still drink their water, but we’re upstream from them and we have lots of mercury in our water. It’s starting to flow down the river into Red Gut Bay and after a while it will start to affect Couchiching. It’s also really close to Fort Frances. What are they going to do? It’s going to affect all 10,000 people living in Fort Frances and eventually it’ll get into Lake of the Woods. Any amount of mercury in the water is dangerous. It’s sad because everyone will be affected at that point. It will go all the way across the country. We’re sitting ducks until the government does something. It wasn’t native people who contaminated the water. The Mines shut down in the 1960s but my concern is that no one is taking responsibility. They say, “It’s not their fault, they weren’t alive in the 1960s or it’s the mistakes of the organizations as opposed to the provincial government.” But its still their problem because the government allowed it to happen. Our quarrel is with the federal government because it’s hard getting their attention for anything. It shouldn’t matter about money because you can’t eat money and you can’t drink
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth, GCT#3:</th>
<th>Cara: I will need to follow up on these questions because the government tends to section things. Some questions / concerns are about the emissions in the atmosphere while others are on winter roads, shorter seasons and wildlife and availability of food. We want to address some of those bigger issues that are hard to see. Everyone should do their part, but we’re not doing our part at the moment. We do have the cap and trade system in place to help with the larger costs of emissions. How can we use some of this money in a way that will benefit communities? Is food security an issue? If this is a fly in community, can we put in a greenhouse to reduce emissions? What do we want some of this money to be spent on?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth: What is the MOECC plan for water because if we don’t focus on the water, we will have to buy bottled water. Back in the time of Queen Elizabeth, Shoal Lake was one of the cleanest and purest lakes. Now companies have come in and there’s gold in the water. The Wynne government promised to take care of the English-Wabigoon river. We have friends who are getting diseased by eating the fish from the river and drinking the water. How long do we have to wait for contaminants to be removed and for the water to restore itself? There are people that are suffering and we’re just beginning to see the effects of some of these contaminants. Youth, GCT#3: My friends from Whitedog have gotten sick from eating the fish.</td>
<td>Cara: some of this spending can come from Ontario’s cap and trade instead of a tax. The cap and trade money went into general revenues. The cap and trade puts a cap on the amount of emissions an industry can emit. This cost will eventually reach consumers. It works by causing a behavioural change, because in the long run renewable energy will be cheaper. We’re trying to invest in those kinds of actions and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder, GCT#3: in Couchiching, we have homes that are not dependent on gas. We have homes with floors heated with water. The families that have these, paid out of their own pockets. Maybe provide grants to put in solar power and heat to eliminate the dependence on oil and gas. I would recommend that.</td>
<td>allow people opportunities to build renewable energies. We are also looking into providing grants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder, GCT#3: there aren’t very people that have blue box programs in communities because it costs money to recycle. Also, we’re two hours away from Fort Frances and Kenora so we’re looking at different ways of recycling. Maybe we could work out a deal to use their recycling equipment. Maybe some communities can get an incentive to transport recycling to Dryden and Kenora. Elder: We saw effects of climate change with a big ice storm in our community. Trees were snapped in half. Most people have electric heat and propane, while only a few have woodstoves. How many communities have emergency plans for storms that cause the power to go? Is the government looking at any emergency plans? Who is going to spear head this planning? Will we have to use our own money?</td>
<td>Alex: the government is developing ways to support their own energy plans and energy use. We’re working on a modelling operative for extreme weather at a regional level. We’re developing tools that take in changes in precipitation. We can better plan for those impacts in the long run and focus more on the micro scale than the macro.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder: solar panels should be considered over windmills. Is there anything that the province is doing on these initiatives?</td>
<td>Alex: The province looked into the short term and long term gains between wind and solar energy. The capacity for wind is 11% while it is 1% for solar. We have an action plan, through the green Ontario fund that was launched in August. This is going to be rolling out new programs and supports. Cara: The green Ontario fund will support action at the community level. We want to see if we can work with First Nations on a community basis. We’re looking for opportunities to take advantage of funding. Wind and solar is something that we can do to fund some of these programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark: Some communities might already have plans on what’s best for their own communities from an energy standpoint that just needs to be updated. We want to fund community plans instead of individual plans. We would ideally like to see some community environment plan that would address the impacts of environmental impacts. We want to develop a long-term plan to handle gasoline and diesel. We have work to do on how to do this.</td>
<td>Elder: It’s nice that the Ministry is proposing what they are planning, but in my experience there is always this division on who has jurisdiction and who has responsibility? Who is going to lead? That’s one of the issues. Provincial jurisdictional issues. Couchiching is adjacent to Fort Frances and they want to develop a community plan, but I don’t think they have the capacity to do that. Are they going to have to go to the province for 30%, the feds for 70% and jump through hoops? If it’s too costly for the province, they dust their hands and see it as a federal responsibility. How do we formulate that relationship?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder: I have a friend who is sick and he explained that as emissions went up into the atmosphere, it came down as water and contaminated the animals and that made us sick. If it was my community and I was Chief, I would help with this. But when you hear something like this you tell us, “it depends”, you’re not definitive with your words.</td>
<td>Cara: We say it depends because communities have different feelings about consultants and we are at an early stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder: Am I hearing you correctly that jurisdiction won’t be an issue with homes on reserves?</td>
<td>Cara: Jurisdiction won’t be an issue on homes that are being newly built, but not on homes that already exist. Mark Dunn: New housing construction is the jurisdiction of the federal government.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
people across the province. That comes to $30,000 allocated to each band member of 8 communities. That still leaves 725 trillion that is still owed to us and is being put elsewhere. Regardless, if it’s provincial or not. MNR wants to tell us what we can and can’t do on the land, but they don’t tell us to do anything. 75 billion a year could be used for energy across the country yearly. This was promised to us through treaty and was held in trust. I’m sure your treaty trustee will make the purchase for you if it’s been discussed. If this money is waiting to be given to us, what’s a couple of windmills here and there? Those three levels of government need to be present if you’re going to have this conversation with Treaty 3 and / or Kenora. In the grand scheme of things, if you want things to be better for everyone, action has to occur. The government still has surplus money still owed to us. But the government has a 12 trillion dollar deficit. With that comes poor nuclear waste management and this affects the climate negatively. Nuclear waste contamination will kill the trees and everything else around it. They wanted to blast into the Canadian shield! What’s going to happen to the air? There are issues that need to be addressed but it’s all reliant on tax payers’ dollars. This is money that’s owed to us that should be used for the greater good.

