
**Understanding the Connection between People and the Land:
Implications for Social-Ecological Health at Iskatewizaagegan No. 39
Independent First Nation**

Christa Gail Foley

Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in
partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Natural Resources
Management

Natural Resources Institute
70 Dysart Road
The University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
R3T 2N2

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By

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Abstract

Iskatewizaagegan Independent First Nation (IIFN), in Shoal Lake, Ontario, has a rich history with the land. Living off the land is important to the Aboriginal people socially, physically, spiritually and economically for centuries. Over the years, the community has seen several culturally and historically significant sites deteriorate, physically and in significance to youth. Reaffirming the importance of these sites, the people sought out a process of social-ecological restoration. In the past, the people managed the land with prescribed burns and the harvest of non-timber forest products serving to increase the complexity of the ecosystem and create economic diversity. The research is part of a continued movement towards the achievement of that balance once more.

The purpose of this study was to document the cultural history of the five sites, determined by the community of Iskatewizaagegan First Nation, enabling the analysis of several media forms (audio, video, photographic) to be used to document the relationship between the health of the land and the health of the people and consider indicators for social-ecological health. The objectives of the research were: 1) to explore and document traditional ecological knowledge regarding the history, use, and cultural importance of the five sites; 2) to determine community level indicators of social-ecological health; 3) to facilitate an opportunity for intergenerational exchange and learning by linking community youth with Elders in an effort to bridge the generation gap; and 4) to develop a multi-media resource on the five sites for use by the community and their school with the various documented media forms and methodologies.

The fieldwork took place within the community and at each of the five sites during the summer of 2003. Cultural and ethno-ecological research was undertaken using two new and innovative methodologies -- the photographic narrative and the site visits methodology. The photographic narrative examined the values and perceptions of both youth and Elders by providing them with a non-disposable camera to photograph people, places and things central to their culture and history with emphasis on their understanding of health. The site visit method enabled a full understanding of the significance, history

and use of the site with hands-on experiential learning, and provided an opportunity to bridge the generation gap with Elders and youth.

There were a number of interesting findings and lessons to be learned from this research. The key findings of the research include: The generation gap occurring between youth and Elders has a strong bearing on what youth and Elders feel is significant; Gender still plays a role in what people valued and how they are connected to the land; history and tradition remain important in the lives of the people; There has been decline in health status due to lifestyle change caused by issues of access; The youth are unprepared but not unwilling to participate in restoration activities once motivated; Elders preferred not to discuss what they know around the other Elders for fear that did not possess as much information and/or did not want to conflict with another. The main recommendations of this research are: further research to explore what is required to effectively create, maintain and improve programs to bring together youth and Elders and allow for a more equal distribution of traditional knowledge; further research to incorporate additional information sources such as historical documents, text or photos with relation to the history and use of the five sites; and incorporate the photographic narrative gallery in a visible spot in the community, in the interactive CD-Rom, and in various publications so that it may serve as an enduring learning tool. This thesis research sheds light on the connections between the health of the people and the health of the land and affirms that health be defined not only in terms of the individual, family and community, but also include the health of the environment. For the community of Shoal Lake, social-ecological restoration represents a way to rebuild and restore their connection to the land, and in turn improve the mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional health of their people as a whole.

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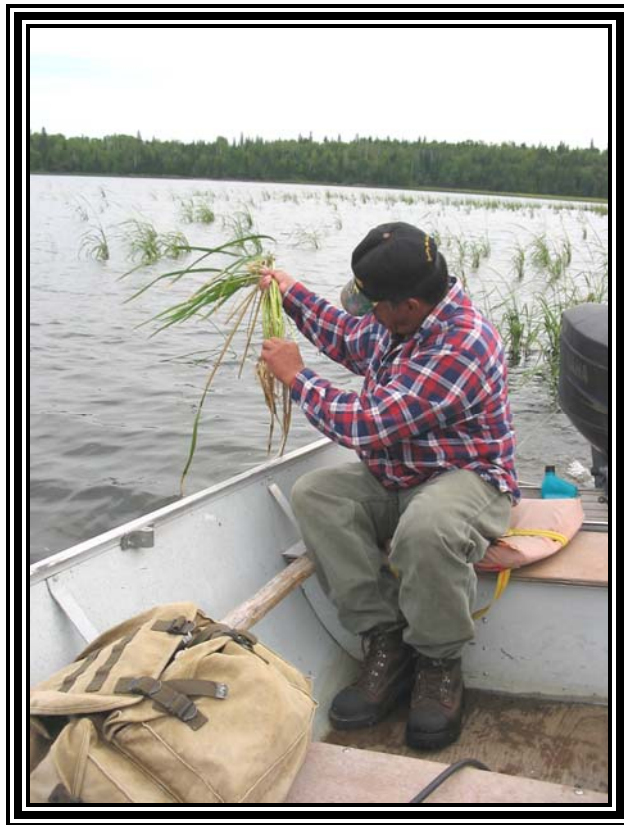
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Chapter 1 – Introduction

“Traditional Indian beliefs about health...revolve around attempting to live in harmony with Nature while developing the ability to survive under exceedingly difficult circumstances.”

