

“The Way We Belong to the Lake”: Renewing Relationships at Lake Nipissing

By Nicole Latulippe
Artwork by Christi Belcourt

Outline

My approach to the research



Challenges



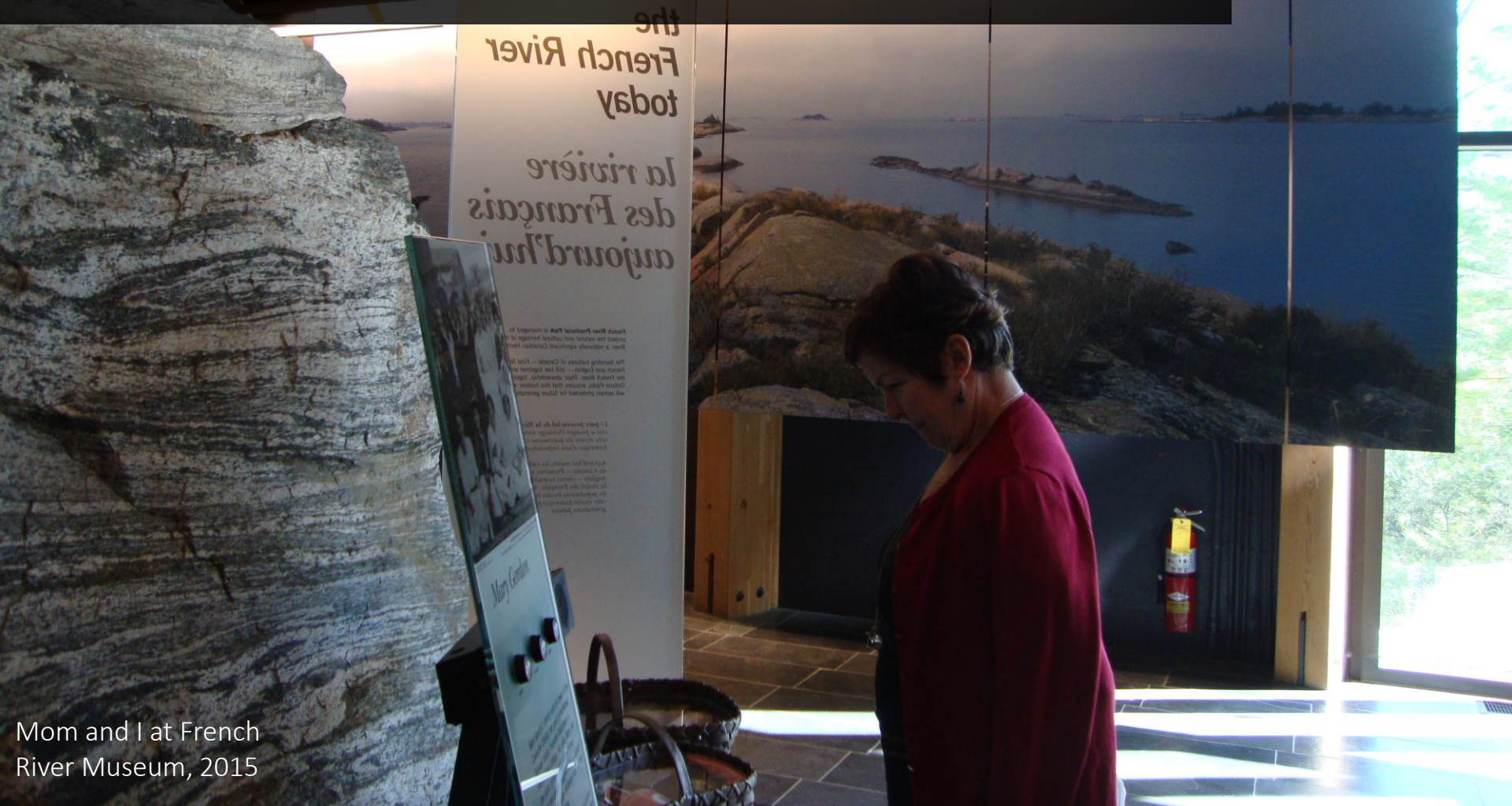
Strengths



What next?