Breakout Session 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indigenous Youth and Elder Delegates</th>
<th>Ministry of Environment and Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cara: we want to talk about climate change impacts that you’re seeing in your community and the action that we could take. We want to talk about what Ontario is doing and how we can benefit you. With the previous group, we asked people to write down some changes they’ve seen and what needs to happen to address some of these problems. Why are you interested in climate change as an issue? Is there something you’ve seen or heard in your communities?</td>
<td>appreciate your comments. What is your role? Should you lobby your chiefs and council or do you want a youth initiative?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Youth, TBay: We are running out of moose meat on my reserve. My grandparents used to hunt all the time, but now it’s hard to find animals. They have to travel north to go and look. Youth, NAN: We’re starting to see a lot of clear cutting in our area. Loggers are probably 50 kilometers away now with the closest clear cut area roughly five kilometers away from our camp. As a result, we are starting to see a decline in moose population. I was talking to a senator about this yesterday. If there is a decline in moose throughout Canada and its seen as a problem, why are thousands of hunting moose tags handed out? Their strategy is to ask First Nations to cut down on their moose hunting.

Youth, AIAI: In my community, people are growing large vegetable gardens, but the soil isn’t as strong today as it was years ago. My parents can’t seem to grow strawberries, but my grandparents had no issues in their time. My parents even tried to bring in new soil but only weeds came out. Outside of my community, there are a lot of corn farmers who sell their corn on the roadside. We noticed that the corn we grow is not equivalent in size to the roadside corn. Our corn seems to get smaller every year. It’s dependent on the growing season, rainfall, and the land. I’ve noticed a difference in the amount of snow that we used to get. My nieces can’t go out and play like I did. Snow seems to be wetter and we’re not getting it until later in December or January. The season seems to have moved. At the same time, and not just in my community, but throughout southwestern Ontario, the summers and winters are getting warmer. As a child, I didn’t burn, but now I’m burning from the sun. It’s another change.

GCT#3: what do you mean by climate? What is your definition? Are you looking at the bees? The worms? The moose? The birds? The animals? The soil? The water? Air? Storms? I think one of the things that currently scares me is the storms like the thunder storms and hail. Around the world there are fires burning out of control and a lack of water. There are huge tornadoes, hurricanes, and these enormous catastrophes. And we hardly have any more bees. Bees are the helper for dealing with sexual abuse. That’s one of our teachers. Their hive is all medicine. I always speak to treaty 3 because that’s where I come from. Will the gold mine affect our drinking water? Why does the gold mine have to put their waste near the water? Is your carbon tax on these companies high enough? The money

Alex: they should revise it proportional to the decline.

Mark: has her family noticed that the growing season is shorter or there hasn’t been as much rain? Is it just the soil? Have they identified additional reasons why?

Cara: Are there any changes in the winter? From previous generations to present?

Alex: there’s a difference between weather and climate. Climate is the study of weather over time. For example, it’s still snowing out and its only November 4. The long-term effects of climate will change ecosystems. This will go up the food chain and impact larger mammals like moose. The greenhouse gasses from industry such as cars cause heat to get trapped and this is
you collect should go to those who need it most. Why do our communities not have clean water to drink? And what is happening with the fracking where the water is on fire? It’s all over our territory. When I think of climate change, I think of those things on all levels of the earth. I’m Medewin and we are responsible for four levels of the earth and all four layers in the sky. How many holes are in the earth now? Why are we having tornadoes in parts of Ontario where that hasn’t happened before? And these huge hail storms, what is that a result of? Young kids know about colonization, globalization and the economy and how money really drives things. Attach issues of health to environmental issues. If you’re going to create an arsenic lake in Treaty 3 because of the mine, then give us an MRI machine. Help us deal with the ramifications instead of waiting for us all to die off. What does it mean when there’s no moose? It means a family is starving and can’t feed themselves in their communities? Then they become dependent on expensive flour and hamburger meat. This is what climate change means to us. These young people are speaking on behalf of their communities and what they see. They see extreme poverty - no clean water, no uncontaminated fish, no wild rice, and no food. That’s why people eat chips or junk and even that’s still expensive. I don’t just think of one thing, I think of everything.

