Resources for Reconciliation

Walking With Our Sisters art installation on display in 2017 at Perth Public Library*

Prepared by Lanark County Neighbours for Truth & Reconciliation

www.lanarkcountyneighbours.ca
facebook.com/LCNeighbours
facebook.com/PerthHealingForests
lanarkneighbours@gmail.com
CONTENTS

PROTOCOLS AND THEIR MEANINGS - 3 -

Acknowledgement of Territory - 4 -
Invite local Indigenous Elders or Presenters - 4 -
The following are steps that organizers can take when organizing an event: - 5 -
Tobacco Offering Protocol - 6 -

BACKGROUND - 7 -

Indigenous peoples in the Ottawa Valley - 7 -
Truth and Reconciliation - 10 -
What is Reconciliation? - 11 -

LEARNING ABOUT OMÀMIWININÌ HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES - 12 -

Online Resources - 12 -
Algonquins of Ontario Land Claim - 12 -
Print Resources - 12 -

GLOSSARY - 13 -

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ONLINE:

❖ The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
❖ Truth & Reconciliation Calls to Action
http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

*A Note About Walking With Our Sisters Art Installation
Walking with Our Sisters was a commemorative art installation to honour the lives of missing and murdered Indigenous Women of Canada and the United States. The installation came to Carleton University in 2015. In June of 2012 a general call was issued on Facebook for people to create moccasin tops (called ‘vamps’). The call was answered by women, men and children of all ages and races. By July 25, 2013 over 1300 vamps had been received, almost tripling the initial goal of 600.

The project is about these women, paying respect to their lives and existence on this earth. They are sisters, mothers, daughters, cousins, aunties, grandmothers, friends and wives. They are not forgotten.

This tapestry was the Prize in a lottery when this amazing art installation came to Ottawa. It provides a glimpse of that very beautiful event. Please go to: WalkingWithOurSisters.ca for more information.
PROTOCOLS AND THEIR MEANINGS

As we go forward with Truth and Reconciliation, to build trusting and honest relationships with diverse Indigenous communities and people, it is important to follow respectful ways of communicating. This shows respect for Indigenous values, cultures and beliefs. It can also create a venue to open people’s minds to different attitudes and allow Indigenous peoples’ voices to be heard in Indigenous ways of knowing.

When writing or speaking about Canada’s history, keep in mind that while Canada recently celebrated 150 years, there is 10,000 years of Indigenous history in this area. Avoid using terms like “wilderness”, “uninhabited”, or “empty” to describe the land before European settlement. Similarly, when describing Canada’s history, it is disrespectful to suggest that the history of Canada started in 1867 or with the arrival of Europeans.

Whenever possible refer to the specific Indigenous people of a given area rather than using a broad generic term. Think of the diversity in the term European and how much more instructive it is to speak about English, Dutch or Italian people or cultures rather than using the generic term, Europeans. Aboriginal is a term that is used by governments and is not favoured by many Indigenous people. The terms “First Nation, Mètis and Inuit” or “Indigenous” are generally preferred; or where possible use the name of the specific nation, such as Anishinaabe or Omàmiwinini (see “Background” document or “Glossary” for more information).

Protocols involve a series of guidelines to be followed in certain situations. Following Indigenous protocols is an important step in engaging with Indigenous communities, in the same way as they are in non-Indigenous communities. It shows respect and demonstrates that time and effort that were put into becoming informed about the people and communities one is interacting with or asking for something from.

There are several protocols that can be followed with Indigenous communities in the Ottawa Valley. We outline three major protocols that are generally followed within Anishinaabe and Algonquin, or Omàmiwinini, communities below: acknowledging territory, inviting local Elders or Speakers and/or Drummers, and offering tobacco.
Acknowledgement of Territory
As a way of honouring and showing respect for Anishinaabe people who have been living and working on this land from time immemorial, we suggest the following be read at the beginning of any event:

“We hereby acknowledge that Lanark County is situated on unceded traditional Omâmiwinini* (Algonquin) territory and with this acknowledgement comes respect for the land, people and the unique history of the territory.”

Invite local Indigenous Elders or Presenters
A good way to engage with Indigenous communities is to involve local Elders, speakers, drummers or other community members in planning local events. It is important to recognize certain things when reaching out. First, in many Indigenous communities there are only a few Elders or speakers and they are often in high demand; it is important to come prepared to meetings and to offer gifts, reimbursement for travel and/or honoraria to acknowledge the person’s time. Second, if Indigenous community members do not wish to be included in an event it may be because there is something inappropriate about what is being proposed. It is important to engage in self-reflection and self-education regarding what might be appropriate (see attached resource list).

