

**NIBI DECLARATION OF TREATY #3**

# **TOOLKIT**

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**NIBI HAS A SPIRIT • NIBI IS LIFE • NIBI IS SACRED • WE HONOUR RESPECT AND LOVE NIBI**

# NIBI DECLARATION TEAM AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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A special acknowledgement is given to all those who worked on and contributed to the Manito Aki Inakonigaawin, the Anishinaabe Nibi Inaakonigewin Report, and Treaty #3 Elders Gatherings and to those who provided feedback on the Declaration and Toolkit in the regional engagement sessions and Nibi Forum.

A word about the cover art by Danielle Morrison (Anishinaabeg of Naoongashing): *The artwork, done in the Woodlands style of Treaty #3, overall captures the essence of the interconnectedness between water, fish, animals, plants and finally, humans. There are two human figures, representing two generations and the responsibility we have to protect water and life for the present and for the next generation. The duality of these figures also represents our responsibility we have to pass along the teachings of being a protector. Night and day are reflected in both the sun and the stars. Water in various forms is presented in a flowing river or body of water, the rain, and the snow. All of this embodied in a single drop of water, which can hold life, knowledge, and memory.*

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Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada



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# PURPOSE OF THE NIBI DECLARATION

## AANIIN WENGI IJI CHI GE'WIING – WHY ARE WE DOING THIS

*This Nibi Declaration is about respect, love, and our sacred relationship with nibi and the life that it brings. It is based on Gitizii m-inaanik teachings about nibi, aki/lands, other elements (including air and wind) and all of creation. This knowledge will be preserved and shared through the declaration with our youth and future generations. Anishinaabe-Ikwewag have a sacred responsibility to nibi and should be included in all decision-making around nibi. This declaration will guide us in our relationship with nibi so we can take action individually, in our communities and as a nation to help ensure healthy, living nibi for all of creation.*

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# PURPOSE OF THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit will provide you with information on how you, your family and your community can get involved in the development of a Nibi Declaration of the Anishinaabe of Treaty #3.

The Grand Council Treaty #3 (GCT3) Women's Council suggested that there should be a Treaty #3 Nibi Declaration.

A declaration is a tool that can be used by Treaty #3 to guide future policy and decision-making. The development of a water declaration would ensure that Treaty #3 Anishinaabe Nibi Inaakonigewin (water law principles) are recorded and formally recognized in governance processes.

Inside this toolkit you will learn how the GCT3 Women's Council started the process to create a Treaty #3 Nibi Declaration with a research support team, and have met with other knowledge keepers/Gitiizii m-inaanik to receive guidance on how to proceed with community engagement. There are also summaries of meetings that have been held to date, the proposed process for the development of the declaration, examples of other water declarations, and ways you can participate and contribute to the Nibi Declaration.

# WHAT IS A DECLARATION?

Declarations are used in many ways for many different purposes. For example, declarations made by nations act as a formal statement or announcement or an affirmation of a statement of truth (e.g. “I declare this statement to be true”).

Declarations have been used by communities and organizations as a way to create principles that help guide decision making.

While declarations are not legally binding (they cannot generally be used to enforce any legal action through the Canadian court systems), they can be used as a way to affirm or recognize Indigenous legal principles. Once declarations are recognized and affirmed by a nation, they can be implemented on individual, familial and communal levels to help guide decision-making.

The Nibi Declaration is a way for Treaty #3 to explain the Anishinaabe relationship to water. The Declaration can be a reflection of the sacred teachings of water held by Treaty #3 knowledge keepers/Gitiizii m-inaanik to be shared with communities and those outside of the Treaty #3 Nation. It can speak to the sacred relationship and responsibilities that the Anishinaabe have to water, water beings and the lakes and rivers around them.

Once the Nibi Declaration has been developed and formally recognized through assembly and ceremony by Treaty #3, communities can use the declaration to ensure that any future policy decision, or any potential development project that impacts water, respects the collective understanding of Treaty #3 Anishinaabe Nibi Inaakonigewin.