(Colomeda, 1999: 1).



“The Evolution of Wild Rice”

Subject: Oliver Pinesse

Photo by: Christa Foley

1.1 Background

The deep connection that Aboriginal peoples hold with the land manifests itself in their history and culture. Over the past few decades Aboriginal peoples' relationship with the land has undergone a great deal of strain, which in some cases is irreversible (Frogg, Simon, Spence, Kathy, 1986). Many Aboriginal peoples believe that this strain, impacting social and environmental health, was "...not seen in First Nations' communities until European contact destroyed the healthy ecosystems and tribal cultures that people depended upon" (Colomeda, 1999: 23). Aboriginal people today are striving to re-establish that healthy relationship. The community of Iskatewizaagegan First Nation (IIFN) in Shoal Lake, Ontario and the Natural Resources Institute at the University of Manitoba initiated a research project to do exactly that.

The focus of my research on five sites, considered significant to the people of IIFN, stems from a Sustainable Forestry Management Network. The project is headed by Dr. Fikret Berkes and Dr. Iain Davidson-Hunt. This project is a joint initiative between the First Nation and the Natural Resources Institute. Through a series of participatory workshops, with the community of Iskatewizaagegan First Nation and the Natural Resources Institute, five sites were identified on the basis of their historical, cultural, and ecological significance as sites where restoration would be desirable. From these five, the community chose two priority sites on the basis of proximity to community, ability to increase access for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, importance of the site to the Elders and the community, willingness to share the site with others, potential of the site for tourism and teaching opportunities, and the likelihood of gaining managerial control over the site. The number of sites was narrowed down to two sites due to the respect of time, funding, and number of researchers.

1.2 Research purpose and objectives

The purpose of my research was to document the cultural history of the five sites, determined by the community of Iskatewizaagegan First Nation, enabling the analysis of several media forms (audio, video, photographic) to be used to document the relationship between the health of the land and the health of the people and consider indicators for social-ecological health.

In order to guide the research process, the objectives were:

1. to explore and document traditional ecological knowledge regarding the history, use, and cultural importance of the five sites;
2. to determine community level indicators of social-ecological health;
3. to facilitate an opportunity for intergenerational exchange and learning by linking community youth with Elders in an effort to bridge the generation gap;
4. to develop a multi-media resource on the five sites for use by the community and their school with the various documented media forms and methodologies.

The research accomplished the objectives by examining the cultural history of each of the five sites with new and innovative methodology that captures the historic use, practices, importance, and stories with photographs and video, also known as photographic narrative and site visits.

1.3 Iskatewizaagegan Independent First Nation

The geographical area of focus for my research is the traditional territories of Iskatewizaagegan No. 39 Independent First Nation (IIFN), which is also referred to as Shoal Lake First Nation. The reserve's boundary is situated 5 kilometres east of the Manitoba-Ontario border, 16 kilometres south of the Trans Canada Highway, and 6 kilometres north of the United States border (Anon, Nd). The total area of the reserve is a landmass of 32.16 square kilometres (Statistics Canada, 2001). The history of this First Nation dates back to time immemorial passed down from generation to generation in stories, ceremonies, traditions and songs. According to the Elders' stories, Shoal Lake has had a very important role in Canada's history. The area was a battling ground during the Indian Wars between the Sioux and the Ojibway in the 1600's (Oliver Pinesse, 2003). In addition, the watercourse brought explorers and traders through the area in the early years before Canada was born and steadily thereafter. In and around 1885, the area became a refuge for many Métis fleeing the Riel Rebellion (from what would become the province of Manitoba), and to African Americans fleeing slavery from the United States after Canada abolished slavery in 1793 (Anon, Nd).

The area of Shoal Lake is very significant to the City of Winnipeg in Manitoba. Since 1919, Shoal Lake has served as the primary source of drinking water for the City of Winnipeg. The lake was chosen because of the availability of high quality water and its isolation from potential future development (City of Winnipeg, 2003). Since 1919, the area has seen a great deal of development and great changes. The Elders often comment on the declining quality of water, remarking that it has become very dirty.

The on-reserve population is approximately 330 people residing on-reserve (Statistics Canada, 2001). Demographically speaking, half of that population is under the age of 25 years, amounting to approximately 165 youth. The number of people in the community over the age of 54 years, however, is much lower with only approximately 20 people falling within this age category (Statistics Canada, 2001). With so few elders in the community and many youth to educate in traditional culture, community members

express concern that not enough is being done to try to bridge the widening gap between the generations.

