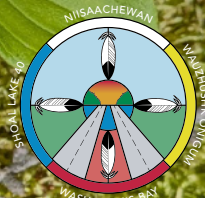


MAY - JUNE 2026

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

Niiwin Wendaanimok in Action



Grand Council Treaty #3 Spring Assembly

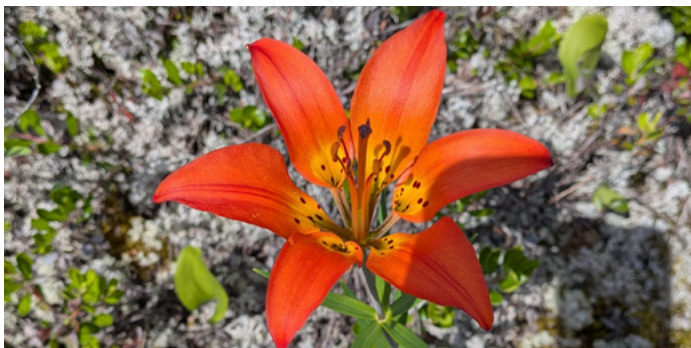
The Niiwin Wendaanimok Partnership recently attended and presented at the Grand Council Treaty #3 Spring Assembly 2026, held from May 26th to 28th. The gathering was hosted by Musk-kosiminiziibing First Nation (Big Grassy River) under the theme of "Moving Forward in Unity: Honouring the Treaty".

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Niiwin Wendaanimok in Action

During the session, Niiwin delivered an update on the ongoing highway twinning project and related processes in both Ontario and Manitoba. This update kept regional leadership informed on the status of discussions, environmental oversight, and technical training milestones. By staying aligned, the Four Nations continue to protect the environment and uphold sacred laws as large-scale infrastructure projects move forward in the territory.

Manito Aki Inakonigaawin – Four-Directional Model



In this newsletter, we are highlighting one of the key tools and guiding principles from the Grand Council Treaty #3 MAI Toolkit used during the visioning process within Manito Aki Inakonigaawin: the Four Directional Model.

Applications and decisions under Manito Aki Inaakonigewin are guided by the Four Directional Model, which considers the mental, physical, spiritual, and social impacts of the proposed activities. This supports balanced decision-making by recognizing interconnectedness.

Within Treaty #3, the Four Directional Model serves as a holistic framework for health, governance and stewardship. By considering all the components, the model encourages a comprehensive understanding of how the decisions may affect present and future generations.

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

Manito Aki Inaakonigewin: Information Package.

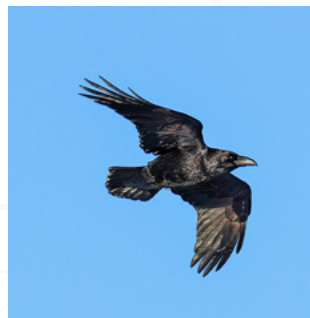
www.gct3.ca/MAI-Toolkit.pdf

Traditional Teaching – Gaagaagiwag (Common Ravens)



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 **Gaagaagiwag (common ravens)**.

Gaagaagiwag (common ravens) are highly intelligent birds, known for their playful and mischievous character. They begin breeding between the ages of two and four years old, and females produce an average clutch of three to seven eggs.



Gaagaagiwag have adapted well to environments and continue to thrive in urban areas. They use different natural and non-natural structures for nesting and have been observed nesting on cliffs, in mitigoog (trees) as well as on powerlines, bridges, and telephone poles.

Because they can find a meal just about anywhere, Gaagaagiwag have been very good at making themselves at home across a massive area. Although commonly recognized as scavengers, feeding on animal carcasses and food scraps, gaagaagiwag are also skilled predators. They prey on manidoonsag (insects), small mammals, reptiles, giigoonh (fish), bineshiinyag (birds) and seeds and grains.

Anishinaabe Aki Shkabewisag – Program Update

The Anishinaabe Aki Shkabewisag are currently in an exciting period of renewal and growth. Through May and June of 2026, the program has been undertaking a hiring process and is excited to bring in new energy, knowledge, and skillsets to the team in their important work on the land. In accordance with the Governance protocols of the program, a Knowledge Keepers council meeting was held in June to guide the program in its next steps including; hiring and onboarding, and skill development and training.