## WHAT IS HAPPENING IN TREATY #3 TERRITORY?

Treaty #3 is a 55,000 square mile territory, spanning from west of Thunder Bay to North of Sioux Lookout, along the international border to the Province of Manitoba. Treaty #3 is made up of 28 First Nation communities with an approximate population of 25,000.

The Territorial Planning Unit (Zhaagimaa Waabo) (“TPU”), guided by Manito Aki Inakonigaawin recognizes the significance of Treaty #3’s connection to the land and works with Treaty #3 leadership to protect the lands, water and resources within the Territory. The TPU is mandated through the Grand Council Environmental Chiefs and Treaty #3 Chiefs in Assembly.

Treaty #3 is marked by rapidly changing resource development activities such as mining, forestry management and nuclear waste management. Mining projects include: Goliath Gold, Pure Gold, New Gold, First Mining Financial and Steep Rock Mine Rehabilitation. Mining and Forestry management impacts lands and water of the Treaty #3 territory, and the TPU works to ensure communities are involved and the voice of the Anishinaabe Nation through MAI is heard during these decision-making processes. The Nuclear Waste Management Organization is in a process of site selection, with one site present in the Treaty #3 territory in Ignace, ON. The project would involve the storage of nuclear waste in a safe storage facility. The engagement process for site selection and environmental assessment will take some time and it is important for Treaty #3 to be involved throughout. Other pressures in the Treaty #3 territory include those of water quality and water level management. The TPU has several ongoing initiatives to work on these challenges for the protection of the land and waters of the territory for future generations.



Currently the TPU is working towards a community-based program to monitor water quality and the environment. This monitoring program will help develop baseline data in the territory in order to further engage with outside organizations in response to resource management, environmental rehabilitation and protection.

A list of current Territorial Planning Unit files is listed below. For more information, you can email [tpu.director@treaty3.ca](mailto:tpu.director@treaty3.ca) or call the Grand Council Treaty #3 offices.

**CURRENT GCT3 TERRITORIAL PLANNING UNIT FILES:**

- Wiitanokiindiwin Policy working table (MNR/MNDM)
- Manito Aki Inakonigaawin
- BellFOTS
- Resource Revenue Sharing
- Manitoba Minnesota Transmission Lines
- Watershed Management Planning
- Community Based Monitoring
- Climate Change adapt education
- Nuclear Waste Management Organization

# SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

During the early meetings on the Nibi Declaration, it was identified that there has already been some work in the area of documenting Anishinaabe Inaakonigewin that should be built upon and used in the declaration.

The GCT3 Women's Council identified that the Manito Aki Inakonigaawin would support information collected at recent Elder gathering sessions on Nibi Inaakonigewin.

It was advised by the GCT3 Women's Council that the research support team use these existing documents and meeting notes as sources in which to pull Anishinaabe Nibi Inaakonigewin from and to use in the water declaration itself.

## **MANITO AKI INAKONIGAAWIN (MAI)**

An elder's gathering in 2018 in Black Bear had invited elders and chiefs from across Treaty #3 to participate in discussions on interpreting, enforcing and codifying traditional laws. Elders shared many different teachings and experiential knowledge on what they knew about water, water beings, and changes they have observed around water, lakes and rivers within their lifetime. There were note takers at these gatherings and these notes were kept on file at the GCT3 offices.