The sites chosen by the community in the participatory workshops for documentation and restoration include (Technical Report No.1, 2003):

- The Gardening Islands- *Gitiiganii Minis*: the gardening islands are various island sites where the people of IIFN grew various vegetables. The specific site of focus for the research was Potato Island;
- Crow Duck Lake- *Kaagaagiishib Zaagegan*: Crow Duck Lake was historically one of the main sites for the harvest of wild rice for the people of IIFN and a very popular hunting and trapping area;
- High Lake & High Lake Access Trail: High Lake was important to the community because it yielded good hunting and fishing, and the access trail was the main route travelled by the people of IIFN to reach the highway;
- Stull Island- *Siizibaakoto Minis*: Stull Island is the site where maple sap was harvested from the maple trees that were transplanted there by ancestors of the community;
- Blueberry Harvesting Patches- *Miniikaa*: the blueberry sites were important to the people economically until the late 1900's when the price of berries dropped off due to constraints on management techniques and increased technology in the way of mass production and harvest.

1.4 Importance of Research

The research has a great deal of importance to the community of IIFN. By working to document and restore the ecological landscape of the IIFN, the environmental health links will gain increasing clarity. Restoration will aid the people in the healing process and rebuild the environmental health link which is not only important to this specific community but to Canadian society at large, as Canadian society is becoming more removed from the land concerns are increasing about the health implications. By

restoring the socio-ecological landscape in one community, the results could then be replicated in other communities. The research also strives to bridge the gap between the youth and Elders by putting the seed of traditional knowledge into the minds of the youth with the hope that it will receive more nourishment from the Elders in the future.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is organized into six chapters. Following this chapter, chapter two discusses various literatures central to the project. In chapter three, the photo narrative method is described, as well as an explanation of the findings. The participant's pictures and quotes are presented along with reflections on the use of this methodology. Chapter four describes the site visits, provides an explanation of the findings, and presents the traditional knowledge and histories collected. The final chapter, chapter five, presents indicators drawn from the qualitative data gathered with the two methodologies; and re-examines the traditional Medicine Wheel in order to create a wheel that is more inclusive of the human and environmental health connection. It also examines what restoration has accomplished and where it still needs to go and provides reflection on the use of Nvivo for data analysis.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

“If the Native Peoples and their heritage are to be understood, it is their beliefs, insights, concepts, ideals, values, attitudes and codes that must be studied.”

(Johnston, 1994: 7)



“Offering Tobacco to the Creator to Ensure a Safe Journey”

Subject: Walter Redsky

Photo By: Christa Foley

2.1 Introduction

My research deals with the main themes of Aboriginal health, ecological restoration, traditional ecological knowledge, intergenerational programs, and indicators for social-ecological health. In this chapter, I provide background to my research by reviewing various literatures that discuss these themes. I begin first with an examination of the literature on the current health status of the Aboriginal people to understand the connection between the health of the people and the land. Secondly, I examine various works on ecological restoration as it is the desired outcome of the SFMN research project which provides the broader context for my work. Traditional ecological knowledge is an equally important topic for this research project, considering the type of information being gathered and the methods that will be employed, and is the third topic examined. The fourth area of literature explored was intergeneration programming. I must note that there was not a great deal of information that dealt specifically with First Nations people and intergenerational programming. Upon meeting with the community and expressing the idea of gathering historical and cultural information onsite with both Elders and youth I received overwhelming support for a focus on intergenerational programming and felt the need to make it a central component of my research. A section on indicators is the final component of the literature review. Each of the above mentioned topics constitute the foundation of this thesis research, and each topic is discussed in more detail in this literature review below.

2.2 Aboriginal Health

The Canadian Aboriginal understanding of health is quite different from the biomedical model that prevails in North America. In contrast to the narrow biomedical perspective the Aboriginal basis of health is the Medicine Wheel, a sacred symbol of the complex, holistic, and inclusive view of health that Aboriginal people hold. The Medicine Wheel is a circle, which symbolizes the life cycle (Sioui, 1992). The circle is divided into four parts, representing the cycles of life including the four seasons, directions, elements (fire,

earth, water, and air), races of man, and Aboriginal nature (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual). Aboriginal understanding holds that health is not the mere presence or absence of disease; rather its interpretation focuses on balancing the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of the person, family, and/or community (Anon, 2002).

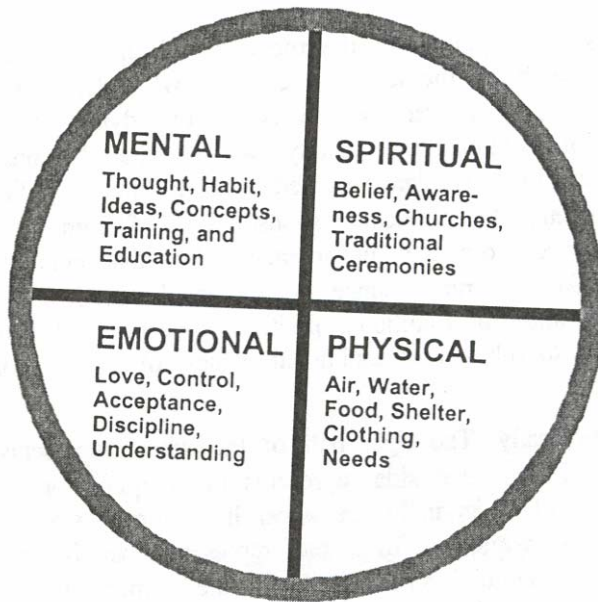


Figure 1. Medicine Wheel

(Source: The Institute of the Environment, 2001:8)