Approach to the research

Research: Builds more knots in the web of relationships that produce knowledge



Mom and I at French
River Museum, 2015



My great uncle Pigeau and Diana Bellaire -
Her nephew married a Shabogesic

My Background

Anishinabek Nation

UNION OF ONTARIO INDIANS



Nicole Latulippe, 2010

Treaties Matter

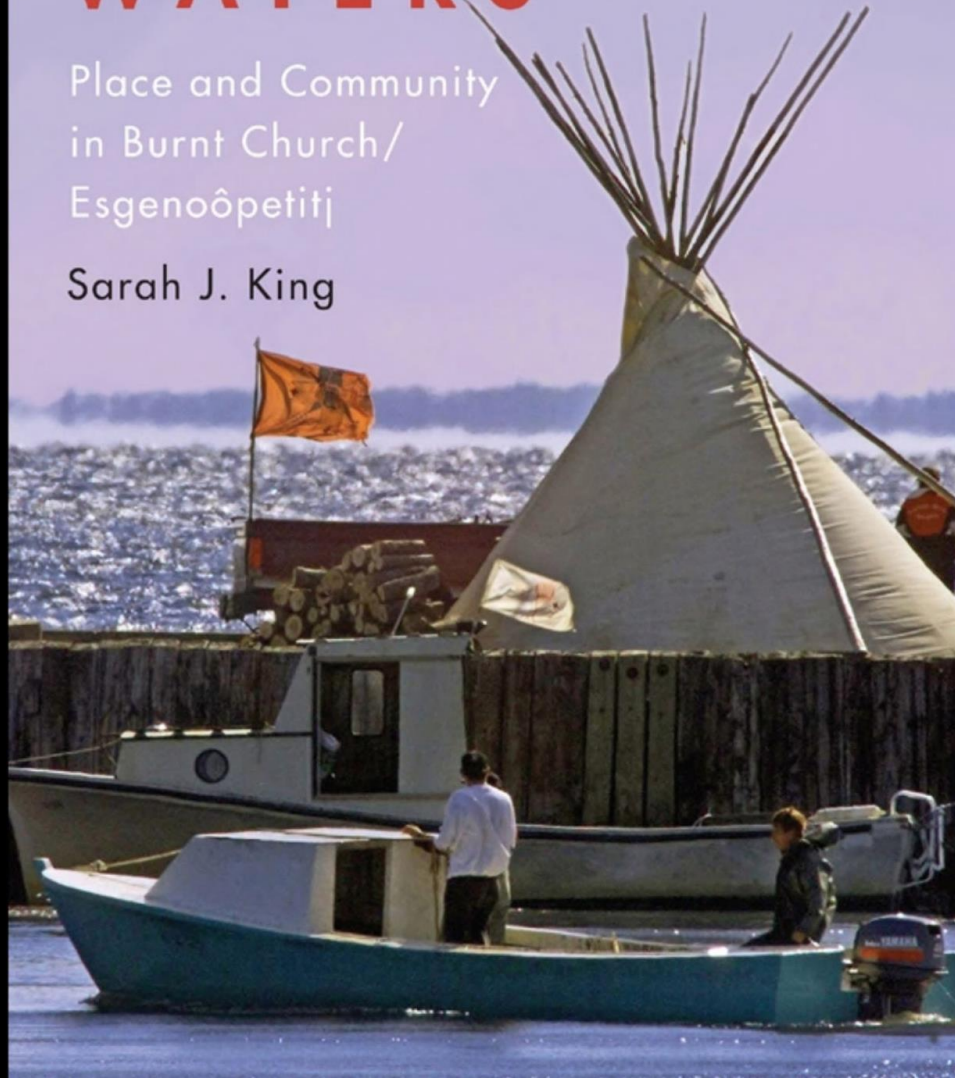


Understanding Ipperwash

FISHING IN CONTESTED WATERS

Place and Community
in Burnt Church/
Esgenoôpetitj

Sarah J. King



A leader in First Nations fisheries



Nicole Latulippe, 2015



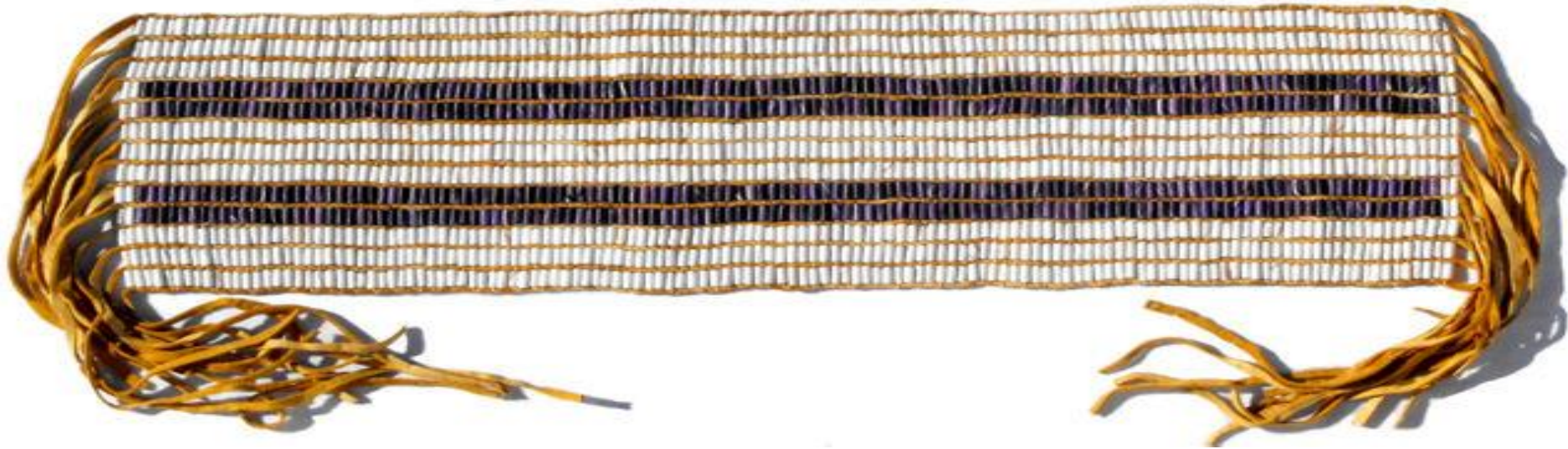
Anishinabek News, 2008

Research objectives

To understand what the NFN fishery says about:

- Ongoing colonialism and resistance
- Anishinaabe knowledge
- Anishinaabe governance and law
- Treaty implementation

My approach to research



My approach to research

- Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty
- Title
- Honour and justice



Challenges



1973

Garden Village residents charged with pickerel sale

Three members of the Garden Village Indian Band have been charged with selling pickerel, in connection with a large seizure of fish made in October.

The Ministry of Natural Resources laid charges Tuesday against George Penasse, Fred Commanda and his wife Rose Commanda, all residents of Garden Village and all members of Nipissing Indian Band Number 10.

The charges were laid in connection with an Oct. 15 raid which resulted in the seizure of about 600 pickerel and charges against two Windsor area men.

Maurice Benoit of 1536

Pelletier St. in Windsor and James Ferguson of 2691 Lloyd George St., Sandwich East were charged with possession of more than a legal limit of pickerel and possession of pickerel purchased from persons other than those holding commercial fishing licences.