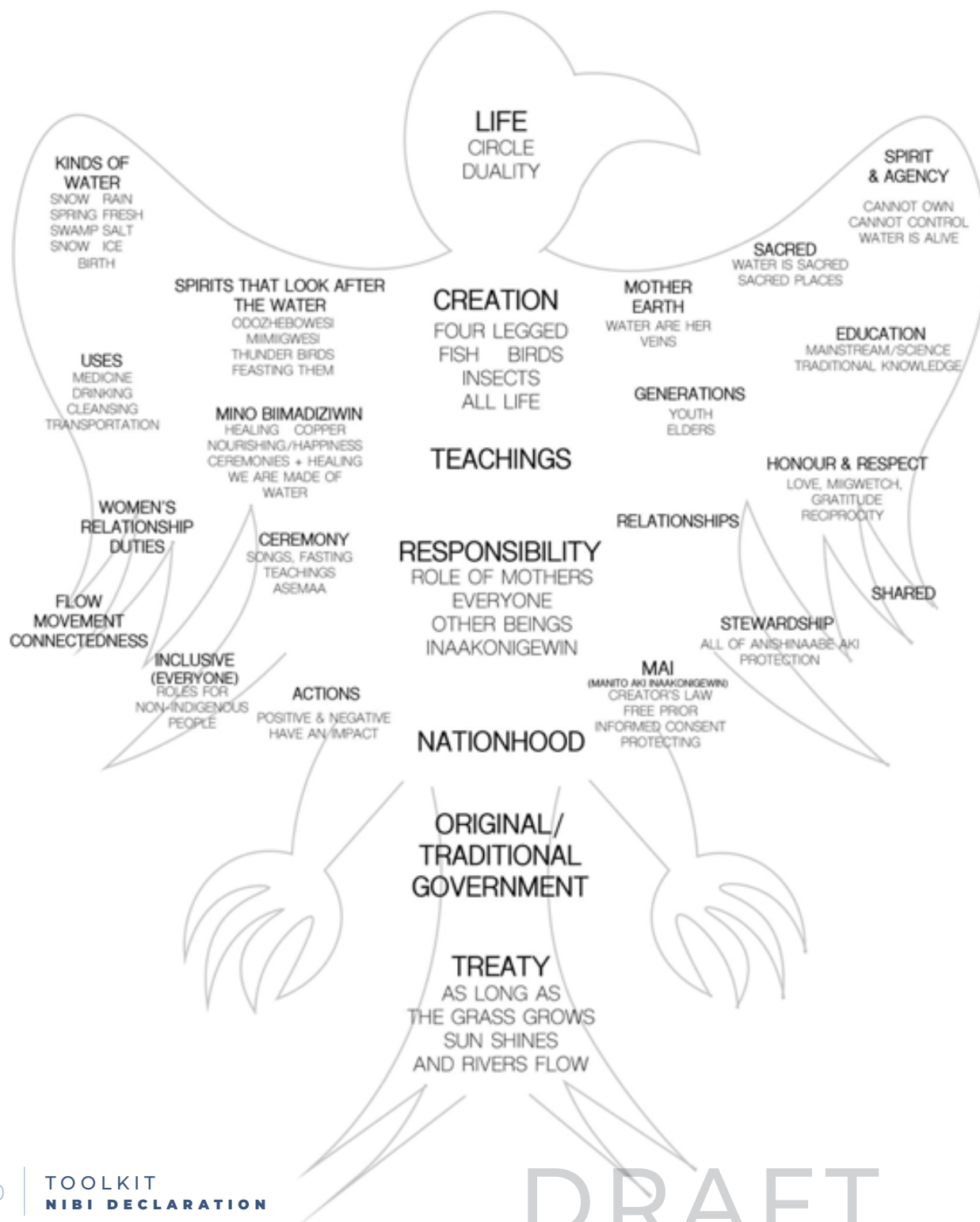
## **NOTES FROM ELDER'S GATHERING IN BLACK BEAR**

An elder's gathering in 2018 in Black Bear had invited elders and chiefs from across Treaty #3 to participate in discussions on interpreting, enforcing and codifying traditional laws. Elders shared many different teachings and experiential knowledge on what they knew about water, water beings, and changes they have observed around water, lakes and rivers within their lifetime. There were note takers at these gatherings and these notes were kept on file at the GCT3 offices.