The Medicine Wheel describes the interconnection between the health and well-being of the individual, the family and the community (The Institute of the Environment, 2001). Therefore, a problem can only be resolved when the entire community is in balance, not by simply treating each problem as a separate individual's lifestyle choices in isolation from the larger pattern of life. A healthy community is seen to be central to the well-being of both the individuals and families residing within it. Thus, Aboriginal peoples see health as inclusive and holistic, in close connection to economic, environmental and cultural status.

Through an examination of literature on Aboriginal health in Canada, it is clear that there is a great deal of inequity between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals particularly in their

health and living conditions. Highlighting this is the high proportion of Aboriginal people inflicted with chronic disease in Canada. Health inequity is an escalating crisis, as stated clearly by Elizabeth Palfrey of the Keewatin Regional Health Board: “*Diabetes, hypertension, overweight, poor nutritional status are epidemic among Native people in Canada today*” (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1996:70).

Chronic Condition	Gender	Age Adjusted Prevalence (%)		FN & I / Canadian Ratio
		First Nations and Labrador Inuit (FN&I)	General Canadian Population	
Heart Problems	Male	13	4	3.3
	Female	10	4	2.5
Hypertension	Male	22	8	2.8
	Female	25	10	2.5
Diabetes	Male	11	3	3.7
	Female	16	3	5.3
Arthritis/Rheumatism	Male	18	10	1.8
	Female	27	18	1.5

Table 1. Chronic Condition

(Adapted From: A Second Diagnostic on the Health of First Nations and Inuit People in Canada, 1999)

Diabetes in the Aboriginal population was virtually unheard of prior to 1945 (Assembly of First Nations, 1999). In recent years, the rates have been dramatically increasing. Today, Aboriginal people are three to five times more likely to have diabetes than the rest of the Canadian population, with rates increasing, particularly, among females and those residing on reserves (Assembly of First Nations, 1999). Another disturbing trend is the increased rate at which the age of onset of diabetes is decreasing in Aboriginal populations. Early onset increases the likelihood of complications, which can affect the cardiovascular system, eyes, kidneys and nerves, resulting in amputations, premature death, disability and a compromised quality of life (Young et al, 2000).

The prevalence of heart disease in Aboriginal populations has more than doubled in the past ten years, according to the Institute of Clinical Studies in Toronto: “...records show the number of those affected moved from 76 out of 10,000 people in the mid-1980s to more than 186 out of 10,000 in the mid-1990s” (CBC, 2000:1). Aboriginal peoples are at higher risk for heart disease because they face twice the risk factors including smoking, obesity and diabetes all consistent with a lifestyle of poverty (CBC, 2001).

HIV and AIDS is a serious health issue facing Aboriginal Canadians. The number of Aboriginal people living with HIV has increased from 1,430 in 1996 to 2,740 in 1999, an increase of nearly one hundred percent within three years (Health Canada, 2002). The proportion of AIDS cases in Aboriginal populations has been steadily increasing from less than one percent to slightly over ten percent during 1990 to 1999 (Health Canada, 2002):

Aboriginal people have been identified as a high-risk group for contracting the AIDS virus for the following reasons: the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases is about three times higher in aboriginal populations than in the rest of Canada; the lack of adequate health care and sex education in aboriginal communities; substance abuse rates are higher, an activity often accompanied by sexual promiscuity; aboriginal people are highly transient, moving frequently between urban centres and aboriginal communities (Schoolnet, 2003: 3).

The number of AIDS cases attributable to intravenous drug use among Aboriginal people has also dramatically increased over time, from ten percent prior to 1992 to slightly over fifty percent during 1997-2001 (Health Canada, 2002).

Tuberculosis among Aboriginal peoples living both on and off-reserve presents a major public health concern. The rate of tuberculosis infection in Aboriginal populations is presently five in ten thousand. This is seven times higher than the rate for non-Aboriginal Canadians (Bruce et al, 2000). High rates of infection are attributable to run down and overcrowded housing, inadequate sewage control, and historically high tuberculosis rates (Bruce et al, 2000). Communities that are isolated and do not have adequate health services are at greater risk of widespread infection.

In order for people to be healthy- mentally, spiritually, socially and physically- they must have an adequate and healthy food supply, the opportunity to obtain an education, access to medical help. The people need to live in a safe environment both indoors and outdoors, have access to clean water and proper sewage disposal. With all these needs met, a person can be secure in their cultural identity and have the opportunity to excel (People to People, Nation to Nation, 1996: 72).