The Garden Village residents have been charged with selling fish that were taken other than under the authority of a commercial fishing licence.

An issue in any court action will likely be the Robinsor Treaty of 1850 which sets out Indian hunting and fishing rights in the area.



BayToday, 2015

I don't think the use power boats in accessing nets was also part of any consideration given when netting was agreed upon in treaty rights.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · [👍 1](#) · July 20, 2014 at 4:39pm

I think its time for everyone to stop gill netting. Gill nets are killing the fishery. It doesnt matter who they belong to.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · [👍 12](#) · [Follow Post](#) · July 18, 2014 at 1:23pm

We live in the 21st century! I was born believing that we all have the same rights as individuals, no matter where or who you come from. Why do some of us have more rights then others? I feel like some of us are at the back of the bus on this trip.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · [👍 2](#) · [Follow Post](#) · July 19, 2014 at 9:28pm

Think about all those outfitters, businesses and camps that businesses are suffering due to the low numbers and commercial fishing. Nobody is buying fishing gear, gas, oil, repair boats, rent ice shacks, rent hotels, renting a cabin and boat, taking a guide for

Nipissing FN members asked to be charged or left alone, so go ahead and test the community's right to regulate members

Dave Dale / The Nugget

Thursday, September 15, 2016 1:22:13 EDT AM



Getty Images

Nipissing First Nation's resource management regulations may soon be tested in court against the stance of a minority of community members who refuse to limit their Lake Nipissing walleye harvest.

