

Resources for Reconciliation



Walking With Our Sisters art installation on display in 2017 at Perth Public Library*

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CONTENTS

PROTOCOLS AND THEIR MEANINGS	- 3 -
Acknowledgement of Territory	- 4 -
Invite local Indigenous Elders or Presenters	- 4 -
The following are steps that organizers can take when organizing an event:	- 5 -
Tobacco Offering Protocol	- 6 -
BACKGROUND	- 7 -
Indigenous peoples in the Ottawa Valley	- 7 -
Truth and Reconciliation	- 10 -
What is Reconciliation?	- 11 -
LEARNING ABOUT OMÀMIWININÌ HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES	- 12 -
Online Resources	- 12 -
Algonquins of Ontario Land Claim	- 12 -
Print Resources	- 12 -
GLOSSARY	- 13 -

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ONLINE:

- ❖ **The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**
https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf
- ❖ **Truth & Reconciliation Calls to Action**
http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

***A Note About Walking With Our Sisters Art Installation**

Walking with Our Sisters was a commemorative art installation to honour the lives of missing and murdered Indigenous Women of Canada and the United States. The installation came to Carleton University in 2015. In June of 2012 a general call was issued on Facebook for people to create moccasin tops (called 'vamps'). The call was answered by women, men and children of all ages and races. By July 25, 2013 over 1300 vamps had been received, almost tripling the initial goal of 600.

The project is about these women, paying respect to their lives and existence on this earth. They are sisters, mothers, daughters, cousins, aunties, grandmothers, friends and wives. They are not forgotten.

This tapestry was the Prize in a lottery when this amazing art installation came to Ottawa. It provides a glimpse of that very beautiful event. Please go to: WalkingWithOurSisters.ca for more information.

PROTOCOLS AND THEIR MEANINGS

As we go forward with Truth and Reconciliation, to build trusting and honest relationships with diverse Indigenous communities and people, it is important to follow respectful ways of communicating. This shows respect for Indigenous values, cultures and beliefs. It can also create a venue to open people's minds to different attitudes and allow Indigenous peoples' voices to be heard in Indigenous ways of knowing.

When writing or speaking about Canada's history, keep in mind that while Canada recently celebrated 150 years, there is 10,000 years of Indigenous history in this area. Avoid using terms like "wilderness", "uninhabited", or "empty" to describe the land before European settlement. Similarly, when describing Canada's history, it is disrespectful to suggest that the history of Canada started in 1867 or with the arrival of Europeans.

Whenever possible refer to the specific Indigenous people of a given area rather than using a broad generic term. Think of the diversity in the term European and how much more instructive it is to speak about English, Dutch or Italian people or cultures rather than using the generic term, Europeans. Aboriginal is a term that is used by governments and is not favoured by many Indigenous people. The terms "First Nation, Métis and Inuit" or "Indigenous" are generally preferred; or where possible use the name of the specific nation, such as Anishinaabe or Omàmìwinini (see "Background" document or "Glossary" for more information).

Protocols involve a series of guidelines to be followed in certain situations. Following Indigenous protocols is an important step in engaging with Indigenous communities, in the same way as they are in non-Indigenous communities. It shows respect and demonstrates that time and effort that were put into becoming informed about the people and communities one is interacting with or asking for something from.

There are several protocols that can be followed with Indigenous communities in the Ottawa Valley. We outline three major protocols that are generally followed within Anishinaabe and Algonquin, or Omàmìwinini, communities below: acknowledging territory, inviting local Elders or Speakers and/or Drummers, and offering tobacco.

The following are steps that organizers can take when organizing an event:

- ❖ Seek out Elders at local community to know which Elder or presenter would be suitable for your event.
- ❖ Enquire from their community what their personal needs are and what they will require for the gathering.
- ❖ An Elder will not ask for payment or state an amount, but often an honorarium is appropriate. Find out from their community what they need.
- ❖ As a common courtesy, you would offer a pouch of tobacco or a tobacco tie to the Elder or presenter as you greet them, in exchange for their knowledge and time. Tobacco is considered spiritual currency and the offering is a sign of respect.

When you have an Elder, a presenter or drummers coming to an event, the following steps can be taken:

- ❖ You could request to include a smudge ceremony to unify and welcome open hearts and minds.
- ❖ Offer the invited guest(s) a comfortable seat, and if possible assign someone to see to their needs (water, coffee, tea, and snacks at break). They should be served first at lunch or dinner, especially if it is a buffet where people will line up to serve themselves. These gestures show our respect and make the guest(s) feel welcome and cared for respectfully.
- ❖ It is also customary to give an honorarium for their time and counsel. When it is not possible to give an honorarium of money, perhaps a gift of appreciation can be made. Honorariums and gift-giving are honoured traditions founded on the principle of reciprocity: when you take, something must be given in return.
- ❖ In the old days, we might have offered invited guest(s) moose meat to feed their family or a blanket to keep them warm, but in today's economic world we compensate them for their time and travelling expenses. At a minimum they should not be paying out of pocket for their transportation and a gas card or per diem allowance would be welcome. Consider: what is it worth to you and your organization? Consult the community on what is valuable to them as a gift.