Youth, AIAI: if I understand you correctly, then this is all a product of humans producing different inventions which have created chemicals that get into our earth and pollute again and again. Is there a way to improve this?

Mark: the burning of fossil fuels has caused a change in our planet. We need to find ways to recapture that carbon that’s been released and slow down the effects of fossil fuels. We want to create strategies for reversing the effects with trees and the wetlands structure. Carbon monoxide is taken from the air by trees, one of the strategies would be to plant more trees to try and reduce emissions. Cara: when thinking about all these different aspects that are involved in climate change, we identify priorities. The difference between a carbon cap and a cap and trade is that those
companies pass on the cost to consumers. It creates a behavioural change in consumers, but also in the short term, there is money coming in from that program. Because it's not a tax, it has to be reinvested into the program with the same purpose. The province would like to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in areas that emit the most. There's also some funding for small initiatives that might add up to change. How can we use some of the money so that First Nation communities can benefit? Food security is a really good example that addresses both of those things. If a community is trucking in lots of food, that's expensive and not healthy. Community gardens would help with food security and help reduce climate change. Things like that that addresses multiple needs. We want to help communities benefit with an action plan.

GCT#3: the collective social responsibility for climate change involves all Ontarians, not just First Nations. What kind of education plans have you implemented for social responsibility? Is there anything in the schools for teaching responsibility for mother earth? First Nations people are guardians of the earth. I would like to see the shift from just First Nations being protectors to Ontarians doing the same. It's all of our responsibility to take care of the earth. I don't know if there was an education component, but I think you need to have that one there. Join us, be with us, and sit with us. I'd love to teach you about the animals and what they're all about. When I was a teenager, I always wanted to be a tree planter. At that time there was no way for an Indigenous girl like myself to get into MNRF to become a tree planter. I don't know what it would be like for kids today. Can people become tree planters
in their own community? Maybe learn about your carbon footprint, so that everybody knows what their own footprint is. Learn about how much you have as an individual and teach kids about it.

Youth, AIAI: you said you’re responsible for education. I’ve seen different groups do awareness campaigns but there is never a budget line item for interpreters and I’m not the only deaf person. We can contribute as well because it’s important that deaf people protect as well.

Mark: you taught me today that this something we need to do better. It’s more than just generating a document that we hope would be disseminated. Signing is another language.

GCT #3: I think about those young people in the spirit of reconciliation. Try something like pen pals between First Nation schools and Ontario schools to communicate about climate change. Teach Ontario’s kids that it’s not just a First Nations responsibility. Ethically, we have a responsibility to teach that to all our kids.

Participant: If you decide to do a pen pal program, make sure it’s not electronic so that students can think things through and promote traditional thought and communication.

Youth, AIAI: I’m going to advocate for information about climate change being available in different formats. I have access to a broader deaf community and will get the message back to them.

Cara: What could you take back to your community after today?

Youth, AIAI: in Puerto Rico, they had individuals who were deaf and used sign language. They brought megaphones and speaker phones because the priority is with the majority of people so most of the technology and/or emergency preparedness is aimed at their needs.

Alex: With regards to your suggestion to attach health issues to climate change issues. As a Ministry we are trying to reduce all types of pollution such as oxides which are damaging to human health, but are not impacting the climate. We can put more attention on these issues. First Nation communities that depend on diesel can improve the situation. We want people to understand about the issues in other places like the flood risk in Miami. I encourage changing the conversation to make people pay attention.