Strengths



Belonging to Lake Nipissing

“...our family history and the way we belonged to the lake...

“...you can't describe it as far as I'm concerned. Around this lake is where I learned my language, I learned to be dependent on the lake; it's where our history as the Nipissing's originated...

“...as the government tries to put down our treaty rights we keep living the way we were living before and try not to stop by their repression. We're still here today...

Belonging to Lake Nipissing

Belong to the lake, not the other way around

For “thousands of years” the “pickerel have sustained us ... the fish has looked after us”

“...we need to do the same to help them survive”

Belonging to Lake Nipissing

Holistic concept:

- Fish, water, birds, trees, insects, animals
- Social, spiritual, emotional, physical
- A way of life
- Fishing is just one way of belonging to the lake

Significance of belonging

- Distinct relationship
- Appreciation and reciprocity
- Values, proper conduct, and ethics are embedded
- People 'belong' differently and have different relationships to the lake (history)
- Belonging is broad enough to include diversity

So what?

1. Strengthening the “connection piece” is an effective response to the fishing “crisis”
2. Disagreement can be a good thing

Not belonging

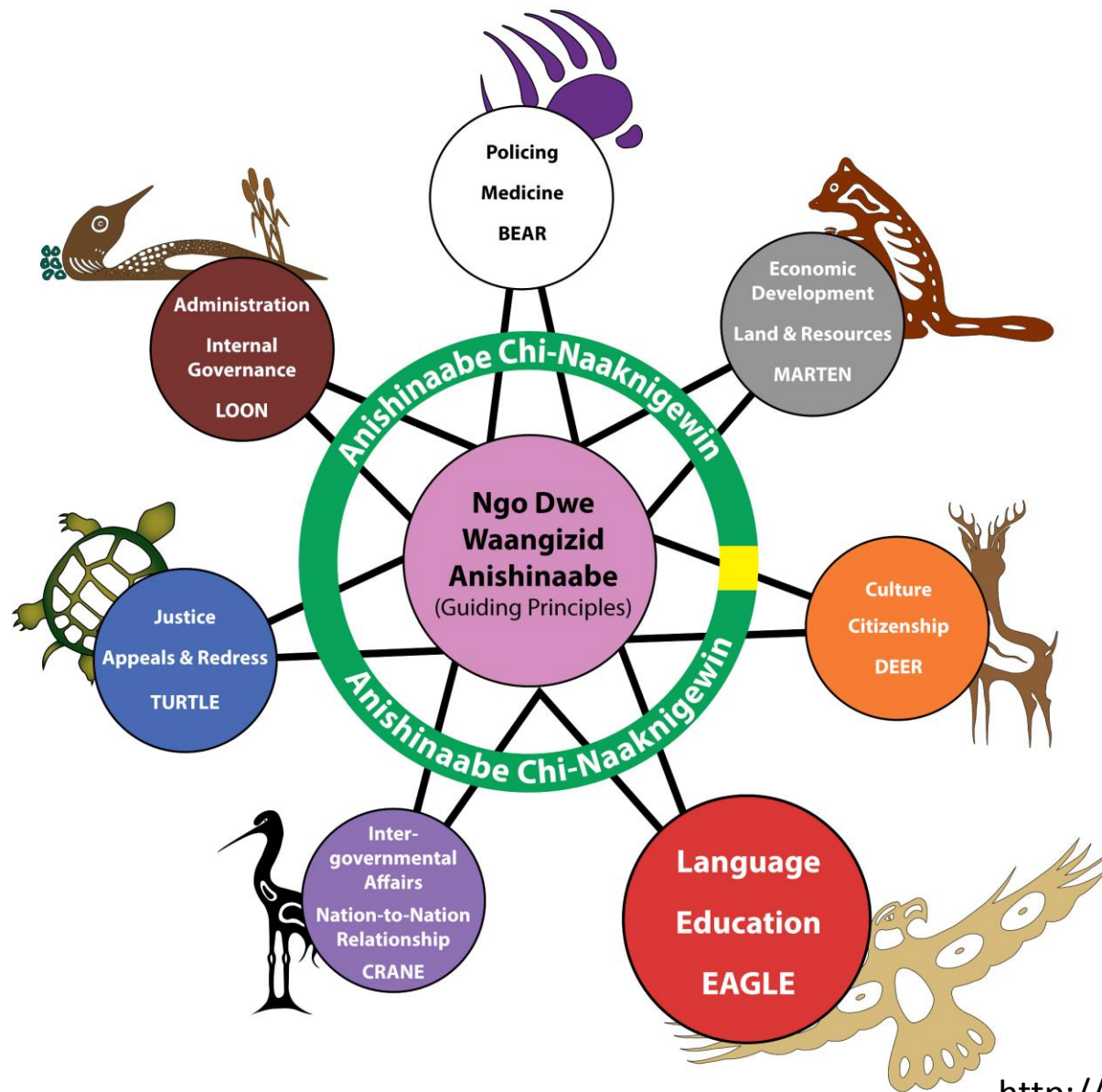
Why is belonging NOT experienced? Who is made to be out-of-place and why?