The technical team worked from notes taken at the Elder's Gathering at Black Bear (2018) and other resources, including the MAI to develop the draft Nibi Declaration. By identifying repeating words, themes and Anishinaabe Nibi Inakonaagwein principles from the notes and documents, the team drafted various formats and visual representation of declarations that were shared with the GCT3 Women's council and knowledge keepers/Gitiizii m-inaanik. At the meeting in October 2018, a draft Nibi Declaration of the Anishinaabe of Treaty #3 was agreed upon and it was later presented in ceremony and feasted on November 18, 2018.

- GCT3 Territorial Planning Unit, Watershed Management Planning community engagement notes.
- *Manito Aki Inakonigaawin*, Treaty #3
- [http://gct3.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/mai\\_unofficial\\_consolidated\\_copy1.pdf](http://gct3.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/mai_unofficial_consolidated_copy1.pdf)
- "*Anishinaabe Nibi Inaakonigewin Report*", ANI Elders and Aimée Craft - [http://create-h2o.ca/pages/annual\\_conference/presentations/2014/ANI\\_Gathering\\_Report\\_-\\_June24.pdf](http://create-h2o.ca/pages/annual_conference/presentations/2014/ANI_Gathering_Report_-_June24.pdf)

# NIBI DECLARATION PRINCIPLES



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## WOMEN'S COUNCIL

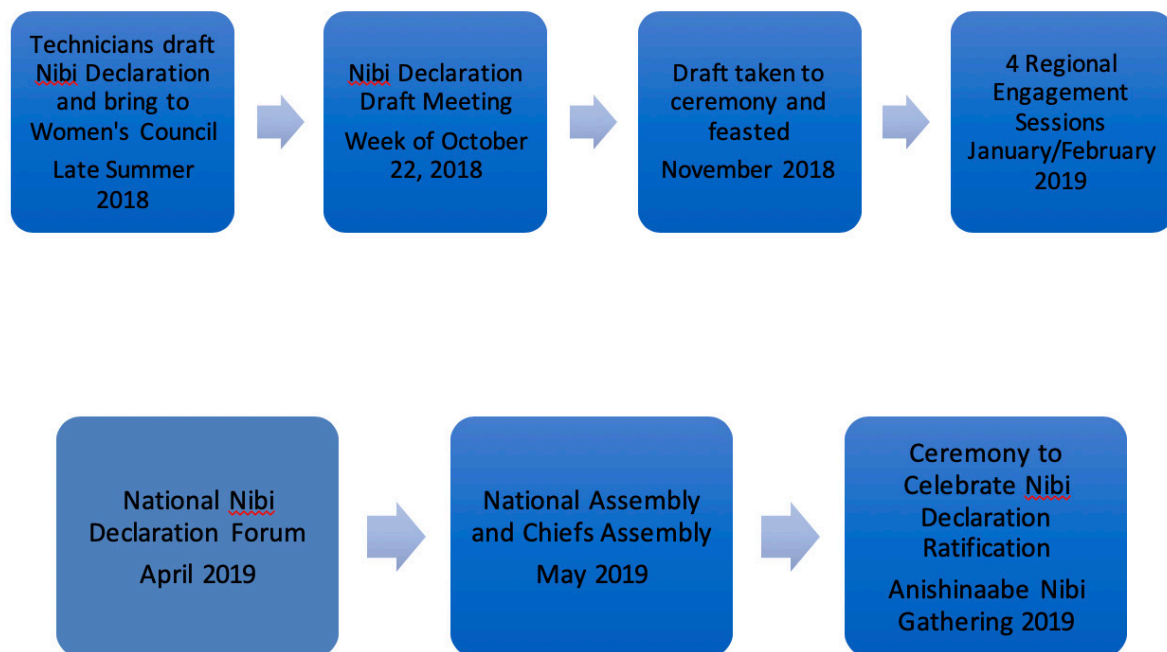


The Women's Council is an important extension of the GCT3. They are community leaders and program organizers in the areas of child care, water and other responsibilities of Anishinaabe Kwe representing the four directions of the Treaty #3 territory.