Tobacco Offering Protocol

The tobacco is offered with the left hand (heart hand) extended, while voicing your intentions, or what you are asking the other person to do. This gives the person an opportunity to accept and enable them to know what they are asked to do in exchange for the tobacco. It is important that you state what you wish them to share with your group beforehand, to let them know precisely what you want them to convey to your group, as you offer the tobacco. They also need to feel confident that they will be of assistance to you.

As an example, to ask someone to open and close a gathering, you could ask the following:

“We would be honoured if you would speak to the Great Mystery for us and ...” (specify what you hope for and what your intentions for the gathering are; for example “we would like to have a good gathering ...”)

Or you could say:

“We would be honoured if you would drum songs for this gathering, to sing in the ancestors and uplift the community with the heartbeat of Mother Earth ... to close the gathering and send the ancestors and the people home safe ...”

Or if you are asking a person to share their knowledge, you could say:

“We would be honoured to benefit from your advice and guidance.”

evidence and oral tradition around the incident, Wright lied and told them he had papers given to him by the Colonial Office. This was untrue as it turns out; he was a land speculator from Massachusetts and had no such papers. While the Omàmìwininì people found it difficult to understand how he had “acquired” these lands, they didn’t question the truth of his statement. To do so would have been an insult and disrespectful. They did not lie. Instead, given that he was already there, they chose to welcome and incorporate him into already existing protocols for relationships with neighbours.”

The land on which we live was then and continues to this day to be unceded Omàmìwininì or Algonquin territory. No agreements have been signed to state how the land shall be shared. Treaties that were signed in the area were not signed with the Algonquin and have since been discredited. Town and township settlements in Lanark County were established in contradiction to British law and the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which stated that no land could be granted to settlers without a prior agreement between Indigenous nations and the Crown. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was ratified at the Treaty of Niagara in 1764, where delegations from Indigenous peoples from across what is now southern Ontario met and exchanged wampum belts with a representative of the British Crown. Through this peace process the Omàmìwininì people agreed to share the land but did not then nor ever since surrender their title and rights to the land. The British Crown repeatedly broke this agreement by granting parcels of unceded land to settlers, for example to non-Indigenous soldiers to reward them for their service.

The federal government restricted hunting in many areas of traditional territory, and tried to convince Omàmìwininì families to relocate to small reserves. The only Algonquin reserve on the Ontario side of the Ottawa River was established at Golden Lake (Pikwàkanagàn), north-west of Renfrew. Some Omàmìwininì children were sent to residential school in Spanish, Ontario, north-west of Killarney National Park. Many people living in the Ottawa Valley fell silent about their Omàmìwininì identities in order to remain in their ancestral lands, fitting in among settler societies and remaining unrecognized as “Indians” (under the *Indian Act*) by the Canadian government.

The Canadian government has since acknowledged that this was Omàmìwininì territory and recognizes the land as unceded. A land claim by the Algonquins of Ontario and Pikwàkanagàn First Nation with the Canadian government for parts of the territory on the Ontario side of the Ottawa River is currently being negotiated, although this land claim is not supported by all Omàmìwininì in the area. The land claim is also being challenged by Algonquin communities on the Québec side of the river, who argue that there was a greater Algonquin nation that straddled the Kiji Sibì and that communities in what is now Québec were excluded from the land claim process despite having family areas that straddle the river and include lands in Ontario.

Today, Omàmìwininì families live across Lanark and Frontenac Counties, some belonging to communities such as Ardoch Algonquin or Shabot Obadjiwaan and others not. Many are active in reclaiming, documenting, and educating others about Omàmìwininì history, language, and identity.

Truth and Reconciliation

Truth and reconciliation efforts have been ongoing in Lanark County for many years. One example is when Ardoch Omàmìwinini and other community members came together to protect *manòmin*, or wild rice at Mud Lake from being mechanically harvested and sold for profit by someone not from the community. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources wanted to open up the cultivation and harvest of *manòmin* to for-profit corporations on a large scale, an action which would have seen many local ecosystems dependent on the rice destroyed, and which would have had a severe impact on the lives of Omàmìwinini and others living in the area. Resisting the large-scale harvesting and sale of *manòmin* brought Omàmìwinini and other community members together, as well as educating the public about the importance of protecting *manòmin* and the practices of cultivating and harvesting it which have been handed down through centuries in Omàmìwinini families.