- “Non-compliance” is evidence of prior exclusion
- History lives on; access, rights, and a way of life

“Fishing was the first economy; therefore, people are fighting to protect it. Others are fighting to protect it too, *just in different ways*”

There is room for diversity

There are many ways to belong



There are many ways to belong

- Human-fish relationships underpin life at NFN
- These relations are constantly being negotiated and re-negotiated
- Old meanings are tested and new ones take shape
- Always had challenges, conflict, debate; nothing new

Disagreement can be a good thing

- Exercise in self-determination
- Friction can be “productive”: strengthens community-derived law, implementation, and law-making

Anishinaabe law

Indigenous law is about collective problem solving and managing relationships (Val Napoleon)

Deliberation (debate) is key source of law (John Borrows)

Nipissing First Nation youth launches petition to stop commercial fishing



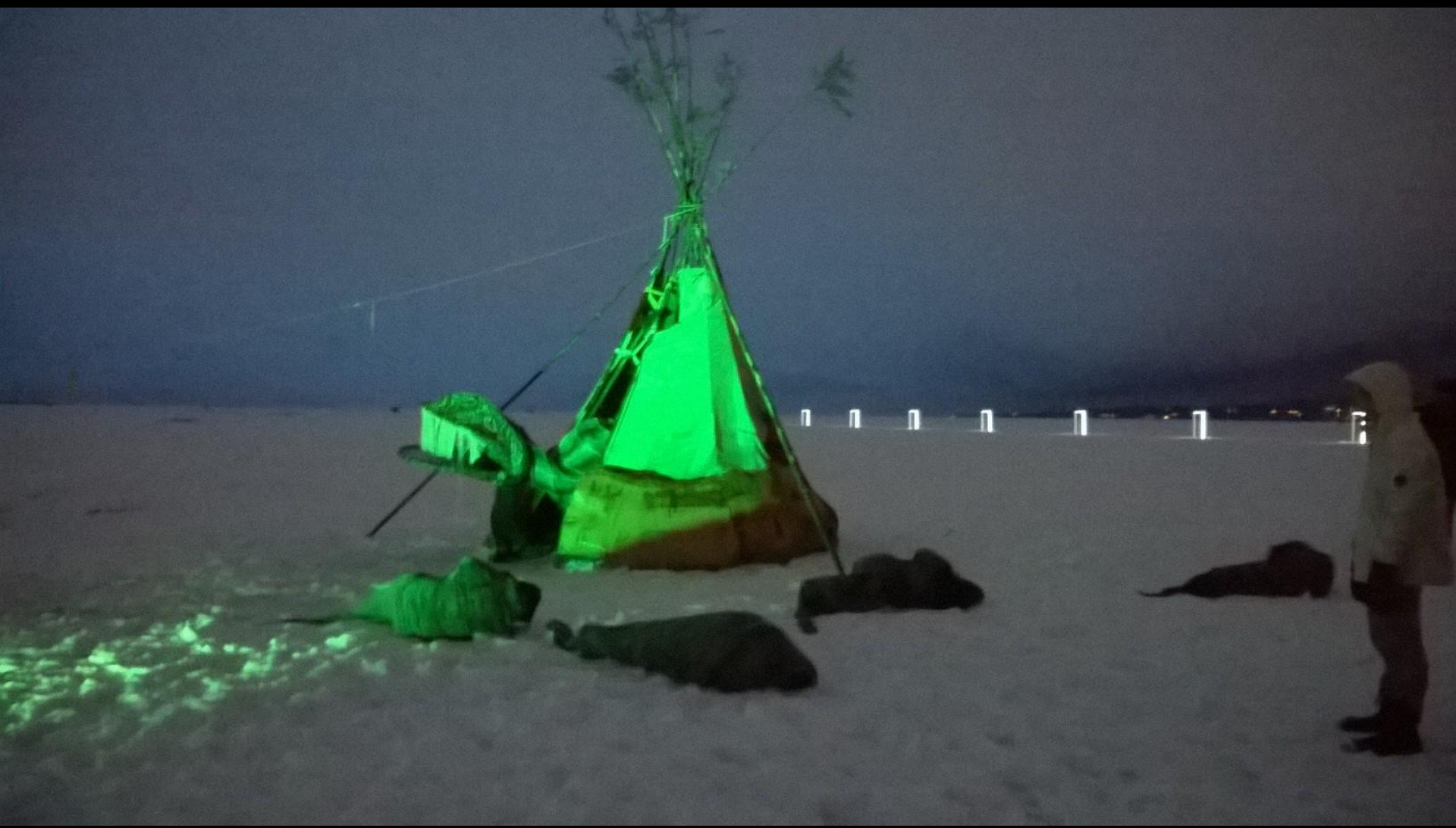