Within Lanark County, there are two Algonquin communities: Ardoch Algonquin First Nation and Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation.

Ardoch Algonquin First Nation
524 Centreville Rd. Westport, On K0G 1X0
613-273-3530
http://www.aafna.ca/
aafna@cogeco.ca

Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation
24719 Hwy#7, Sharbot Lake, ON, K0H 2P0
613-335-5000
http://www.sofn.band
The following are steps that organizers can take when organizing an event:

- Seek out Elders at local community to know which Elder or presenter would be suitable for your event.
- Enquire from their community what their personal needs are and what they will require for the gathering.
- An Elder will not ask for payment or state an amount, but often an honorarium is appropriate. Find out from their community what they need.
- As a common courtesy, you would offer a pouch of tobacco or a tobacco tie to the Elder or presenter as you greet them, in exchange for their knowledge and time. Tobacco is considered spiritual currency and the offering is a sign of respect.

When you have an Elder, a presenter or drummers coming to an event, the following steps can be taken:

- You could request to include a smudge ceremony to unify and welcome open hearts and minds.
- Offer the invited guest(s) a comfortable seat, and if possible assign someone to see to their needs (water, coffee, tea, and snacks at break). They should be served first at lunch or dinner, especially if it is a buffet where people will line up to serve themselves. These gestures show our respect and make the guest(s) feel welcome and cared for respectfully.
- It is also customary to give an honorarium for their time and counsel. When it is not possible to give an honorarium of money, perhaps a gift of appreciation can be made. Honorariums and gift-giving are honoured traditions founded on the principle of reciprocity: when you take, something must be given in return.
- In the old days, we might have offered invited guest(s) moose meat to feed their family or a blanket to keep them warm, but in today’s economic world we compensate them for their time and travelling expenses. At a minimum they should not be paying out of pocket for their transportation and a gas card or per diem allowance would be welcome. Consider: what is it worth to you and your organization? Consult the community on what is valuable to them as a gift.
Tobacco Offering Protocol

The tobacco is offered with the left hand (heart hand) extended, while voicing your intentions, or what you are asking the other person to do. This gives the person an opportunity to accept and enable them to know what they are asked to do in exchange for the tobacco. It is important that you state what you wish them to share with your group beforehand, to let them know precisely what you want them to convey to your group, as you offer the tobacco. They also need to feel confident that they will be of assistance to you.

As an example, to ask someone to open and close a gathering, you could ask the following:

“We would be honoured if you would speak to the Great Mystery for us and …” (specify what you hope for and what your intentions for the gathering are; for example “we would like to have a good gathering …”)

Or you could say:

“We would be honoured if you would drum songs for this gathering, to sing in the ancestors and uplift the community with the heartbeat of Mother Earth … to close the gathering and send the ancestors and the people home safe …”

Or if you are asking a person to share their knowledge, you could say:

“We would be honoured to benefit from your advice and guidance.”
BACKGROUND

"Effective reconciliation will see... the development of relations of mutual respect between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people... There is an opportunity now for Canadians to engage in this work, to make their own contributions to reconciliation, and to create new truths about our country." (Truth and Reconciliation Commission Interim Report, 2012)

This information package has been put together by the Lanark County Neighbours for Truth and Reconciliation, a network of Indigenous and non-Indigenous neighbours in Algonquin (Omàmiwinini) territory who support Indigenous rights, education and Indigenous self-determination, and is intended to give background on the thousands of years of Indigenous history in this area and to promote good relationships in this land that we now share.

Indigenous peoples in the Ottawa Valley

When settlers arrived in the Ottawa Valley, this was not an empty land but a homeland. Algonquin Anishinaabe peoples, or Omàmiwinini, have lived in the watershed of the Ottawa River (Kiji Sibi) for thousands of years. Omàmiwinini were here when Samuel de Champlain boated up the Ottawa River in 1603 – it was Champlain who first used the name “Algonquin”. Omàmiwinini people were here when settlers from Europe made the long overland journey from Prescott to the Lanark Highlands and helped the settlers survive and thrive on the land. Omàmiwinini and Anishinaabe people played key roles in defending the British colonies during the War of 1812.

