

MARCH - APRIL 2026

NIIWIN WENDAANIMOK NEWSLETTER



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Recap

In October 2018, a Unity agreement was signed between the four Anishinaabe Nations of Wauzhushk Onigum, Washagamis Bay, Shoal Lake 40, and Niisaachewan – collectively the Niiwin Wendaanimok Partnership (NWP) – to discuss shared interests in the twinning of the TransCanada Highway through their territories. This project is proposed to occur over three phases between the Manitoba border and Kenora. In February 2020, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Anishinaabe governments committing to a

respectful, collaborative working relationship and engagement process under Manito Aki Inakonigaawin (MAI). One of the outcomes of Phase 1 was the Partnership developing their own Harmonized Impact Assessment (HIA), which brings together Western science and Anishinaabe knowledge to understand the impacts of the project in a holistic and comprehensive way. Today, the Partnership is embarking on a similar journey concerning Phase 2 of the project. To read the Phase 1 HIA or find more information, please visit: niiwinwendaanimok.com

We Want to Hear from You!

In the spirit of keeping our communities connected, we are putting out a call for stories and teachings to feature in the newsletter.

If you have a story, traditional teaching, or experience you would like to share in a future newsletter, please reach out to us at JLedoux@niiwinwendaanimok.com. We would love to feature your voice and keep our collective knowledge growing!

Niiwin Wendaanimok in Action

Elders Engagement: Feasting the Process

The Niiwin Wendaanimok Partnership recently hosted an Elders Engagement to Feast the Process. In accordance with traditional protocol as per the Manito Aki Inakonigaawin, the event began with a Traditional Pipe Ceremony at the Wauzhushk Onigum Round House on April 20th, 2026. The ceremony was then followed by an engagement session on April 21, 2026, at the Clarion Lakeside Inn, where Elders from Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation, Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, Washagamis Bay First Nation, and Wauzhushk Onigum Nation came together to connect, to listen to updates, and to participate in discussion on important initiatives of the Partnership.



The gathering was a powerful demonstration of unity and ceremony, held specifically to honour the enduring strength, wisdom, and voices of our Elders. It provided a vital space for connection, the sharing of Manito Aki Inakonigaawin teachings, and important updates on Niiwin Wendaanimok initiatives including; the Anishinaabe Aki Shkabeiwsag, the Training Program, and Phase II of the Highway 17 Twinning Project. By feasting the process in this way, the partnership continues to ensure that traditional protocol and guidance remain the foundation of this journey in unity.

Manito Aki Inakonigaawin – Community-Led and Nation-led Decision-Making Process

In this newsletter, we will cover community-led and nation-led decision-making processes under Manito Aki Inakonigaawin, as outlined in the Grand Council Treaty #3 MAI Toolkit. This process is rooted in the Anishinaabe worldview and can guide decision-making processes for development within Treaty #3 territory. Manito Aki Inakonigaawin is a guiding framework of the Anishinaabe Nation, both in community decision-making processes and in nation-based decision-making process.

What does this mean? Manito Aki Inakonigaawin has many fundamental principles and guidelines that are a part of the Anishinaabe way of life in relation to Mother Earth and all beings. Chiefs in Assembly discuss Mother Earth and its relations under the framework of Manito Aki Inakonigaawin to deliberate issues as a Nation.

Many communities in Treaty #3 territory have their own laws that they use for decision-making within their community. In this case, Manito Aki Inakonigaawin acts as a framework to support individual community laws. Treaty #3 communities participate in Manito Aki Inakonigaawin; participation does not remove the need for Treaty #3 communities to fulfill their own resource law processes if they so choose.

Grand Council Treaty #3. (n.d.)

Manito Aki Inakonigaawin: Information Package.

www.gct3.ca/MAI-Toolkit.pdf

Traditional Teaching – Moozoog (Moose)



The Anishinaabe Aki Kakendamowin (AAK) provides a valuable opportunity to safeguard traditional knowledge for future generations. With education as a key principle of the MAI, these newsletters include traditional teachings shared by community members during the AAK process. This month, we would like to share some teachings on **moozoog (moose)**.

Moozoog (moose) are an Anishinaabe totem symbolizing endurance and strength. Fall is the traditional time for moose hunting, as they are gaining weight to prepare for winter. Like all animals, moozoog (moose) are highly respected by the Anishinaabeg. Respect for moozoog (moose) is demonstrated through prayers and protocols that take place before, during, and after mooz (moose) hunting. Moozoog (moose) are also respected by using every part of the animal. Traditionally, this involves sharing mooz (moose) meat within the community and making use of other parts of the animal like the organs, bones, moozwashkan (moose antlers), and hide. Mooz (moose) is a popular dish at traditional fall feasts.

