



**GRAND COUNCIL
TREATY #3**
THE GOVERNMENT of THE ANISHINAABE NATION in TREATY #3

WHAT WE HEARD

Guardians Program 2023 Planning Sessions

**REPORT PREPARED BY THE GRAND COUNCIL TREATY #3
TERRITORIAL PLANNING UNIT**

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**PLEASE DIRECT ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS REGARDING THE CONTENT IN THIS
REPORT TO CHRIS HERC, CHRIS.HERC@TREATY3.CA.**

What is the Guardians Program?

Grand Council Treaty #3's Territorial Planning Unit (TPU) has been mandated (through Resolution CA-22-07) by Treaty #3 leadership to begin the process of creating a Treaty #3 Guardians Program for the benefit of all Treaty #3 communities. The core areas of focus for the Treaty #3 Guardians Program will be long-term environmental monitoring, cultural revitalization, and enforcement and compliance of Manito Aki Inaakonigewin. The creation of the Treaty #3 Guardians Program will be a community-driven process with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, leadership, youth, and other community members providing input on priorities for the Program which will be used to shape its creation and direction.

How is the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3 engaged in the planning process?

Community engagement happens through community, regional, and national level engagement sessions. Sessions have taken place throughout 2023 and will continue on into in 2024-2025. To reach additional community members who are unable to attend the engagement sessions, the TPU will create an online survey for further input on the Guardians Program, as well as maintain an open invitation for feedback through email, phone, and in-person conversations.

As of this report, the TPU has held three regional community engagement sessions across the territory. The first on July 19th, 2023 in Kenora was attended by 24 Treaty #3 members; the second session on September 13th, 2023 in Dryden was attended by 20 Treaty #3 members; and the third session on December 12th, 2023 in Fort Frances was attended by 25 Treaty #3 members.

At each session, TPU staff led participants through a Guardians Program planning presentation that provided an overview of Guardians Programs across Canada and an overview of intent on each of the core Treaty #3 Guardians Program focuses. The three focus areas include long-term monitoring, cultural revitalization, and Manito Aki Inaakonigewin enforcement & compliance, all of which were determined through repeated mention by community leadership and staff during early conversations surrounding the Treaty #3 Guardians Program. For each of the core focus sections and the program logistics session, TPU staff led participants through small group breakout sessions to discuss and give input on what priorities should be for the Treaty #3 Guardians Program. The following pages provide a summary of input given during the breakout sessions from the three regional engagement sessions.

It is important to note that with engagement continuing on an ongoing basis, the information within this report does not represent the final summarization of the contributions that will shape the Treaty #3 Guardians Program.



During engagement sessions, we asked participants *what would you like to see prioritized in long-term monitoring efforts across Treaty #3?*

Education in all forms

Participants made clear the importance of **education** when it came to long-term monitoring. They emphasized opportunities for learning both **traditional land-based methods** shared through Elders and Knowledge Keepers, as well as **western environmental methods**.

Additionally, creating partnerships with local schools could help introduce children and youth to environmental areas of interest, while instilling an important sense of identity in relationship to the land, and **teach core traditional values**.

Core focus areas to help guide the Guardians through monitoring efforts

Some of the suggested focus areas include **water, land, wildlife, and natural resources**. Within each, different aspects would be monitored, such as testing spray levels for plants, or assessing migration periods for wildlife. Additionally, culturally or ecologically **significant sites** should be identified and monitored.

A set of **monitoring guidelines** and protocols can be developed **with guidance from Elders**, so that monitoring is consistent across the territory and maintains a connectedness to the spiritual and cultural processes that are vital to operate within.

Working together for the best results

The Program will operate best if efforts are made to work respectfully in relation with industry, government, and each other. Having **communication** lines between Treaty #3 communities and any developing Guardians Programs will help create a network for treaty-wide monitoring efforts, while building relationships with companies operating on the land will encourage **honesty** and **transparency**.

Paying attention to industry and potential impacts

A strong need for monitoring Treaty #3 sites that are subject to **industry activity** was brought forward in the sessions. Keeping a close watch on these areas and making note of any impacts on the surrounding environment is important for ensuring **compliance** to environmental regulations. The Guardians can use the knowledge gathered to inform future discussions with respect to natural resource activity in the territory.



During engagement sessions, we asked participants *how would you like to see the Guardians Program focus on cultural revitalization?*

Ceremony and cultural teachings based on the season

There was a strong interest in having **season-based** culture camps, since each season has different cultural teachings associated with it. These camps would be held in different locations across the territory to respect the unique teachings in each region.