Women's Council members that have contributed to work on the water declaration are: Isobel White (Naotakamegwanning - Whitefish Bay), Priscilla Simard (Couchiching), Maggie Petiquan (Wabauskang), Rhonda Fischer (Niisaachewan - Dalles), Anita Collins (Seine River)

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# TIMELINE OF THE NIBI DECLARATION



# SUMMARY OF MEETINGS

## SUMMER MEETING 2019 JULY 16 - 18 2018, NESTOR FALLS, ON

The meeting was attended by GCT3 Women's Council members Isobel White, Priscilla Simard and Anita Collins (regrets Rhonda Fischer and Maggie Petiquan). Technical team: Aimée Craft, Lucas King and Alyssa Bird.

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce what a declaration is and to create a strategic plan to engage with Treaty #3 communities to create the Nibi Declaration. To do so, the following questions were asked and discussed:

- What's the purpose of the Nibi declaration?
- What's the process in creating the Nibi declaration?
- What's the content of the Nibi declaration?
- What should the Nibi declaration look like?
- Who needs to be involved?

The meeting spanned over three days where the Women's Council and Support Team were engaged in ceremony and made water offerings, with the help of Laura and Delbert Horton, at Splitrock Bay.

### RECOMMENDED DETAILS ABOUT NIBI DECLARATION

2-4 pages, accessible, not technical, includes Anishinaabemowin

Encompassing of all people in Treaty #3 (Indigenous and non-Indigenous)

### WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED

Gitiizii m'inaanik/ knowledge keepers

GCT3 Youth Council

Grand Council Treaty #3

### DETAILS ABOUT NATIONAL NIBI DECLARATION FORUM

Reps each community to attend: 1 Gitiizii m'inaanik, 1 Woman, 1 Youth

Kenora, ON in a facility that has space for language and ceremony

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The outcomes of the meeting were: the purpose of the working group and declaration, creation of a timeline for community engagement, identification of other organizations and knowledge keepers to be involved in the planning, and details about what the declaration would look like.

## **OCTOBER 26 - 28 2018 KENORA, ON**

The meeting was attended by GCT3 Women's Council members Isobel White, Priscilla Simard, Maggie Petiquan and Anita Collis (regrets Rhonda Fischer). GCT3 Gitiizii m-inaanik Ida Skead, Gilbert Smith, Tommy White, Allan White, Ogichidaa (Francis Kavanaugh), Sherry Copenace and George Simard. Technical team: Aimée Craft, Lucas King and Alyssa Bird.

The purpose of the meetings was to get guidance from Gitiizii m-inaanik on how to proceed with the development of the Nibi Declaration. The team reviewed and made edits to draft documents that were going to be used when going forward with the Nibi Declaration development. Two drafts were made from looking at notes from the 2017 Elder's Gathering in Black Bear, the Manito Aki Inakonigaawin, Nibi Inaakonigewin, a draft GCT3 Water Declaration and Territorial Planning Unit Notes around water. Those present made suggestions on edits on formatting and wording in the declaration. From here the declaration was named the Nibi Declaration of the Anishinabe of Treaty #3.

Similar to previous gatherings, the team offered tobacco and made water offerings during two days of meetings. Various points were identified by Gitiizii m'inaanik on when ceremony should be engaged, and it was said that the draft declaration will be feasted at each milestone of the developmental process.

### **EDITS ON WATER DECLARATION**

To be named "Nibi Declaration" of the Anishinaabe of Treaty #3

### **CEREMONY NEEDS TO BE ENGAGED**

Feasting the draft declaration at different milestones of the drafting process.

Opening meetings with smudge, pipe and water ceremonies and offerings.





