

# Ojibwe Communities and Economies: Asserting Sovereignty in a Changing Environment



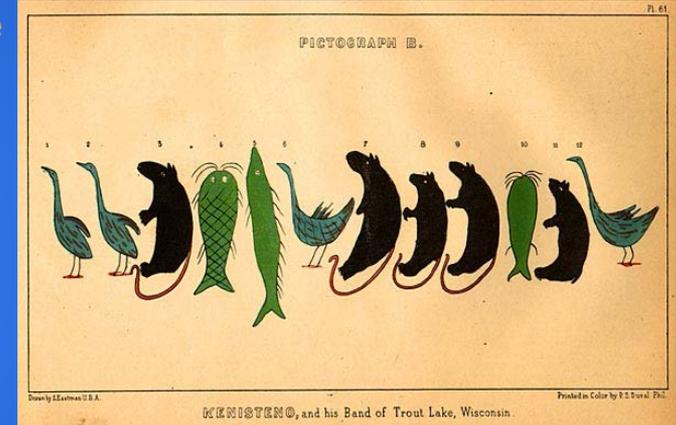
# Anishinaabe Nation-Building Period

- Ojibwe/Chippewa Bands allied with the Odawaa and Potawatomi to form the Three Fires Alliance, also referred to as the Anishinaabe Nation, with similar languages and cultural traditions.
- The Anishinaabe came to the upper Great Lakes region more than 400 years ago, with indigenous governance extending over a vast area of lands and waters for several centuries prior to European/ American settlement.
- Quality and characteristics of the Anishinaabe nation:
  - Independence of individuals and communities
  - Engagement in international diplomacy & trade
  - When necessary, engaged in warfare and skilled both technically and strategically
  - Lived lightly on the land -- did not engage in significant civil engineering or massive agricultural endeavors, but worked with natural ecosystems and processes to sustain a large population



# Anishinaabe Governance

- Anishinaabe families belonged to a band, made members from different clans
  - Seasonal activities (i.e. spring fishing, summer planting, wild rice camp, fall and winter hunting and trapping, maple sugar production) were conducted within bands
- A common language and cultural traditions created bonds across bands/ clans
  - Strong tradition of storytelling – creation stories, dream stories and everyday stories contain teachings about the role of humans in the world in relation to the rest of creation
  - Importance of each individual's observations of natural processes and *humor*
  - Seven values/ guiding legal principles: love, honesty, respect, humility, bravery, truth, wisdom



Individuals from the same clan are considered close relatives, even among far-flung communities.

# Anishinaabe Inakonigewin (Law)



Photo: Midewewin ceremony near Whitefish, LCO; taken by an anthropologist in 1910.

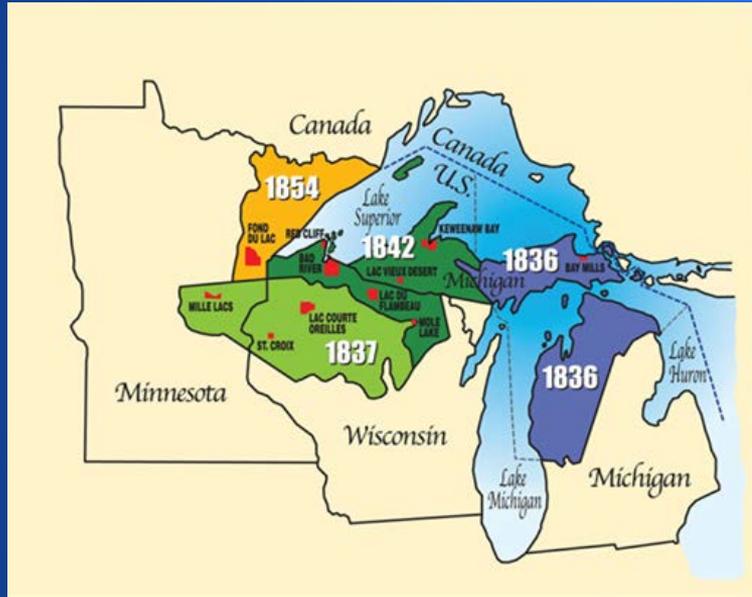
All aspects of creation (including humans) received original instructions from the Creator.

