

TERRITORIAL PLANNING UNIT

# ANISHINAABE INAKONIGAAWIN IN TREATY #3

Zhaagimaa Waabo



GRAND COUNCIL  
TREATY #3

The GOVERNMENT OF THE ANISHINAABE NATION in Treaty #3

# What is Anishinaabe Inakonigaawin?

Anishinaabe Inakonigaawin (law) is inherent to the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3 territory since time immemorial. Inakonigaawin guides relationships with the land and its inhabitants throughout daily life. This includes:

- Respecting the lands and waters
- Giving offerings to spirits and Creator when you benefit from Mother Earth's gifts such as hunting, fishing or transportation
- Knowing your rights as a Treaty #3 member
- Understanding the responsibility as a steward of the land

As explained by Doctor John Burrows in his book "Drawing out Law", Anishinaabe Inakonigaawin has been here since time immemorial and pre-dates colonial British/Canadian law. It co-exists with today's Canadian law and has throughout history, since settlers came to Canada. On this basis, Treaties were formed to help two separate systems of law, Anishinaabe Inakonigaawin and Western laws to co-existence in Canada. In Treaty #3, it was understood that the Treaty was to represent the expectation that Anishinaabe Inakonigaawin was to be upheld, respected, and create a mutual foundation of respect.

Anishinaabe Inakonigaawin is learned from the Earth and other beings, such as the plants, insects, birds, animals, the daily changes in the weather, the motion of the wind and the waters and the complexion of the stars, the moon and the sun (Burrows, 2010). Inakonigaawin is mostly unwritten, found in Anishinaabemowin and various teachings, taught from the land, Elders and Knowledge Keepers. In Treaty #3, it is a promise to the land that the humans will take care of all beings, interconnected in a loop of respect, reciprocity, rights and responsibilities.

Anishinaabe Inakonigaawin in Treaty #3 stems from the Creator. These laws give the Anishinaabe duties and responsibilities to protect, care for, and respect the land. Many traditional laws signify the duty to respect and protect lands, waters and all the inhabitants that may be affected from unethical processes. These Treaty #3 laws are rooted in oral law, passed down through stories and traditional Anishinaabe practices. The laws as an Anishinaabe teaching, and can be difficult to translate and fully convey in the English language, as they are a way of life and spans beyond the written word. This part of the laws lies in ceremony and guidance from the spirits.

Written Inakonigaawin in Treaty #3 are Manito Aki Inakonigaawin, the Nibi declaration, and Abinooji Inakonigaawin. You can learn more about these on Grand Council Treaty #3's website [www.gct3.ca](http://www.gct3.ca)



# Understanding Anishinaabe Inakonigaawin Through Ceremony and Protocols

*"Our traditions represent the spiritual connection between us, the Creator and all of creation. We are the most dependent on the rest of creation to survive, that's why it's so important to respect and honor that relationship."*

Francis Kavanaugh, Treaty #3 Ogichidaa (Grand Chief), 2021.



Anishinaabe culture has many protocols in place to ensure respect, rights, responsibility, and reciprocity. These protocols are within sacred ceremony and are enacted during all relations with Niinkeminaan (Mother Earth).

Ceremonial protocols in Anishinaabe culture may include the following:

Anishinaabemowin, feasting, offerings, giving of gifts, drums, pipes, sacred items, smudging, tobacco, and other sacred medicines such as sage and cedar.

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No decision made by human is greater than spirit, therefore all guidance is given through spirit and passed down to humans through ceremony. Authority of Inakonigaawin lies in ceremony.