Another idea was to incorporate **seasonal learning ceremonies**, where youth could learn about the different **ceremonies** that take place based in the time of year. They could engage in processes such as **berry harvesting, rice picking, or hunting and trapping**, and would learn about the ceremonies that must be carried out when taking part in each activity.

Language revitalization through land-based learning

Through land-based learning camps, youth would be introduced to language while learning on the land. These sessions would bring passion to **stories and teachings**, and **unite language with land** in young minds. Activities such as identifying traditional plants and learning their **Anishinaabemowin names** could be carried out, as well as hunting and processing game using the language throughout the process.

Learning the significance of culture heritage and history

Connecting with Elders and Knowledge Keepers who can educate young Treaty #3 members on the **history and significance** behind Anishinaabe culture was stressed during sessions. Sharing knowledge and stories about the land, the history of Treaty #3 and its member communities, and **teaching youth about their roots** should be a core piece of the Program.

Inviting proponents to learn important cultural teachings

The Guardians Program could provide **proponents** with **opportunities to engage** in learning about the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3, so that a foundation of trust and respect can precede discussions on altering the landscape for development.

Practicing traditional ways of life

Incorporating as many **land-based activities** that bring back traditional practices should be a goal of the program. Land-based **survival skills, traditional foods harvesting, tree tapping, canoe building, and fishing** are just some of the activities that could be practiced.



During engagement sessions, we asked participants *how can the Guardians Program enforce Manito Aki Inaakonigewin, and verify compliance?*

Building the capacity of Guardians to participate in regulatory processes will be crucial

Training was highlighted as a need for Guardians so that they can effectively carry out their **duties relating to compliance**. Having a Guardians training program become an accredited post-secondary college level learning opportunity was suggested. Education and training relating to specific industries will also help lead to stronger Guardian enforcement through a better understanding of regulations.

The Guardians Program must recognize different community protocols within the Manito Aki Inaakonigewin Framework

As the application of Manito Aki Inaakonigewin differs community to community, it was highlighted that the Guardians Program must **create space** and **elevate** each community's rights, jurisdiction, and protocols.

Work must be done to raise Manito Aki Inaakonigewin into public knowledge

Building Manito Aki Inaakonigewin into **school curricula** was suggested to bring more awareness to its significance and importance, as well as education opportunities for local government. Sessions showed a display of concern around Manito Aki Inaakonigewin not being officially recognized as Anishinaabe law by the provincial government, and would like to see work being done to build a **stronger pathway for its enforcement** and requirement for compliance.

Involving all ages, levels of education, and perspectives in the development of compliance protocols

It was important for participants that Treaty #3 youth and members of **all ages**, with **all different kinds of perspectives**, were included in the discussions on enforcement of Manito Aki Inaakonigewin. **Respect** should be shown to everyone during these discussions.

Logistics of the Treaty #3 Guardians Program

- All Treaty #3 Guardians should have the same basic training. Though, it would be beneficial for different Guardians to have unique specialized training. Guardians will have gained a base of knowledge through training to carry out core duties, while the specializations will allow different Guardians to handle specific issues.
- Guardians distribution could be modeled similarly to the Treaty #3 Police force, where different subdivisions have been created. This will be further examined upon budget and funding requirements.
- Guardians distribution would have to account for the selected Guardians' accommodation, since daily work would have to be easily accessible.
- Currently scoping out one or two Guardian per Treaty #3 community. Potential is there for communities to set up individual Guardian programs that aren't associated with the Grand Council Treaty #3.

Next Steps

With regional engagement sessions concluded, the TPU staff will begin holding individual community engagement sessions, meeting with community leadership for further input and direction on community-specific priorities for the Guardians Program. The TPU will also offer an online Guardians Program survey for additional input. Once all engagement sessions have been completed the TPU will bring the Guardians Program to ceremony for final direction.

The TPU will use all input and direction given to create a draft Treaty #3 Guardians mandate and work plan, which will be distributed to communities for their input and feedback. The TPU will also hold a National Gathering for the Treaty #3 Guardians Program where the draft mandate and work plan will be reviewed for any final input. The TPU will use the feedback given to create the finalized Guardians mandate and work plan which will then be brought to Chiefs in Assembly for review and resolution.

Take the Treaty #3 Guardians Survey!



If you have not already done so, take the *Treaty #3 Guardians Program Planning Survey*, where you can contribute your own thoughts and ideas to the planning process. A survey submission will automatically enter you in a draw for one of three **\$100 Visa giftcards**.