Alex: a big part of these impacts is preparation so that before things occur, you know how to
<p>| GCT #3: What should First Nation communities look out for when climate change gets worse? | Alex: flood risk and wild fires. |
| Youth: I’m concerned with the American government under Trump and the environmental legacy that he’s leaving. How many people in Canada don’t believe in Climate change? | Cara: we heard a lot about communities that only have one access / entry point. Part of the plan is thinking about who is the most vulnerable in those situations. With forest fires, it would be those with asthma or the elderly. There is also concern with access because winter roads are only open for part of the year. Cara: Trumps policies are an issue because climate change is a global problem. The silver lining is that people from other countries came forward and said they’re going to support initiatives on climate change after he denounced it. |
| GCT #3: in terms of political leadership, who has been more supportive on the environment? Which party has made more change over the years? | Alex: Typically, the conservatives are less concerned about the environment, placing more emphasis on growing the economy. Ontario has made the most reduction on green house gases - more than any other province and are putting in a lot of investments. For example, we banned pesticides for bee populations. As staff officials for the government, we can’t offer our own opinions. The liberals pushed to get Canada at the table for the Paris agreement. I think climate change issues should transcend political... |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Indigenous Youth and Elder Delegates</strong></th>
<th><strong>Ministry of Environment and Change</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COO delegate: What are you going to do with the information collected?</td>
<td>Cara: we’re going to use the information to figure out how to work with you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COO delegate: Why are there no Indigenous people from your unit here?</td>
<td>Cara: They advise us, and we’re here to hear from Indigenous voices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COO delegate: Is there input from communities in the action plan? At the energy conference you stated: “collaborate with Indigenous communities”, but that box was empty.</td>
<td>Cara: we conducted a strategy to get general ideas from community representatives identified by the PTOs. This strategy gave us high level feedback. We are doing our best to hear back from the action plan but the equipment that we use to figure out how to continue wasn’t detailed enough. We are trying to change our planning for the community level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth, AIAI: have you introduced cap and trade?</td>
<td>Cara: Cap and trade is different from a carbon tax as a cap is put on emissions. If things cost more to produce, then they will pass on this increased cost to their customers. Capping car emissions is an easy way to go. Cars that are monitored and have good gas mileage are better at emissions than those that don’t. We need to make sure that the people who can afford this are those that are paying. Alex: We’re helping industry reduce their footprint. The cap and trade program is aimed at industry. The</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
emissions cut off is set at 20,000 tonnes in a year. Any emissions over that set amount requires them to be a part of that program. Or they could sell it.

| COO delegate: What are they trading for? | Alex: They are trading for allowances and permits. They’re trading for pieces of paper. Dollars, credits, or allowances; surplus and deficits. Cara: There is a cap on the whole economy for greenhouse emissions. The economy has to emit less year after year. If you said to a factory in Ontario that you can’t emit all of this, industry could just take their “business” somewhere else anyway. We know it’s bad, but it would still happen (pollute) somewhere else anyway. |
| COO delegate: What about the pollutants in the water? | | Cara: There is a cap on the whole economy for greenhouse emissions. The economy has to emit less year after year. If you said to a factory in Ontario that you can’t emit all of this, industry could just take their “business” somewhere else anyway. We know it’s bad, but it would still happen (pollute) somewhere else anyway. |
| COO delegate: Cap and trade would be a mechanism for how long? | Alex: we’re declining the cap of total emissions allowed. We’re hearing from industry that they need to know what that will look like. There is interest in continuing the program, but they want to know what it would look like. Cara: it’ll be easier to make those choices going forward. It hasn’t cost people enough to pollute in the past. |
| Youth, AIAI: the water levels are up in my community and there’s flooding in Batchewana. The smelts that run through are affected. We used to be able to put a net in and you could get 30 or 40. Now we sometimes see only 5 smelts. When we access nibi (water) and access traditional food, we know how to give back to the land as Indigenous people. How can we sustain our way of life when we can’t do what we’ve done before? How can we minimize the effects? It’s almost too late. Some of it is out of our hands. | Alex: they say that even if we were to stop emitting greenhouse gases now, we’ve already locked in at 50 years of global warming. It’s currently around $18 per tonne to emit. Cara: Climate change will happen anyway and there’s so much of it that we can’t control. This is kind of what we’re hoping to do. The money that’s coming out of this, we’re trying to link up to see what we can do. It takes a lot of money and a lot of fuel to ship in trucks. If you can cut that down, you’re |
reducing green house gasses. It’s also addressing the issue of food security.

Delegate: What about taxing the general public? Delegate: What about an incentive for car pooling?

Alex: the general public do have to consider how this cap and trade will impact them. Alex: this is what this action plan is looking at. It’s taking all the money raised for cap and trade to make those necessary changes. Public transit, cycling, and walking. Supporting programs at home so that people are not spending as much on that.

COO delegate: What if an impact of cap and trade is that companies cut back and leave communities without a sufficient supply of food and fuel? The cap and trade may impede companies from growing and then the community suffers. There are a lot of communities that rely on planes and barges. Now the barge can’t even get into the river. Who pays for that? COO delegate: the former Minister said there’d be no additional cap for airplanes. COO delegate: That’s not what your Minister is saying. And you talked about invasive species. An Elder said he was out in the bush hunting and he killed partridges. He prepared a partridge and we plucked it and it had worms. There are changes happening. Bacteria is coming in from other places. There’s no monitoring of our food supply. Your programs are all aimed at people that live in urbanized areas. They’re not geared to people who live off the land.

Cara: Where do we invest money that can help with that?

Cara: Ships and planes were not included in the cap and trade. Then airplanes are not capped right now.

COO Delegate: Your action plan is all about community retrofit. Are there monitoring programs where liver analysis can be done? We need to ensure that our food supply is still healthy so that we can still eat.

Kara: what would you like to see? Cara: There’s an environment steward at Laurentian University who was working on food centres. They’re discussing it and having training on the analysis of the water as well.

COO delegate: Is it only focusing only on fossil fuels?