To date, Shkabewisag have built capacity in the monitoring of the Lands, the Soils, and the Waters. Once onboarding of the new Shkabewisag is complete, Shkabewisag will be trained in Monitoring the Skies using Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) to monitor birds of importance in the territory. They will build capacity in the use of this modern western science-based technology, while rooting their monitoring effort in the knowledge of the communities, setting ARU's in areas of importance for birds as identified by the Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

In June, as part of an ongoing effort to monitor the soils, the Shkabewisag have been doing surveys for plants, berries and medicines of importance. Some photos of what they have observed in this work can be seen in this newsletter!

Team Member Spotlight: Elycia Skeid

We are excited to introduce a new member of the Niiwin Wendaanimok Anishinaabe Aki Shkabewisag Team - [Elycia Skeid!](#)



Shawina Bineseek is my Anishinaabe name, Wauzhushk Onigum Nation nindoonjii, name (Sturgeon) dotem.

I am from Wauzhushk Onigum Nation. I was born and raised in Kenora, where I will continue to live my life and raise my children.

As a Shkabewisag (Guardian), my responsibilities includes upholding the Manito Aki

Inakonigaawin (The Great Earth Law) and the seven Grandfather teachings: Humility, Bravery, Honesty, Wisdom, Truth, Respect and Love. Our role is to help protect the lands, soils, skies, and waters throughout the territory, including the highway 17 Twinning Project Area and beyond.

To me, "Protecting the lands, soils, skies, and waters" means protecting Mother Earth so future generations can thrive and grow. It means ensuring these elements remain clean and safe for our children and grandchildren of Treaty #3 and the surrounding communities.

Our work involves monitoring wildlife through trail cameras to observe which species inhabit the area before, during, and after construction. We monitor the soil conditions by ensuring there are no spills/leaks during construction, to ensure the safety of the plants, berries and medicines. We monitor the waters using equipment in the field and in the lab, to make sure they remain healthy.

We also use drones to capture bird's-eye views of project sites, helping us monitor environmental conditions and construction activities from above. I look forward to being out in the field and collecting data to ensure our environment remains safe and clean while construction of the twinning project goes on for future generations to enjoy and use a safe highway.

This role is especially meaningful to me because the work we do helps ensure future generations can enjoy a clean and healthy Mother Earth while travelling on a safe highway.

In my free time, I like to spend time with my family and friends, along with my two dogs, Melly and Charlie. A fun fact about me is that my nickname is Bird, which was given to me by my late uncle. So, if we ever cross paths in our lifetime, you are more than welcome to call me Bird.

In The News: Niiwin Wendaanimok Training Updates

The NWP Training Program continues to serve as a core pillar for long-term capacity building and economic participation in the territory. In an exciting Press Conference in Sudbury, Ontario, at the end of May, it was announced that the training program successfully secured \$1.95 million in funding through Ontario's Skills Development Fund to support ongoing training initiatives in the territory. This provincial funding will directly support the partnership's mission to remove barriers to employment and deliver top-tier trade training within the territory. The Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MILTSD) David Piccini and other provincial officials noted they were incredibly impressed by the training initiatives undertaken by the Partnership over the last several years.

The NWP Spring calendar was packed with hands-on training opportunities, including a successful "Introduction to Trades" session that took place from May 25 to 29, 2026. NWP Training also wrapped up its Pre-Apprenticeship Heavy Duty Equipment Technician Training, which concluded in May and equipped students with essential technical skills for the mining, construction, and transportation sectors.

Building on that momentum, the 8-week Modular Construction Training was launched in May and is currently underway through July 2026. This paid opportunity (\$18/hr) allows a full cohort of trainees to gain hands-on experience building a single-story modular home using polyurethane Structural Insulated Panels (SIPs), taking the project all the way from structural assembly to core interior finishes.

The training program has several training opportunities opening for those living in Treaty 3 Territory and is currently finalizing dates for Heavy Duty Equipment Operator (Surface Miner), Construction Craft Training, and Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship courses. To keep informed on how to apply and stay updated on these courses throughout the year, please subscribe to the newsletter and follow Niiwin Wendaanimok on Facebook and Instagram.

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



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