The settlers were welcomed, befriended and helped through the early years of settlement. Over time the newcomers took over more and more of the traditional territory – pushing aside Algonquin people with little regard for their cultural, material or spiritual needs or the land that sustained them. “The Omàmiwinini,” a chapter written by Paula Sherman in At Home in Tay Valley quotes Kaondinoketch, an Omàmiwinini leader from 1840, addressing a council meeting:

“Our hunting grounds that are vast and extensive and once abounded in the richest furs and swarmed with deer of every description are now ruined. We tell you the truth, we now starve half the year through and our children, who were accustomed to being comfortably clothed, are now naked. We own, brother, that we are partly the cause of these present misfortunes; we were too good and generous; we permitted strangers to come and settle on our grounds and to cultivate the land; wood merchants to destroy our valuable timber, who have done us much injury, as by burning our rich forests, they have annihilated our beaver and our pelttries, and driven deer away.”

The chapter also records the Omàmiwinini people’s response to the actions of newcomers:

“When they came across Philemon Wright cutting down their sugar bush in the early 19th century, they were quite upset, and questioned him about his actions. From what I can tell from the documentary
evidence and oral tradition around the incident, Wright lied and told them he had papers given to him by the Colonial Office. This was untrue as it turns out; he was a land speculator from Massachusetts and had no such papers. While the Omàmìwinini people found it difficult to understand how he had “acquired” these lands, they didn’t question the truth of his statement. To do so would have been an insult and disrespectful. They did not lie. Instead, given that he was already there, they chose to welcome and incorporate him into already existing protocols for relationships with neighbours.”

The land on which we live was then and continues to this day to be unceded Omàmìwinini or Algonquin territory. No agreements have been signed to state how the land shall be shared. Treaties that were signed in the area were not signed with the Algonquin and have since been discredited. Town and township settlements in Lanark County were established in contradiction to British law and the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which stated that no land could be granted to settlers without a prior agreement between Indigenous nations and the Crown. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was ratified at the Treaty of Niagara in 1764, where delegations from Indigenous peoples from across what is now southern Ontario met and exchanged wampum belts with a representative of the British Crown. Through this peace process the Omàmìwinini people agreed to share the land but did not then nor ever since surrender their title and rights to the land. The British Crown repeatedly broke this agreement by granting parcels of unceded land to settlers, for example to non-Indigenous soldiers to reward them for their service.

The federal government restricted hunting in many areas of traditional territory, and tried to convince Omàmìwinini families to relocate to small reserves. The only Algonquin reserve on the Ontario side of the Ottawa River was established at Golden Lake (Pikwàkanagàn), north-west of Renfrew. Some Omàmìwinini children were sent to residential school in Spanish, Ontario, north-west of Killarney National Park. Many people living in the Ottawa Valley fell silent about their Omàmìwinini identities in order to remain in their ancestral lands, fitting in among settler societies and remaining unrecognized as “Indians” (under the Indian Act) by the Canadian government.

The Canadian government has since acknowledged that this was Omàmìwinini territory and recognizes the land as unceded. A land claim by the Algonquins of Ontario and Pikwàkanagàn First Nation with the Canadian government for parts of the territory on the Ontario side of the Ottawa River is currently being negotiated, although this land claim is not supported by all Omàmìwinini in the area. The land claim is also being challenged by Algonquin communities on the Québec side of the river, who argue that there was a greater Algonquin nation that straddled the Kiji Sibi and that communities in what is now Québec were excluded from the land claim process despite having family areas that straddle the river and include lands in Ontario.

Today, Omàmìwinini families live across Lanark and Frontenac Counties, some belonging to communities such as Ardoch Algonquin or Shabot Obadjijaan and others not. Many are active in reclaiming, documenting, and educating others about Omàmìwinini history, language, and identity.
Truth and Reconciliation

Truth and reconciliation efforts have been ongoing in Lanark County for many years. One example is when Ardoch Omàmìwinini and other community members came together to protect manòmin, or wild rice at Mud Lake from being mechanically harvested and sold for profit by someone not from the community. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources wanted to open up the cultivation and harvest of manòmin to for-profit corporations on a large scale, an action which would have seen many local ecosystems dependent on the rice destroyed, and which would have had a severe impact on the lives of Omàmìwinini and others living in the area. Resisting the large-scale harvesting and sale of manòmin brought Omàmìwinini and other community members together, as well as educating the public about the importance of protecting manòmin and the practices of cultivating and harvesting it which have been handed down through centuries in Omàmìwinini families.