Alex: there are other elements to the plan such as lands and forests. We are working to maintain the soil health with agricultural plans and producing forestation to minimize impacts of climate change. Cara: solar panels are a clear switch. Because of where Mushkegowuk is
Youth, AIAI: Lets introduce composting for communities. Provide some information about how to access resources to start. What about moving to a provincial electricity grid?
COO delegate: Hooking up to the grid is not a positive thing. And it looks ugly on the outside.
Youth, AIAI: why are building materials so expensive?

Cara: We rely a lot on fossil fuels. Connecting to the provincial grid is better. The main goal is to not to use diesel because the worst one for emissions.
Mark: I’m referring to clean energy like solar. Maybe the grid is part of the solution. Maybe over time, our communities can build on this and have many solutions.

### Breakout Session 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indigenous Youth and Elder Delegates</th>
<th>Ministry of Environment and Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth, Six Nations: There are more wood ticks in Six Nations. That’s scary because of Lyme disease. Also, I’m not sure if my community agreed to have one built, but there’s a pipeline there. Youth, Pic River FN: When I was younger, there used to be lots of snow and last year, there was no snow in January. This year, we had spring weather out there even though January is supposed to be one of the coldest months of the year. Youth, IFN: I noticed change on the water because I’ve always been connected to one lake or another. Some of the trees fell into the water this year because there was so much rain and it caused the water levels to rise. The fisheries were two weeks ahead this year. The water birds started having their babies late in the season. I saw in late summer, that the geese and ducks were still infantile. Once they get old enough, they practice flocking and now they’re adapting to a climate that’s changing. We’re falling a few years behind the animals.</td>
<td>Cara: We’re seeing some of these things in the environment and animals and it’s also about how these things are impacting your life. Alex: have they done anything to address the wood ticks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth, Six Nations: the wood ticks are terrifying us. Youth, Six Nations: No, and I just heard about Lyme disease.</td>
<td>Cara: Is there ways that we can reduce or adapt to things happening now? For example, can you reduce the number of trucks that come into the community by building a community garden or a green house?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gull Bay Delegate: My wife has noticed that amounts of blueberries have dropped dramatically in the last few years. She picked about 200 litres 6 years ago. But now there just aren’t any berries anymore. It must be like that in other places too. Climate change is different in different parts of the province. I used to see geese flying north in the fall, and south in the spring. We don’t see the flocks that we used to see. Maybe they might be going in a different route. It’s little things that we have seen over the year. Youth, IFN: Animal watchers have been having a hard time planning their excursions for birds. The animals are kind of like refugees, because there’s nowhere for them to go. There’s no geography for them to occupy. It is an ongoing negative impact. For example, we used to have porcupines in our area, but they’re all gone now.</td>
<td>Youth, IFN: Are we paying more because of the cap and trade system and are we also responsible for reducing greenhouse gas emissions? I don’t think cap and trade is achieve its goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth, Six Nations: I noticed that this year there are a lot of grapes on the fence. I remember someone telling me that that means it will be a bad winter. Youth, IFN: Are we paying more because of the cap and trade system and are we also responsible for reducing greenhouse gas emissions? I don’t think cap and trade is achieve its goal.</td>
<td>Youth, IFN: The cap and trade program is a complicated system and it’s not being communicated in a way that we can understand it. It’s based on the market and it’s risky. It lacked the foresight of changing realities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth, IFN: Can they determine what they want to do? Youth, IFN: It’s important to note that we’re not the ones who caused these problems and we don’t get to spend time on our own priorities like the declining moose populations.</td>
<td>Mark: The process has allotted money for First Nations and we’re here to help you develop plans. How should we do this? How do you want this done? Mark: This money can go to benefit First Nations by building a green</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
house to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and helping with food security. For communities using diesel to produce electricity, we can work to eliminate the need for diesel and help get them on the grid. The provincial system has let them down. But we need to generate our own energy needs. We’re absolutely looking for ways to reduce greenhouse gases to do that.

Cara: The program is mostly focused on those big emitters. We realize that you didn’t really contribute to that very much. If you want your house to use renewable energy, then we want to make it more affordable for people.

Participant, Poplar Point: You’re trying to make a dramatic change but does money really solve our problem? Why do our people have to shovel this money up for chemical plants? You should be talking to the companies doing this. Our Elders told us that no one listened before. Now that they have this big problem, they’re running back to the Elders. They want something to do. They don’t want to hear about the tax increases. We never had these impacts before European contact. These companies are causing this problem. We’re doing it to ourselves. The young people can hear the frustration because businesses and corporations are the ones doing this.

Youth, IFN: In May 2016, Ontario had an opportunity to submit the First Nations perspective. First Nations have a special relationship to the land and water. We have a sacred responsibility to the land. Until that kind of language is used, it’s not going to help us. We’re missing the opportunity to make real impacts.

Participant, Poplar Point: We talk about Canadian legislation and laws while people are drawn away from the natural law of our people. We understand what our laws are. This is what we need to fight for the betterment of our people. When are you going to stop taking and when are you going to start giving back? If we keep going in this way there will be nothing left. When we

Mark: It’s helpful for us if we have something definite that says “this is what we’d like going forward”. It’s helpful for us to have that kind of resolution. If you want our help and want us involved, here is what we need. You asked us to have youth and Elder engagement. This is the beginning of how we are doing engagement. We’ve probably asked for different things from communities before. Your voices are at least being sought. Truthfully, no matter
really look at it, it’s not just about water, resources and animals. It’s everything and everything is bleeding fast and going fast. You really must choose sides because acid rain really is killing us.