2.3 Ecological Restoration

The sustainability of our earth's resources depends on the health of our ecosystem. Since human beings depend on the ecosystem for the necessities of life, it has become imperative that our use is sustainable and the degradation that has already occurred, be reversed.

The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) defines ecological restoration as, “...*the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed*” (SER, 2002:2). The science of restoration ecology is devoted to “*returning damaged ecosystems to a condition that is structurally and functionally similar to the predisturbance state*” (Green, 1998:1). It must be noted that the purpose of ecological restoration is not solely to restore an ecosystem to a particular state, but an attempt to resurrect the processes of natural succession and evolution that would have normally occur in wild self-regulating systems (Jordon III, 1993).

The key requirement for ecological restoration is either a reference site and/ or a historical information basis to provide a model to strive for. The reference site must be as similar to the predisturbance state of the site to be restored, as it represents a point that the restored ecosystem is eventually expected to emulate (SER, 2002). Often enough it is difficult to find a reference site, so historical information is used. One of the best sources of historical information on the process and functions of a site, where it is available, is

traditional ecological knowledge of Elders. Other beneficial sources include historical accounts, documents, photographs and paleoecological evidence (SER, 2002).

The goal of ecological restoration is to recreate a resilient, self-sustaining and integrated system that is congenial to ecologically modest human activities (Higgs, 1997). In order for ecological restoration to be successful it must: successfully treat causes rather than symptoms; favour process repair over structural replacement; be patient; include spatial variation and linkages; address both social and cultural concerns; and be economically and politically viable for the community (Higgs, 1997).

The involvement of local communities in restoration projects can be a very powerful tool to strengthen the community and deepen the connection with the environment (Kettler, 2001). A community's involvement in restoration can also help to restore cultural activities, and even lead to the re-establishment of a community's sense of place. This empowerment can give a community an increased sense of control and self-sufficiency.

2.4 Traditional Ecological Knowledge

For centuries, Aboriginal people practised a harvest-based economy. They managed the resources according to their knowledge of the land, and its ecological processes and patterns. Aboriginals influenced their landscape and the life within it with the use of fire and harvesting practices (Kimmerer, 2002). Canadian parks and various heritage fields use the term "Aboriginal Cultural Landscapes" to describe where Aboriginal peoples place value because of their long and complex relationships with the land. The landscapes are a physical illustration of Aboriginal peoples' traditional knowledge of land use and ecology (Buggey, 1999).

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in North America, Aboriginal nations exchanged both goods and knowledge among their allied nations. During the colonial era the opportunities for exchange dissipated, as conflict between tribes heightened over access

to trade goods weakening the pool of knowledge. With the establishment of the reserve system, exchange was further impacted by the pass system that restricted travel on and off the reserve. The knowledge that survived remains in the form of oral history or oral tradition. Generation upon generation passed down the significance and meaning of events, processes, and people in the form of songs, stories, art, and legends to maintain a connection with the past and guide the generations of the future. Today, in this technological era, the pool is being weakened further by the generation gap, which has inhibited the dissemination of knowledge to younger knowledge.

Contained within Aboriginal stories and legend, lies an elaborate body of knowledge on the ecological processes and patterns of their environment. This traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), as it is commonly referred to, has the ability to fill in the gaps where science has been unable to formulate answers because of a lack of data sets (Freeman, 1992). It is difficult to find a definition that embodies the true understanding of what TEK is, and it is even harder to find one definition that is commonly agreed upon. The clearest, most encompassing definition of TEK states that it is: *“a cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment”* (Berkes, 1999:8).

Recognition of the importance and relevance of TEK outside of the Aboriginal culture has developed in conjunction with growing concern over biodiversity loss, the increasing number of threatened and endangered species, deforestation and a hand full of other forms of environmental degradation (First Nations National Forestry Program, 1999). In 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity recognized internationally the importance and relevance of this unique knowledge held by Aboriginal peoples in relation to the conservation of biological diversity.

Article 8 (j) Subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve, and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider

application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices (UNEP, 1992: 1).

The Aboriginal worldview holds that every living and non-living unit on Earth is interconnected and every unit lives according to the Creator's instructions (Kinsella, 1999). These beliefs and values are the foundation of the moral responsibility and for Aboriginal people's role in protecting their environment.

2.5 Intergenerational Programs

The face of families today has changed dramatically as a result of high job mobility, efficient transportation, and a society that went from being hunter-gather/agricultural to industrial to technological (Friedman, 1999). Today's families are no longer as physically close to each other as they once were years ago. During the 20th century, extended family households declined in prevalence. This change is associated particularly with increased residential mobility and with diminished financial responsibility of children for aging parents, as pensions from jobs and government-sponsored benefits for retired people became more common (Bales et al, 2000).