“...We are speaking up for those who have no voice: the children, the next seven generations, the fish, and they deserve our respect as equal parts of society

Anishinaabe law


- **Sacred:** original instructions
- **Customary:** proper conduct, protocol
- **Natural:** fish have law; they know what to do
- **Positivist:** codified, e.g. Chi-Naaknigewin, Fisheries Law
- **Deliberative:** debate, collective problem solving








She heard the sounds of the feast,
then strange sounds,
then silence.



She waited until the end of
her fast before going to
check on her family.

Her mother, half transformed
into serpent, told her to run away
before her father, now fully serpent,
devoured her.



mining
for

GRAND
ISLAND
MOUNTAIN

a time of hardship, temptation, starvation
illusions, exploitation, exhausted resources
oil consumption, pollution.
Voices of the serpent



Island

A TIME OF THE

WHAT TRAITS DOES EACH CHARACTER REPRESENT?
DO THESE TRAITS DIRECT THEIR ACTIONS?

WHAT DOES SERPENT PEOPLE MEAN?
IS BEING A SERPENT PERSON GOOD/BAD?

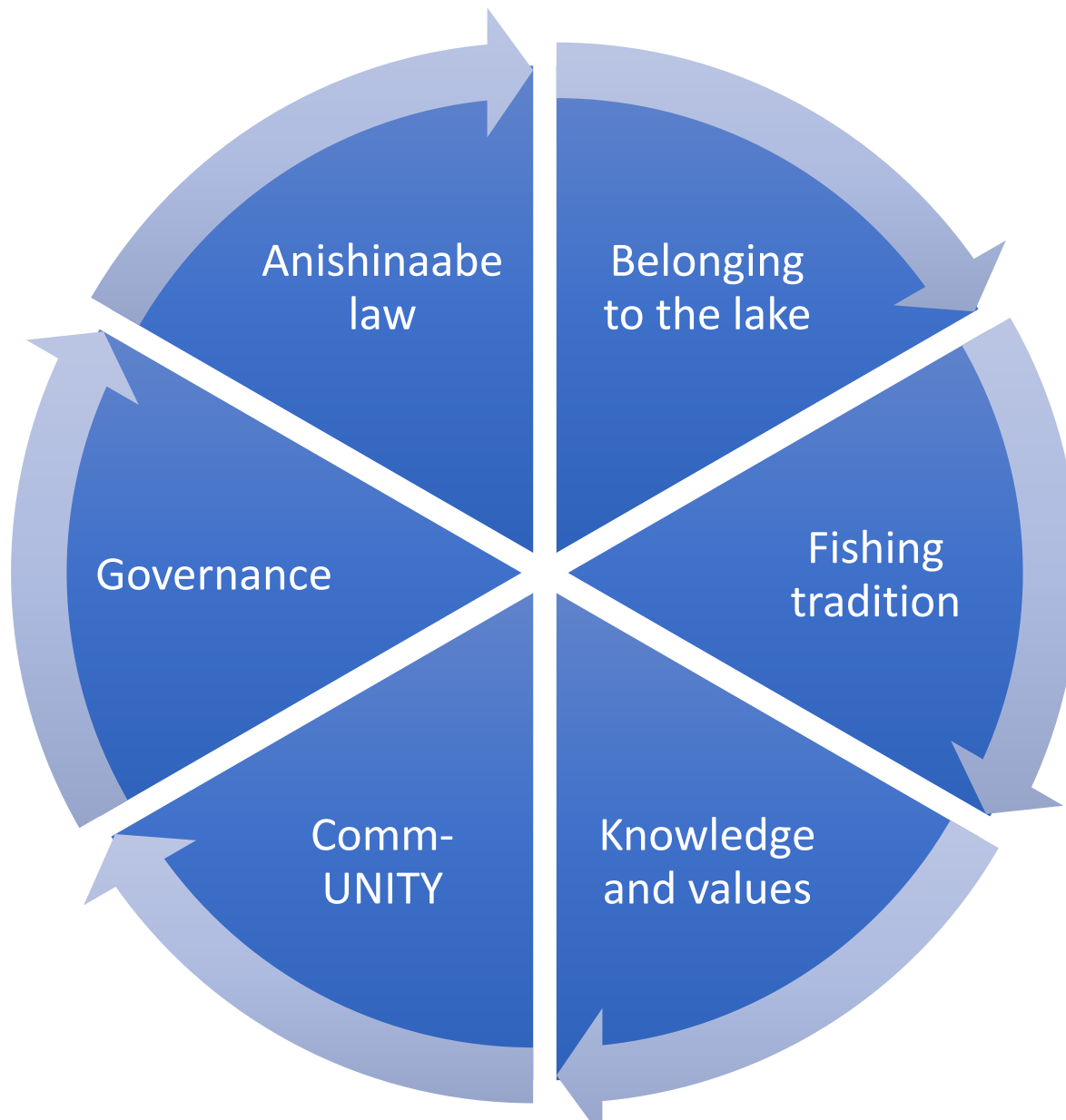
WHY DOES THE GIRL LEAVE HER FAMILY?
DESCRIBE THE JOURNEY, IS IT EASY FOR THE GIRL?