# NIBI

## DECLARATION OF TREATY #3

**NIBI (WATER) IS ALIVE AND HAS A SPIRIT. IT IS THE LIFEBLOOD OF OUR MOTHER (AKI) AND CONNECTS EVERYTHING. IT CAN GIVE, SUSTAIN AND TAKE LIFE.**

**NIBI CAN TAKE MANY FORMS INCLUDING SNOW, ICE, SPRING WATER, SALT WATER, RAIN, FRESH WATER, SWAMP WATER, AQUIFERS AND BIRTH WATER. EACH TYPE OF WATER HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN OUR WELLNESS AND HEALING. NIBI IS CONNECTED TO OUR GRANDMOTHER, THE MOON. EVEN THOUGH IT HAS SUFFERED, NIBI CONTINUES TO BRING FORWARD LIFE AND WE MUST WORK TO HEAL THE WATER AND OURSELVES.**

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### **NIBI HAS A SPIRIT AND SHARES ITS GIFT OF LIFE WITH ALL OF CREATION**

Nibi has its own spirit. It cannot be owned or controlled. Nibi is shared across lands and territories, between people, with other nations and all other beings that are part of creation. Spirits and other beings in creation look after nibi and its wellbeing. Nibi and all beings and spirits that look after nibi must be feasted. All creation expresses love and respect for nibi through gestures of gratitude.

### **WE NEED NIBI IN ORDER TO LIVE A GOOD LIFE**

All beings, including Anishinaabe, are born of nibi. We depend on nibi to live and our bodies are made of it. Nibi is the source of our wellbeing. It nourishes us, spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally and provides cleansing and healing. Clean nibi for drinking is important to our health. We must respect our sacred relationship with nibi and all beings in creation to help protect nibi for our children and future generations.

### **WE ALL HAVE A SACRED RELATIONSHIP WITH NIBI**

Anishinaabe have been responsible for the care of the aki (land) and nibi since time immemorial. Women have a sacred relationship with nibi and a special responsibility to look after nibi because they carry birth water and have the ability to bring life into this world. Men have a role to play to protect the land and support the wellness of nibi and ikwewag. Our relationship with nibi is preserved through ceremony, teachings, education and knowledge shared through generations.

### **NIBI UNITES US**

Through its flow and movement, nibi cleanses itself and connects us all. It brings us together as families, communities and as a nation. Traditional governance and law, including the Manito Aki Inakonigaawin and Treaty #3 confirm our collective responsibility to take action, give back and protect nibi and the environment for our children and future generations.

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## **REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019 (DRYDEN, FORT FRANCES, KENORA)**

### **DATES AND LOCATIONS:**

January 24, 2019 – Kenora, ON

February 19, 2019 – Dryden, ON

February 20, 2019 – Fort Frances, ON

February 21, 2019 – Kenora, ON

The meetings were facilitated by members of the GCT3 Women's Council and technical team: Aimée Craft, Lucas King and Sam Chicago. Over the four meetings, roughly 60 Treaty #3 members from different communities attended to provide feedback on the Nibi Declaration and toolkit.

The purpose of the meeting was to bring materials to the different regions of the territory and involve the voices of citizens of the Anishinaabe Nation of Treaty #3 in the process of developing the Nibi Declaration. Three main questions were asked for feedback on the Declaration and Toolkit:

- What major themes should be addressed in the Nibi Declaration?
- What materials are needed to support the Nibi Declaration?
- How does the declaration impact you, your family and your community? What would you like to see?

The outcome of the regional meetings provided feedback for the draft declaration presented at the Nibi Declaration National Forum. In each of the meetings the Women's Council, Technical Team and participants worked through the Declaration and Toolkit to get an understanding of regional specificities, dialects and purpose of the declaration to Treaty #3 communities.