September and October are when mating between moozoog (moose) begins, with calves being born in May and June of the following year. Naabe-mooz (bulls) carry moozweshkan (moose antlers), which are grown and shed each year. Moozweshkan (moose antlers) begin to develop in the spring and are fully formed by early fall. Naabemooz (bulls) shed their moozweshkan (moose antlers) between November and March. Community members have shared that moozoog are less common in the region than they used to be, but moozoog remain an important part of the Anishinaabe tradition.

Anishinaabe Aki Shkabewisag – Program Update



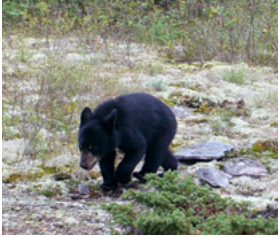
Through March and April, the Anishinaabe Aki Shkabewisag continued land-based monitoring activities within the Highway 17 Twinning Project area, guided by the principles of Manito Aki Inakonigaawin. Monitoring efforts focused on maintaining and relocating trail cameras to support ongoing site observation, with plans to expand monitoring capacity through additional cameras in 2026.



In early March, the Knowledge Keepers Council met to guide the program's operational plan, ensuring the work remains rooted in community priorities. As part of this meeting, the Council supported Shkabewisag training in the monitoring of Nibi (The Waters), specifically identifying lakes and creeks along the Highway 17 Corridor that require close attention.

With this guidance, the Shkabewisag completed in-class and in-field training, monitoring the waters within Royal Lake and Moth Lake. Their monitoring effort included measuring ice thickness, pH, turbidity, and dissolved oxygen, while collecting samples for lab analysis. These new technical skills are step to expand the capacity of the program to monitor the health of our lands and waters, allowing us to better evaluate the impacts of development projects across the territory.

Wildlife Crossing



As part of their ongoing monitoring efforts, the Anishinaabe Aki Shkabewisag are tracking areas along Highway 17 where wildlife are frequently crossing, and where vehicle-animal collisions are occurring. This information will help

to inform mitigation strategies and ensure the safety of both animals and people passing through the corridor. This will also ensure that the Shkabewisag can respond to wildlife collisions with the appropriate traditional protocol.

If you witness a wildlife/vehicle collision, or come across an animal that has been hit on Highway 17 between the Manitoba/Ontario Border and Kenora, please report it to the Anishinaabe Aki Shkabewisag by emailing: JLedoux@niiwinwendaanimok.com

Miigwetch for your continued care and attention on the land.

In The News: Niiwin Wendaanimok Training Updates

Niiwin Wendaanimok is excited to share that they have officially relocated to a new office space at the Bannister Centre!

This move provides the necessary room to grow the training programs and better support our trainees as they build their skills.

We are now located at:

Bannister Centre
301 1st Avenue South, Suite #300
Kenora, ON P9N 1W2

The NWP Training Program is experiencing a busy and productive spring, with several key initiatives now in motion. The Modular Construction Training Program will officially launch on May 4th the 10-week session will run through July 10th, 2026. In collaboration with Eco-Panels Canada, a group of motivated trainees will gain hands-on experience building a full, single-story modular home from the ground up. Operating out of a controlled manufacturing facility, participants will master high-performance construction techniques, including structural floor systems and SIP (Structural Insulated Panel) wall installation, while earning \$18/hr and working toward their SIPA Registered Builder certification.

Looking ahead, the program is excited to host an "Introduction to the Trades" session from May 25th to 29th, 2026. This upcoming week-long program is designed for those considering a career in the trades, offering foundational insights into the construction industry and exposure to key fields such as carpentry, ironwork, electrical, and millwrighting. Participants will also learn essential skills in site safety, blueprint reading, and surveying basics.

Applications are posted on the website, Facebook page, and displayed via posters in the communities- sign up today!

If you have any training-related questions, please reach out at training@niiwinwendaanimok.com

Contact Information

Dennis Major

Community Navigator

(807) 407-5970

dmajor@niiwinwendaanimok.com

Couradge Wapioke

Community Navigator

(431) 373-0094

cwapioke@niiwinwendaanimok.com

Natalie Daniels

Process Coordinator

(807) 548-4448

ndaniels@niiwinwendaanimok.com

Avery Daniels

Process Coordinator Assistant

adaniels@niiwinwendaanimok.com