Before the arrival of Europeans, Aboriginal societies organized themselves in a variety of ways, differing in terms of the roles individual members and subgroups performed in work, decision-making, ceremonies, and the many other aspects of everyday life (Cadwalader, 2000). The Aboriginal societies were essentially egalitarian, no one person held a significantly higher level of status than anyone else. Within this egalitarian structure, people with the most knowledge the Elders, earned the most respect and commanded the most authority. They were perceived as the keeper of the cultural values that underpin the wellbeing of the family and the community (Cook, 1999).

For indigenous people, authentic elders are living models of transcendence, that is they are the epitome of human experience in an awakened state of mind.... Authentic elders today are not necessarily old. Rather, they are individuals who are perceived to have many gifts with which they can perform multiple roles. The leadership hat is one of the many that elders wear. They are also looked at as oral historians, teachers, cultural workers, ecologists, environmentalists and healers (Cook, 1999:192).

As well as the difference in ages between Elders and youth, there is an increasing social gap. Studies have shown that society's youth often hold negative attitudes toward the elderly and view them as senile, isolated, helpless, useless, lethargic, unproductive, and stubborn (Pinquart et al, 2000). Television and media further perpetuate this image of the old as weak, feeble and absent-minded, which serves to reaffirm the stereotype to widen the gap.

In order to dismiss a stereotype, it must be proven invalid. One way of doing that is through the use of intergenerational programs, which bring the young and old together to increase contact and understanding. A study by Bales et al (2000) showed that intergenerational programs effectively promote positive attitudes towards the elderly, and effectively bridged the gap between children and elders by encouraging positive relationships.

2.6 Indicators

The study of environment with and human health linkages has only begun to receive the fundamental attention it requires. As a result the creation of environmental health indicators and reporting have to catch up to the existing demands for understanding the linkages between human health and environmental change.

There are a number of differing perspectives defining what exactly an indicator is, but there is consensus that indicators should be more than simple statistics. The Jacksonville Community Council in 1992 described indicators as “...a way of seeing the ‘big picture’

by looking at a smaller piece of it....They tell us which direction we are going: up or down, forward or backward, getting better or worse or staying the same” (Environment Canada, 2001:13). In essence an indicator provides us with a summary indication of conditions or problems, enabling us to observe any progress or changes made. This information can then be measured in one of two ways. Measurements can take on a time frame or be judged against a benchmark as a measure of progress (Environment Canada, 2001).

Indicators play a fundamental role in the management of the human-environmental health relationship. For example, indicators can be utilized in order to:

- monitor trends in the state of the environment which serve to identify potential health risks;
- monitor trends in health resulting from exposures to various environmental risk factors;
- compare areas or countries in terms of their health status;
- monitor and assess the effectiveness of policies and interventions on environmental health;
- help create awareness about environmental health issues among differing stakeholder groups; and
- assist in the investigation of potential links between environment and health (North Hampton, 2002:1).

Environment Canada’s Sustainable Community Indicators Program utilizes five different frameworks, depending on the target needed, to develop suitable indicators. The domain-based framework is described as encompassing the three main components of sustainability [social, economic, and environmental] and utilizing them as the umbrella under which they organize the indicators (Environment Canada, 2001). The issue-based framework, as its name alludes, organizes indicators according to issues and problems in the areas of study (Environment Canada, 2001). The sectoral-based framework differs by organizing indicators into areas of government responsibility (Environment Canada, 2001). The goal-based framework develops indicators using sustainability objectives

which are categorized from a community's vision (Environment Canada, 2001). The causal-based framework, in comparison, examines the differing interactions between elements in the community and organizes the indicators into three categories -- stress, condition, and response (Environment Canada, 2001).

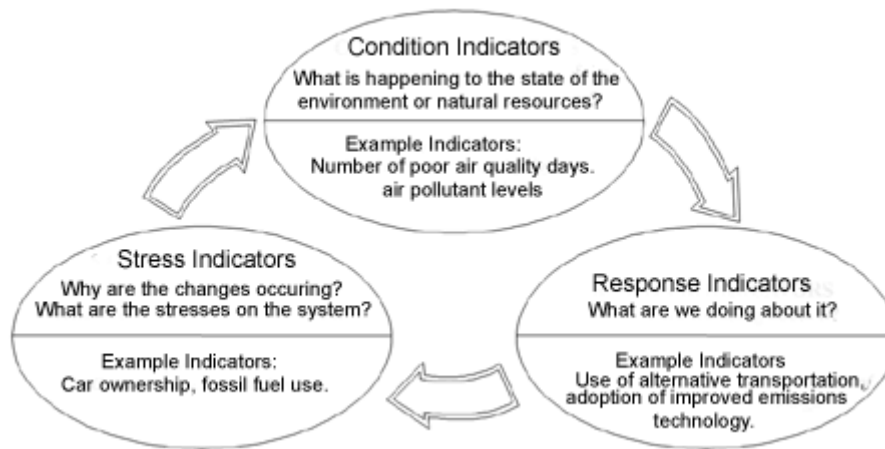
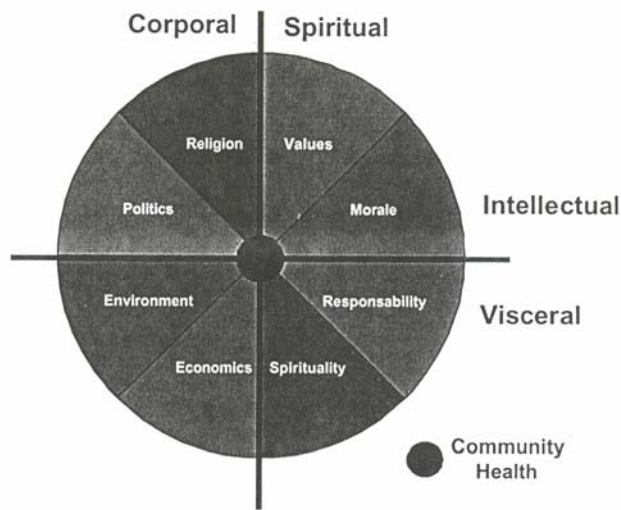