As long as the people continue to adhere to those original instructions (i.e. responsibilities), they will maintain their cultural distinctiveness, inherent sovereignty and rights to their traditional territories.

These fundamental teachings are considered the original treaties.

*“Mino bimaadiziwin”*

# Chippewa/Ojibwe Treaties with the United States



Treaties with the United States in 1836, 1837, 1842 & 1854 ceded control of Anishinaabe territory, reserving rights to use and harvest from those lands.

The Treaty of 1854 also created 10 reservations or permanent homelands for the Lake Superior Ojibwe Bands.

# Post-Treaty Period & Rights Violated

States adopted fish & game laws at the end of the 19th Century, criminalized Anishinaabe harvesting activities. One goal was to disconnect Indian people from their lands & waters.

Beginning in the 1890s, Indian children were forcibly removed from their families by state and federal agents and subject to cultural genocide and child abuse. The legacy of this policy is ongoing, with Indian children subject to disproportionately high rates of removal.

Photo: Bad River members Julia Bennett, Julia Clementine, Charlotte Manidoogiizhig, collection of Patrick Mayotte.

# Tribes Prevail in Treaty Rights Suits Against States



Photo: Drum ceremony at the Seventh Circuit during proceedings in the LCO v. Wisconsin case. Ojibwe cultural traditions continue to be critical to tribal sovereignty.

- State v. Gurnoe (fishing in Lake Superior)
- People v. Jondreau (fishing in Lake Superior)
- Lac Courte Oreilles v. Wisconsin (off-reservation treaty rights in Wisconsin)
- Minnesota v. Mille Lacs (off-reservation rights in Minnesota)
- United States v. Michigan (Great Lakes fishing, inland issues resolved by agreement)
- Grand Portage v. Minnesota (inland 1854 rights resolved by agreement)

# Ecosystems Support Treaty Protected Resources



- The wide range of resources harvested by the tribes means that a wide range of healthy ecosystems is necessary to support those resources.
- Tribes are concerned about and involved in environmental issues that impact those ecosystems, thus they are interested in virtually everything that affects the environment in the ceded territory.
- Natural resources are cultural resources.

Photo: tribal members harvesting manomin (wild rice), a deeply significant activity for Ojibwe people

# Tribal Environmental Justice

Ojibwe Tribes engage in natural resource management and policy development to support their on-reservation and off-reservation rights:

- Robust tribal natural resource departments that engage in traditional Ojibwe and western-oriented science
- Expertise on manomin (wild rice) management and other areas
- Engagement on state and federal permit decisions for industrial activities (e.g. pipelines, mines, etc.
- Legal action taken to protect tribal interests

The Healing Circle Run is an annual intertribal spiritual run/walk brings community members together from GLIFWC's 11 member tribes to celebrate community wellbeing and bring awareness of threats to treaty natural resources

# Tribal Approaches to Climate Adaptation & Mitigation

- Tribes are particularly vulnerable to impacts that degrade the environment.
  - Tribes are place-based and are not able to relocate their reservations
  - Tribal communities depend on wildlife, fish and plant communities for food, medicine and spiritual wellbeing
- Species will migrate or disappear due to climate change
- Many tribal communities are taking initiative to develop their own climate adaptation and mitigation strategies
  - Example: Lac du Flambeau's Resiliency Project



Photo: US 2 in July 2016. The flood cut off most roads into and out of the Bad River Reservation for approx. 1 week, homes were lost and many roads, bridges and culverts damaged.

# Indigenous Food Sovereignty

Indigenous foods from this region include:

- Maple syrup and sugar
- Manomin (wild rice)
- Inland fish (walleye, sucker, sturgeon, northern, etc.)
- Great Lakes fish (cisco)
- Venison and other wild game
- Wild berries
- Wild onions, nettles, myriad of plants for food and medicine

Many of these foods were preserved for sale and trade historically; today's indigenous food movement seeks to re-establish traditional food ways and tribal sovereignty over food production.

# Youth Engagement

Ojibwe Tribes are investing in youth initiatives related to treaty rights, tribal sovereignty, hunter safety and environmental learning for youth of all ages.



GLIFWC and other tribal natural resource departments are working to recruit more Native American youth into fields related to natural resources.

# Questions?

Miigwetch gaʔizindawiyeg!

Thank you for listening!