**NATIONAL FORUM  
APRIL 24 - 25 2019  
(SEVEN GENERATIONS EDUCATION  
INSTITUTE, KENORA)**

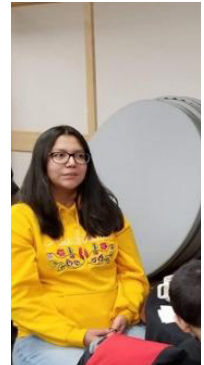
The meetings were facilitated by members of the GCT3 Women's Council and technical team. Over 80 Treaty #3 members from different communities attended to provide feedback on the Nibi Declaration and toolkit. One youth, one Elder and one woman were invited to participate from each community. Presentations on Declarations, Nibi inaaakonigewin and Anishinaabe Gikendaasowin were made by Prof. Deborah McGregor and Sue Chiblow (York University) and Prof. Aimée Craft (University of Ottawa).



The purpose of the meeting was ensure that the voices and knowledge of citizens of the Anishinaabe Nation of Treaty #3 are accurately reflected in the Nibi Declaration and Toolkit. The drum and ceremony guided the process. There was a significant amount of discussion from the floor in support of the Declaration.

The Forum confirmed that the Nibi Declaration and Toolkit should be presented to the Nation at the Assembly and that further work should be done to implement the Declaration after its ratification.





# LIST OF KEY TERMS

\*Treaty #3 language speakers will be engaged in the lexicon work and pronunciations will be included (we hope to include recordings of the key terms and the declaration as a whole in audio form on the website). We also appreciate that there are variations amongst regions and dialects. This is meant to be only a small bit of helpful information about language commonly used in relation to water.

**NIBI** • water

**MANITO NIBI** • spirit water

**MANITO WAABO** • spirit water

**SAAGIMAA WAABO** •  
forever sacred water

**SAAGIMAA MANITO** •  
forever spirit

**AKI** • earth

**IKWEWAG** • women/ladies

**MIIMIIGWESI** • little people (or  
maachigaagosuk)

**ANIMIKII** • thunder beings

**ODAZHEBOWESI** • water spider (if  
you see this spider like bug on the water  
you know that it is clean)

**MINO-BIMAADIZIWIN OR  
MINOWAANIGITOWIN** • wellness

**GITIIZII M-INAANIK** • Elders and  
knowledge keepers

**ASEMAA** • tobacco

**NIBI KE MANITO** • water's spirit

**INAAKONIGEWIN,  
INAKONIGAAWIN,  
KINOO'IGENIN** • law

## HOW CAN WE SUPPORT THE DECLARATION?

\*Ideas are being generated at the regional engagement sessions and the Nibi Forum. Some suggestions include: teaching (classroom and youth), community water walks, awareness campaigns, support for advocacy initiatives, and many more.

# LAW BACKGROUND

## INAAKONIGEWIN – ANISHINAABE LAW:

Nibi inaaakonigewin - <https://bifrostonline.org/what-significance-does-water-have-in-first-nations-legal-traditions/>

Indigenous Water Law (Decolonizing Water Governance) - <https://vimeo.com/228287217>

## CANADIAN AND PROVINCIAL LAWS:

**FEDERAL WATER LAWS** - The bulk of federal acts and regulations relating to water deal with inter-jurisdictional issues and national concern for the protection of water. The majority of the power to regulate water is placed within the provincial governments. Should issues be of national concern, the *Canada Water Act* allows the Minister of the Environment to upload the responsibility for only that issue or watershed to the federal government.