Figure 2. Causal-Based Framework: Stress-Condition-Response

(Source: Environment Canada, 2001; 33)

In the past indicators were primarily based on quantitative measures but with increasing value and importance being placed on things such as traditional ecological knowledge, qualitative measures are being used to measure non-quantifiable issues such as cultural values (North Hampton, 2002).

In 2000, Henry Lickers of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne created a model (Figure 3) that can be used to explain what must be considered in the formulation of indicators for a First Nations community. The wheel is adapted from the traditional medicine wheel (Figure 1) and recognizes that in order to keep human-environment health issues in balance the community must maintain a balanced approach to all life (Institute of the Environment, 2001: 4.3).



Source: Lickers (2000)

Figure 3. Life Indicators Wheel

(Source: The Institute of the Environment, 2001: 4.9)

When the wheel is divided in half horizontally, the upper half represents the intellectual and the lower half the visceral or bodily aspects of the community (The Institute of the Environment, 2001). When divided vertically, the right half of the wheel represents the spiritual and the left hand side the physical world (The Institute of the Environment, 2001). The focal point in this diagram is the community and it is said that the health of the community is the balance point of the circle, and in order to keep the indicators in balance, a balanced approach to life must be taken. Contained within each of the sectors are eight different representative aspects of the community. Each of these aspects must be considered in the construction of community life indicators and they must also be monitored to ensure that balance is created and maintained.

Chapter 3 – Photographic Methodology

“If one can see culture, then researchers should be able to employ audiovisual technologies to record it as amenable to analysis and presentation.”

(Ruby, 1996: 1345)



“Photographic Narrative Camera”

Photo By: Christa Foley

3.1 Introduction

Most people have heard the phrase '*a picture tells a thousand words*' and those words tell many different stories. It is for that reason I chose to employ a photographic narrative in my research with Iskatewizaagegan Independent First Nation. Photography is described as one of the most pervasive and least understood symbolic modes; even though visual media has become more and more influential in society (Ruby, 2003). The lack of understanding is rooted in the fact that a picture can be interpreted in a number of different ways by each individual person. A picture is a snapshot of one moment in time that constitutes a story in the eyes of the photographer that can stretch back for centuries.

3.2 Photographic Narrative Methodology

In an exploration of this new genre in arts-based research, I invited community youth, between the ages of 13 to 24 and Elders individuals -- not necessarily old but who are perceived by the community to have extensive knowledge and experience to photograph the people, places, or objects they felt were central to their culture and history (Beckley, 2002). The participants were each given an inexpensive less than \$25, non-disposable camera, which was theirs to keep at the end of the research, and were divided into two groups. One group was taken to the site and asked to take pictures following a discussion on the cultural history of the site by the Elder [see Appendix A. Photographic Narrative Consent Form]. I emphasized in instructions to participants, that pictures exemplify their understanding of the connection between the health of the people and the land. The second group was not taken to a site but left to their own devices to take pictures at their own timeline. The participants in this group were able to choose where they wanted to take their pictures, with the same emphasis given to the first group. Transportation was available to the participants, so that lack of mobility did not confine what participants could photograph.

When the pictures were returned and developed, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant in order to understand the meaning and importance of the pictures that were taken.

3.3 Data Collection & Analysis

The involvement of the community in the photographic narrative was a very powerful tool and effective methodology to strengthen and deepen the people's connection with their environment. The subjective nature of a photograph lends itself well to the solicitation of community views, because in order to understand the objective nature of the photograph you must interview the participant.

My grandfather used to say to me, when you are out in the wilderness or someplace alone think for a moment and stand. Take one good turn 360 degrees. What do you see? ...and capture everything that you see. I guess that is what I can say to that [question- Why did you choose to take these pictures?]. That is a 360 degree turn. You know that is the way my grandfather taught me, you see when you do that... (Stephen Kejick, 2003).