Other examples of truth and reconciliation efforts include the recent formation of a National Healing Forest committee in Perth. The National Healing Forest is a nation-wide effort to commemorate the many missing and murdered Indigenous women and children who died in residential schools. Healing forests are spaces where people can go to heal and to remember family members and loved ones in the calming presence of trees. The Lanark County Council has also recently adopted a resolution to become active in the work of truth and reconciliation, to educate themselves and their staff about Indigenous history and presence in Lanark County, and to actively engage with Indigenous leaders in the county.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007, officially endorsed by Canada in 2010, and enshrined in law by the government of British Columbia in 2019, is a blueprint for reconciliation. It is an international agreement that outlines “the rights necessary to ensure the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples of the world,” and itemizes the rights of Indigenous peoples around the world, including:

- ❖ The right to free, prior and informed consent in matters concerning Indigenous traditional territories;
- ❖ The right not to be subject to acts of genocide or violence, including the forcible removal of children from their families and communities;
- ❖ The right to maintain and strengthen distinctive spiritual relationships with Indigenous territory; and
- ❖ Basic human rights and freedoms.

Under the UNDRIP, governments have responsibilities to:

- ❖ Combat prejudice, eliminate discrimination, and promote tolerance, understanding and good relations;
- ❖ Put in place effective mechanisms to prevent any action aimed at depriving Indigenous peoples of integrity as distinct peoples;
- ❖ Engage in good faith negotiations with Indigenous peoples; and
- ❖ Ensure prompt resolution of disputes.

What is Reconciliation?

For people of settler descent and other non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, reconciliation consists of:

TRUTH: Accepting and learning the truth about our shared histories;

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Acknowledging responsibility as Canadians for what has been done to Indigenous peoples;

RESPONSIBILITY: Committing to ensuring that this will never happen again, and committing to ensuring that the continuing wrongs are corrected;

COMMITMENT: Committing to evolve new relationships of respect, consultation and co-operation.

One way of demonstrating a person's or a group's commitment to reconciliation is by acknowledging the Indigenous traditional territory on which the person or group's activities are taking place. This process is outlined in the "Protocol" document included in this package, and is:

- ❖ A way of honouring and showing respect for peoples who have been living and working on this land from time immemorial;
- ❖ A beginning in the process of reconciliation.

LEARNING ABOUT OMÀMIWININÌ HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

ONLINE RESOURCES

Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation History (web page)

http://www.algonquinsofpikwakanagan.com/culture_history.php

The Algonquin Way website has two interesting articles posted here:

<http://thealgonquinway.ca/English/story-e.php>

- Kim Hanewich, Omàmiwininì: The Invisible People
- James Morrison, Sicani Research and Advisory Services, Algonquin History of the Ottawa River Watershed

Peter DiGangi presented on Omàmiwininì history at Octopus books in December 2015. The talk was recorded and is online: <https://equitableeducation.ca/2015/podcast-history-ottawa-river-watershed>

Algonquins of Ontario Land Claim

- <http://www.tanakiwin.com/our-treaty-negotiations/overview-of-treaty-negotiations/>
- <https://ipolitics.ca/tag/ontario-algonquin-land-claim/>
- <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/03/17/algonquins-of-pikwakanagan-reject-aoo-modern-treaty/>
- <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/04/05/pikwakanagan-grandmothers-launch-court-bid-against-350-million-algonquin-modern-treaty/>
- **Note:** The Ardoch Algonquin are not participating in the AOO land claim process.

Ardoch Algonquin First Nation: <http://www.aafna.ca/>

Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation: <http://shabotobaadjiwan.net/>

Print Resources

Lynn Gehl, *The Truth that Wampum Tells*

Bonita Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland*

Paula Sherman, *Dishonour of the Crown*

Paula Sherman, "The Omàmiwininì", a chapter in *At Home in Tay Valley*

GLOSSARY

Omà̀̀winini:

Omà̀̀winini people, often referred to as “Algonquin,” are part of the Anishinaabe nations who have lived in the watershed of the Ottawa River (the *Kiji Sibi*) for thousands of years. *Omaamawi* means a gathering. *Omà̀̀winini* refers to “the people who gather,” in a social sense. [Note: *Omà̀̀winini* can be pronounced: “Oh-MAH-Mee-Wih-NEE-Nee”]

Algonquin:

It is believed that the first person to call *Omà̀̀winini* people “Algonquin” was Samuel de Champlain when he came up the Ottawa River in 1603. The origin of the term is unclear, but it is not what the people originally called themselves.

Anishinaabe:

Anishinaabe people include the Odawa, Ojibwe, Potawatomi, Oji-Cree, Mississaugas, and Algonquin peoples. The name can also be written *Anishinà̀̀be* or *Anishnawbe*. *Anishinabek* refers to “Anishinaabe peoples” in *Ashinaabemowin*. Anishinaabe peoples historically migrated from the East coast to what is now Québec, Ontario, Manitoba, and many areas of the United States.

Aboriginal:

The term “Aboriginal” is a legal term used in Canada’s *Constitution Act*. It is a general term that includes the First Nations peoples, Métis peoples, and Inuit living within Canada.

Indigenous:

This term is most often used in an international sense, to refer to the first peoples of the land. It is a general term that does not make distinctions among different Indigenous nations, and can also be used in Canada when referring to Aboriginal peoples generally.