### IMPORTANT FEDERAL WATER LAWS:

- Canada Water Act 1985
- Canadian Environmental Protection Act 1999
- Department of the Environment Act 1985
- Dominion Water Power Act 1985
- Fisheries Act 1985
- International River Improvements Act 1985
- Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act 1998
- Navigation Protection Act 1985
- Nunavut Waters and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal Act 2002
- Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act 2013



## **ARTICLE 25**

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HAVE  
THE RIGHT TO MAINTAIN AND  
STRENGTHEN THEIR DISTINCTIVE  
SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH  
THEIR TRADITIONALLY OWNED  
OR OTHERWISE OCCUPIED AND  
USED LANDS, TERRITORIES,  
WATERS AND COASTAL SEAS  
AND OTHER RESOURCES  
AND TO UPHOLD THEIR  
RESPONSIBILITIES TO FUTURE  
GENERATIONS IN THIS REGARD.

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ONTARIO WATER LAWS - The *Ontario Water Resources Act* manages water quality and quantity in Ontario. The *Environmental Protection Act* focuses on pollution control. The *Environmental Assessment Act* manages environmental planning. Environmental planning is primarily managed under the *Environmental Assessment Act*. The purpose of the *Clean Water Act* is to protect existing and future drinking water sources. The *Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act* balance new business opportunities in the water technology sector with water sustainability planning.

#### OTHER IMPORTANT ONTARIO WATER LAWS:

- Safe Drinking Water Act 2002
- Conservation Authorities Act 1990
- Environmental Bill of Rights 1993
- Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act 1990
- Great Lakes Protection Act 2015
- Lake Simcoe Protection Act 2008
- Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act 2006
- Municipal Water and Sewage Transfer Act 1997
- Nutrient Management Act 2002

#### INTERNATIONAL LAW - UNDRIP ARTICLE 25

The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is an international declaration that was adopted by the United Nations in 2007, and then supported by Canada in 2010. There are many different articles within UNDRIP that are useful tools, which can support Treaty #3 assertions of Anishinaabe Nibi Inaakonigewin through tools like a Treaty #3 Water Declaration.

UNDRIP Article 25 supports Treaty #3 in assertions of the Anishinaabe understanding of relationships and obligations to land and water.

## **SAMPLE**

# **WATER DECLARATIONS**

There are many different examples of water declarations that have been created by First Nations, Indigenous political advocacy organizations and grassroots initiatives to formally recognize relationships with water. The following are a few examples of water declarations that have drawn on Indigenous legal principles and understandings of responsibilities and obligations to water to affirm values and commitments to Nibi.

### **KICHENUHMAYKOOSIB INNINUWUG WATER DECLARATION**

Kitchenuhmaykoosip Innuiwug (Big Trout Lake First Nation) is a Treaty #9 community which created a water declaration that aims to protect the watershed within the community's territory from industrial development. It was formally accepted by membership in 2011.

### **ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS – FIRST NATIONS NATIONAL WATER DECLARATION**

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has a water portfolio that deals with many water issues such as First Nations right to water, watershed management and protection and overall water management. The First Nations National Water Declaration was brought to a Special Chiefs Assembly in 2013 where it was fully endorsed.

### **CHIEFS OF ONTARIO WATER DECLARATION**

The Chiefs of Ontario also identified the need of a water declaration after hosting a water policy forum. The Chiefs of Ontario's water declaration was brought forward and accepted in 2008 at the Chiefs assembly meeting.

### **GREAT LAKES COMMONS CHARTER DECLARATION**

A grassroots organization that looks to restore the relationship, responsibilities and stewardship to the Great Lakes of Ontario.

# ONLINE RESOURCES

\*more information to be inserted

Anishinaabemowin – Nibi - <https://vimeo.com/329886078>

Water - <https://vimeo.com/327176115>

Anishinaabe laws - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtjRjB44WJ8>

Speak for the water - <https://vimeo.com/330258602>

Clay and water - <https://vimeo.com/261561860>

Anishinaabemowin Language Teachings - <https://vimeo.com/330265938>

The significance of water- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0\\_W78uoBkrA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_W78uoBkrA)

Climate change impacts - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBdubfLsqBY>

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## CONTACT INFO:

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DECOLONIZE WATER  
[www.decolonizingwater.ca](http://www.decolonizingwater.ca)