Youth Participant: It would be great to have some advocacy support instead of someone saying “here’s some money and here’s some deliverables”. This doesn’t feel like we have self determination in what needs to be done. I feel like we keep repeating ourselves because our voices are not being heard. What’s going to happen in future legislation? In November, we said we had to get rid of these corporations. We have a paper mill right by our community. We’re not learning from other communities. It would be great to get some support. We’re the future and we must solve this problem for our children and our children’s children.

Youth participant: when there’s a corporation coming in, we feel like there’s backlash from the government. It’s federal land, but it’s our community and we feel like we don’t get any support. That’s what I’m talking about.

Youth, IFN: The windmills are disturbing the underground springs in Ontario. We don’t have any data or previous data of the springs, but they’re ancient. What’s happening is those pegs are cracking and fracturing underneath. What happens if those aquifers become contaminated? One of the world’s cleanest aquifers is located north of Barrie. For advocacy, these grassroots groups are trying to get support because they are fighting major projects, but First Nations don’t have the capacity to support them. We need someone to intervene. This requires our consent and consultation.

Participant, Poplar Point: You know there’s something wrong if people get up and start protesting. We speak for ourselves but they’re not listening. We need to leave this problem here. This isn’t something that adults have control over anymore. When does the government step in and listen? The government can’t seem to stop the problems because of the money. Think of the damage caused by refining the tar sands. The ones who care are the ones who are here. Where are we going? The government always wants something and never benefit us because they have what they want.

Youth, IFN: It will be up to us to deal with when fracking comes to Ontario. This is what Winona Laduke talked...
about when she spoke of Windigo economics. It’s coming. We live in the Great Lakes region, so we will be negatively affected. You can’t get that pollution out of the water.

Youth, Poplar Point: The youth are affected more than others. I’ve been outside this treaty area and I’ve been to the US where the people are fighting the Pipeline. It would get the government really mad to negotiate with us but we haven’t been given the tools. However, we’re still going to fight and oppose that industry. I’ve been through communities all over and I have seen the tar sands. If you go into the mountains, you will see all that pollution. We have seen some machines making big clouds. But those weren’t clouds, we tell you. I butt heads with different people because people don’t want to stand up against the government. I’ve seen this kind of process many times. You ask us, and yet we still get left behind. I don’t know what to say anymore. I give this input everywhere I go.

Youth, IFN: The Idle No More movement started making Canada pay attention. Almost six years later, and nothing has been done with the Fisheries Act and Species at Risk. They’re working on reviewing these regulations. This could tie into the objections that I’m hearing. How is the province approaching those pieces relating to First Nations? Climate change is a big part of this. This is an opportunity to push back. We’re the ones paying the consequences. We’re a minority population and yet we’re the most studied. No matter where we go, we find out how much more we’re dying than anyone else. We live in a global economy so we should be able to have some kind of influence.

Youth, IFN: Lets create a whole other system.

Cara: We can’t stop production, because they’re going to go across the lake to the states. Emissions are still going to happen; it would just be somewhere else. We can talk about changing legislation. Everyone has to be on board.

Mark: The goal is to gradually get everyone on board and have industry convert and still maintain jobs.
| Youth, IFN: Green initiatives need to be looked at because they could be more reflective of community values. | Alex: I know that green initiatives exist and you might be right. Cara: this is not a satisfying conversation for anyone. But we want to continue this conversation. |
| Participant, Poplar Point: I wasn’t here in the beginning but taxing for pollution, is this just one of your options? | Cara: Cap and trade puts price on carbon emissions, and creates revenue for other initiatives. There’s still opportunity for other projects. Mark: that money is going into a pot for communities to lower their fossil fuel use. It’s a long hard road getting industry to change. |
Food Sovereignty and Indigenous Science by Dan Longboat, Professor Trent University

Introduction:

We all share things like food, water, air and earth. It is important to understand that the Creator has provided for us and given us the authority to live here.

Food sovereignty is about governance, self determination, empowerment, our landscape, and providing all the things necessary to support our people.

Indigenous peoples are often referred to as just subsisting on the land but this is not true. We flourished on the land. We had civilizations and our ancestors helped to provide the opportunity to take care of that natural beauty and pass it on to future generations. We had a beautiful life. Everything that has been created has given us a great life that has tied us to the land. Food and the issue around the food are tied together but are two separate things. We were secure in the foods we had.

We have the independence and the inherent right to make choices about food to eat. Its clear that it is necessary to eat. But diary and wheat/grain are not our food and it has made our people sick with chronic illnesses. Suitable food helps maintain cognition, flexibility, proper digestion. Proper digestion and blood flow are turned off by negative food consumption and we get physical sicknesses.