WHAT IS ON THE SHORE OF LAKE NIPISSING?
WHO HELPS THE GIRL AFTER SHE LEAVES THE ISLAND?

WHAT IS DISCOVERED UPON RETURNING TO THE ISLAND?
WHAT DOES ISLAND REPRESENT TO YOU?

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GIRL AFTERWARDS?
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SERPENT PEOPLE?

A Quick Summary



Opportunities

- The values and instructions are already there
- The lake itself communicates knowledge and laws
- People are talking, asking questions, acting
- Models exist for getting along through diversity
- Work is taking place on many levels: Self, family, community, nation, international

In the literature

An Indigenous approach to fisheries is yet to be fully articulated, but “Native community members are in the process of sorting this out” (Koenig 2005)

Resource management is more than a technical exercise; it’s about managing relationships, which are political and complex (Bowie 2013)


Traditional knowledge is a way to create long-term processes to facilitate ethical cross-cultural collaboration (Whyte 2013)

Big picture

- Anishinaabe law
- Treaty implementation
- Relationship building/reconciliation
- Resistance to injustice
- Current policy reviews
- Climate change

Implementing Anishinaabe law

Ontario recognizes Nipissing First Nation's Fisheries Law

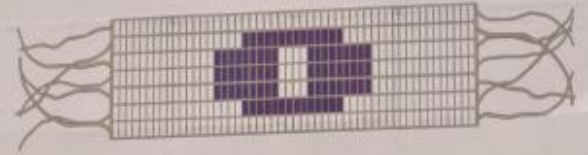
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Posted on March 24, 2016 In News





Giishpin waanda
kendamaawnen
gegoo,



aabideg ntam
g'gagwejikendaan
maanda.

If you want to learn something, first you must learn this.

#OgimaaMikana

Oginaa Mikana (Reclaiming/Renaming)
March 2016

Renewing Relatives: Nmé Stewardship in a Shared Watershed



Kyle Whyte
*Renewing Relatives:
Nmé Stewardship in a Shared Watershed*



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Conclusions

- NFN is leading sovereign approach to fisheries
- Debate, disagreement are productive
- Nipissing Anishinaabe knowledge, governance, and law are equipped to deal with significant challenges
- NFN is renewing relations and strengthening connections

Next steps

- Other Indigenous tools and mechanisms for taking care of lands, waters, resources, i.e. New Zealand
- Link to broader work, i.e. Anishinaabe inaakonigewin
- Where to go with this research?



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