Other examples of truth and reconciliation efforts include the recent formation of a National Healing Forest committee in Perth. The National Healing Forest is a nation-wide effort to commemorate the many missing and murdered Indigenous women and children who died in residential schools. Healing forests are spaces where people can go to heal and to remember family members and loved ones in the calming presence of trees. The Lanark County Council has also recently adopted a resolution to become active in the work of truth and reconciliation, to educate themselves and their staff about Indigenous history and presence in Lanark County, and to actively engage with Indigenous leaders in the county.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007, officially endorsed by Canada in 2010, and enshrined in law by the government of British Columbia in 2019, is a blueprint for reconciliation. It is an international agreement that outlines “the rights necessary to ensure the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples of the world,” and itemizes the rights of Indigenous peoples around the world, including:

- The right to free, prior and informed consent in matters concerning Indigenous traditional territories;
- The right not to be subject to acts of genocide or violence, including the forcible removal of children from their families and communities;
- The right to maintain and strengthen distinctive spiritual relationships with Indigenous territory; and
- Basic human rights and freedoms.

Under the UNDRIP, governments have responsibilities to:

- Combat prejudice, eliminate discrimination, and promote tolerance, understanding and good relations;
- Put in place effective mechanisms to prevent any action aimed at depriving Indigenous peoples of integrity as distinct peoples;
- Engage in good faith negotiations with Indigenous peoples; and
- Ensure prompt resolution of disputes.
What is Reconciliation?
For people of settler descent and other non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, reconciliation consists of:

**TRUTH:** Accepting and learning the truth about our shared histories;

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Acknowledging responsibility as Canadians for what has been done to Indigenous peoples;

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Committing to ensuring that this will never happen again, and committing to ensuring that the continuing wrongs are corrected;

**COMMITMENT:** Committing to evolve new relationships of respect, consultation and co-operation.

One way of demonstrating a person’s or a group’s commitment to reconciliation is by acknowledging the Indigenous traditional territory on which the person or group’s activities are taking place. This process is outlined in the “Protocol” document included in this package, and is:

- A way of honouring and showing respect for peoples who have been living and working on this land from time immemorial;
- A beginning in the process of reconciliation.
LEARNING ABOUT OMÀMIWININÌ HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

ONLINE RESOURCES

Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation History (web page)
http://www.algonquinsofpikwakanagan.com/culture_history.php

The Algonquin Way website has two interesting articles posted here:
http://thealgonquinway.ca/English/story-e.php

- Kim Hanewwhich, Omàmiwinini: The Invisible People
- James Morrison, Sicani Research and Advisory Services, Algonquin History of the Ottawa River Watershed

Peter DiGangi presented on Omàmiwinini history at Octopus books in December 2015. The talk was recorded and is online: https://equitableeducation.ca/2015/podcast-history-ottawa-river-watershed

Algonquins of Ontario Land Claim

- https://ipolitics.ca/tag/ontario-algonquin-land-claim/
- **Note**: The Ardoch Algonquin are not participating in the AOO land claim process.

Ardoch Algonquin First Nation: http://www.aafna.ca/
Shabot Obaadjiiwan First Nation: http://shabotobaadjiiwan.net/

Print Resources

Lynn Gehl, *The Truth that Wampum Tells*
Bonita Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland*
Paula Sherman, *Dishonour of the Crown*
Paula Sherman, “The Omàmiwinini”, a chapter in *At Home in Tay Valley*
GLOSSARY

Omàmìwinìnì:

Omàmìwininì people, often referred to as “Algonquin,” are part of the Anishinaabe nations who have lived in the watershed of the Ottawa River (the Kiji Sibi) for thousands of years. Omaamawi means a gathering. Omàmìwininì refers to "the people who gather," in a social sense. [Note: Omàmìwininì can be pronounced: “Oh-MAH-Mee-Wih-NEE-Nee”]

Algonquin:

It is believed that the first person to call Omàmìwininì people “Algonquin” was Samuel de Champlain when he came up the Ottawa River in 1603. The origin of the term is unclear, but it is not what the people originally called themselves.

Anishinaabe:

Anishinaabe people include the Odawa, Ojibwe, Potawatomi, Oji-Cree, Mississaugas, and Algonquin peoples. The name can also be written Anishinàbe or Anishnawbe. Anishinabek refers to “Anishinaabe peoples” in Ashinaabemowin. Anishinaabe peoples historically migrated from the East coast to what is now Québec, Ontario, Manitoba, and many areas of the United States.

Aboriginal:

The term “Aboriginal” is a legal term used in Canada’s Constitution Act. It is a general term that includes the First Nations peoples, Métis peoples, and Inuit living within Canada.

Indigenous:

This term is most often used in an international sense, to refer to the first peoples of the land. It is a general term that does not make distinctions among different Indigenous nations, and can also be used in Canada when referring to Aboriginal peoples generally.