We look to our community for examples of self determination. Think about how we transmit culture. There is connection to ceremony, water, land, and life. Ceremony expresses our responsibility to care for all of life. Our ceremonies, language, and water, comes together with the Elders. These Elders are our doctors and our social processes of education. It’s important to recognize the authority of our Elders.

Who do you ask about community-consensus and governance? This is an opportunity to assert our jurisdiction and law-making authority. We can make decisions as a community. This could include working within our education system or engaging with others outside the community to rebuild our economy.

How were our nations tied together? How do we take care of each other and connect with the physical world and the spiritual world?

It is amazing that we are still here after the impacts of colonization, treaty making, residential schools, and even different world views. Think about the crisis our people have been through. Those things that saved us must be rebuilt. Sovereignty must be rebuilt, and we have a responsibility to make those things happen.

Louis Henry Morgan was a philosopher. He said that we were the finest men and women in the world. For example, at age 82, Hendrick was an appointed speaker. He had sun tattoos on his face, and at 82 years of age he showed up in history at a big battle with New York state between the British and French. How many people do we know can take on a 20-year-old in battle?
Our mental and spiritual teachings kept us vital. Those old people who have been sustained by the land and who ate real food kept dark hair and young features even in old age. Elders were healthy and by maintaining their ways they stayed healthy. Things have changed. Drinking pop, eating hamburgers and greasy food etc... turns the switches off. Then in our thirties our bodies start to ache. We get future health problems because we didn’t turn those switches on and didn’t put things in place to protect ourselves. This behaviour starts early. Babies need to be exposed to a whole spectrum of food because they need to develop their taste buds for good food. Unfortunately, as human beings we tend to be attracted to unhealthy foods like sugar. Sugar over taxes our body and then we develop diabetes. Getting diabetes is a process because our taste buds became accustomed to sugar. Unfortunately, we focus on the negative food practises which are now passed on to our children.

What kind of food did our people eat compared with what Canadians eat? The Canadian diet consists of about 21 different foods including cereal, bread, and sandwiches. It’s basically one food all day long instead of three separate meals. Look at the nutrients that are consumed daily. Some people say it’s not a meal without bread. But the wheat is genetically modified and milk is altered too. Two thirds of what is on the Canadian food guide is not compatible with our bodies to digest. Think about where the meat comes from and how it was raised. Antibiotics and steroids are fed to the cows and chickens but this isn’t good for us to eat.

When we hunt animals we have a connection to our food. We ask those animals for their lives so we can eat. We show respect to those animals. But now with industrialized meat plants, animals are tortured, killed and traumatized. The animals are not respected as a gift. It is not surprising our people get sick from that meat and genetically modified foods.

Part of preparing for hunting is thinking about how we don’t make those animals suffer. There are rules such as observing certain times to hunt and eating meat. And what about food colonization? Is our cupboards full of our food or Canadian food? If we are going to be food secure we must be secure in our own food systems. Eat traditional foods – the 150 foods that turn those switches on and respect the proper times to hunt. We need to rebuild the process of understanding those connections and return to our traditional ways of well being. Understand the nutrients that turn on those positive switches compared to the negative switches we turn on today. That is what is killing us, we need to return to healthy lifestyles. We need to look at the capacity of food. Our land and the animals on the land can revitalize our diet and help prolong good health for our people. If we don’t have health and wellbeing nothing else will matter. Create good eating patterns and pass on a good diet to your kids so they don’t develop health problems later in life.

Michael Thrasher who studied with Peter, obtained a lot of knowledge from Peter.

A single mom who is a moose hunter talked about each cut of meat from the moose. Everything that moose digested is exactly the food needed for our nutrition. This single mom shares with her community. For example, the marrow in the bones of a young calf and the meat is given to their Elders. Why do they do that? Because the stem cells are in that marrow and the moose meat is strong. It helps the Elders maintain their health and strengthens them. Our ancestors were brilliant. This is only one example of a strategy we need to regain. A discussion followed this story and another strategy was shared by a participant. The strategy is as follows: in that person’s family, if they have an unborn...
moose, the mother skins the fur from that unborn calf and the meat is fed to young boys. This practice helps these boys grow into good hunters and providers.

In summary, we must understand our culture and language. Understanding about traditional food is important and we can use technologies to improve our way of life in a modern world.

Our Elders always told us to love and take care of every aspect of our wellbeing. Sharing and learning is a never-ending learning journey. Learn about the proper care for yourself so you can teach our people.

**Traditions and Protocols**

Our traditions and protocols describe our way of doing things and identify the right way to do it. Stay true to your traditions. It is our way of holding ourselves accountable.

What is the origins of our way? The Creator gave us the processes and the knowledge from a place of spirit. Our way came from all the animals and the earth and it came to our people through dreams, visions and ceremony. Our ancestors taught us to keep these teachings by embedding them into our protocols through song, speeches, dances and all the other things given to our people. We are accessing a body of knowledge that is connected to something that is thousands and thousands of years old. We are calling the thunder out of the sky. This is rebuilding our sovereignty.

Jake Thomas, who was a great cultural mind in the past century, instructed Dan one day. Jake told him that instead of just relying on himself, he ought to go to the four beings that live in the sky. The four beings have historically manifested themselves and have taught human beings how to be human again. Jake instructed Dan to address the four beings to help him fulfill his responsibility to the Creator. Entreat them to give you the power and strength to change at least one more person. Be the vessel so that you can be of service to help creation and help life continue. It’s a beautiful and simple mechanism that goes back to traditional knowledge and comes from a place of spirit. To entreat the four beings we need to recognize the language, culture and ceremony otherwise we fail.

What are the elements and what do we need to put in place? There needs to be a structure of how we make decisions and we need solid leaders who are informed by spirit.

The foundation of a sense of community is founded on kindness and compassion. It is a different way to see the world because it’s about working together and supporting each other. We need to revitalize these ideas and it’s important that we go back and learn the ceremonies. Learn the knowledge and acquire the skills and if things don’t make sense you put them aside and go back to it when it does make sense. Going through this process will help you become a real human being. This process is the driving force behind us and the more you engage with the physical world and develop a relationship with it the more empowerment you gain. Listen to it!

Creation is still unfolding, and we have, as human beings, a responsibility to sustain, honour, and respect it. We must build relationships with the animals and the land and learn to understand it. Listen to the message and not the messenger if the person is suffering with sickness. Be careful of teachings but listen to the message. And what makes sense of the message take it and embrace it. That’s why
we have life, so we can be of service to the Creator and the animals, water, air etc... Otherwise, we work against creation and destroy it. What we do is up to us.

Language opens the door and is the key to rebuilding our relationship with the land and the creator. Every time we use our language those beings who are listening are helping us. Have an open mind and accept those things. If we are angry or preoccupied, the learning won’t be absorbed. You need to have an open heart because the lessons come from a place of spirit. I pray for our language. I’m asking for all the powers behind us to help me continue teaching my grandchildren the language.

The creation story of Sky woman that tells how the earth was made and how everything started to grow shows us that life comes from women. To help support, honour and strengthening life we must recognize the authority of women.

We are the authority of our economic systems. We need to rebuild our traditional economy so everyone prospers and grows. Our foods and traditions are under threat and we need to restore our ways to preserve them.

How can we be a sovereign people? A sovereign people looks after themselves and is healthy. We need to be resilient and determination our own future. That’s what we had in the past.

Elder comment: The residential schools fed these young kids who went there. The children that were left in the communities were healthy. Illnesses came back from those schools with our kids and affected those who were healthy. Everyone ended up being unhealthy.

Speak up. Sometimes the truth hurts but we need to correct that history. We need to correct our teachers and professors and bring that knowledge back in our lives.

**Self sufficiency**

What is the driving force behind self empowerment and self sufficiency? It is the revitalization of values and our ability to understand the origin of where sovereignty comes from. Every crisis we have faced has been resolved by our culture and our way of life! That is the foundation of sovereignty. Everything we have comes from a place of spirit! How do we take control of our sovereignty? We do it through our lifestyles and the ability to sustain ourselves.

Become educated about ceremonies and teachings. It is our responsibility to respect the gifts we’ve been given. For example, strawberries and everything in nature have their own leaders. The strawberry is the leader of the berries, and when it is the right time to harvest the women pick them. When we understand the gifts those things listen to us because we recognize it and say its name. The strawberries listen and know we are thanking them for our gift of food. They will notice we have songs for them and praise them with thanks. Let’s get strong by that practice and let them know we are thankful. We have forgotten our connections and relationship to them.
**Last session:**

The effects of colonization has caused problems with our foods. In our community we have a high rate of diabetes. Climate change has also compounded the issue. How do we modernize those old teachings and traditions in this generation? How will we gather our foods in our traditional ways such as hunting, fishing, and trapping? It is done by revitalizing our culture. We can move forward through our culture and ways of being. The culture we’ve been provided will build our future life. This includes showing our appreciation of those relationships and the relationship we have with the spirit world. We are calling them to be with us and help us take care of our systems in order to sustain our gifts for future generations. Our health and wellness are built on our traditional foods. We need to remove barriers and things that prevent us from regaining our traditional ways of hunting, cooking and eating.

A participant commented “moose meat gives me strength” and Don asked if she was a longhouse girl. The participant responded with a yes. Don is asked how he knew this, and he said he knew because of the way she explained her connection to the animal in a traditional way.

Colonization is not just in the past, its alive here today because it is in our cupboards. If we want to be sovereign nations we must be in control of our food, land, and ceremonies. By taking an animals life, it is a fulfillment of our responsibility to the creator to honor our gifts. The micro and macro are embedded in the things we eat, see, do and understand. Our ancestors needed great mental capacities to survive, and its our responsibility is to make sure we turn those genes on. Our foods contained macro-nutrients like carbohydrates and amino acids which are there to create optimum health.

These modern times need to be responsible to the history of our food and its significance to our people. We must pass on and maintain the connection we have to animals, water and, land. Look at our diets and make the change to better our futures. These man-made foods are killing our people because they cause heart problems, diabetes, digestion issues and gastric complications from unhealthy food.

Are there new ways of bringing ancient things forward? That is the opportunity or the challenge for this generation.