A total of eighteen cameras were distributed to participants. Of that number, five were returned unused because the individuals felt they had no time to participate in the research. A total of thirteen films were collected from the participants, but one film was exposed and was therefore unusable. One individual chose to provide me with pictures that they had taken on a previous occasion, because, they had lost the camera I had given them and still wished to participate.

Table 2. Photographic Narrative Camera Distribution	
Number of cameras distributed	18
Number of useable films	13
Number of participants using own camera	1
Number of cameras returned/ un-useable films	6
Number of female participants	5
Number of male participants	8

With duplicates of each roll, I returned to the community to provide each participant with a copy of their pictures and conduct individual semi-structured interviews. During the interviews, I asked participants to select two or three photos they felt captured the objective of the methodology and their intent. Based on the pictures selected, I asked them a series of questions (see table below).

Table 3. Semi-Structured Interview Cuing Questions Photographic Narrative
1. Please describe what you have chosen to take a picture of.
2. Where did you take this picture?
3. Why did you choose to take this picture?
4. Can you describe the connection between the people and the land in this picture?
5. What makes this person, place, or object central to your history or culture?
6. What is its history and importance to you?
7. Would you like to show this picture in a community gallery presentation?
8. What would you title this picture?

The responses to the questions elicited the meaning and importance of the picture, in a manner that showed me how much people know about their culture and history and what exactly is important to them. A total of thirteen people were interviewed about their pictures. The longest interview took approximately one hour and the shortest only ten minutes. The interviews were recorded with a Dictaphone and later transcribed. I chose to record the interview because it was not the cultural norms in this community to write while someone was talking to you.

After all the interviews were conducted and I had an understanding of what each individual was capturing in their chosen photographs, I began to analyze the photos and visually categorize them into themes.

The first step in this analysis of the photographs placed each photo into one of three broad groups according to the subjective nature of the photo: landscape, people or other. Of the total thirty seven photos chosen by the participants, twenty one can be classified as capturing an element in the landscape. The remainder were split with eleven focusing on people and seven falling within the category of other. The majority of the photos are concentrated in the landscape category, which shows that the majority of the participants see the land as a central component to their culture and history. The smaller number of photos which focused on people and their relation to culture and history is supportive of the notion of a generation gap occurring on the reserve.

The second aspect of my analysis grouped the photos into seven categories further defining the focus of each picture to allow me to draw additional conclusions. The categories included: artefact, Elders and youth, economic, learning, culture, visual appeal, and cultural landscapes. The categories containing the largest number of photographs were the culture and cultural landscape categories, each with eight photos. The next highest concentration of pictures fell into the learning and artefacts categories, each with six photos. The remainder of the photos were grouped into the following categories youth and Elder, economic, and visual appeal, each with three pictures.

3.4 Interpretation of Findings

From the more defined analysis of the photographs it is possible to draw several conclusions. Clearly, there were a number of differences between what the youth and Elder feel is significant. This difference can be attributed to the amount of cultural

history and knowledge the participant possessed. It is also important to note that the interviews with the youth did not contain as much depth and detail as the Elders provided during their interview. In the pictures taken by the youth, focus was placed on elements that were visually pleasing or included some aspect of history in the form of a material artefact such as an old shoe or bottle found at a cultural site. Although, at a subconscious level these possibly had rich meaning, the youth in interviews did not interpret hidden meanings of their choice of photo subjects/objects. The Elders, in comparison, chose to focus directly on culture and tradition in their photograph such as the inside of a round house, or the traditional dancing at Pow Wows.

The analysis of the photos also showed that gender played a significant role in what people photographed. The female participants more often took pictures that included children or had a connection to the activities, interests, or roles of future generations. In contrast, the male participants more often chose to photograph the land and its provisions. The difference between what the two genders chose to photograph is reflective of the traditional Ojibway family structure, a structure in which women typically held the role of primary caregiver and homemaker and men typically held the role of provider (in terms of basic necessities). The structure has undergone a great deal of change over the decades, but it is easy to see that some roles have not changed drastically. In the community women are more commonly involved with the rearing and care of children, whereas men are more commonly involved with activities out on the land such as hunting, fish, and trapping.

The one common theme that existed throughout all the photographs in the narrative methodology was history. I asked people to photograph people, places or things that exemplified their connection with the land, and the most common theme that arose from all the photos was history in terms of both the past (traditions, objects, or stories), and in terms of where and how the people have gotten where they are (infrastructure, teaching). This finding is not surprising given that the Aboriginal people's connection with the land is very historical and often interpreted with reference to history.

The photographic narrative is a relatively new methodology that is not yet widely used or overly documented, therefore I really had no idea what to expect in terms of results. For the purposes of my research I found the narrative very effective. The methodology confirmed what the literature states with regard to the status of the health-land connection. Interestingly, very few participants photographed individuals physically interacting with the land, supporting the literature which suggests that the decline in the health status of Aboriginal people is largely due to a lifestyle change that has caused a physical disconnection with the land.

The photo narrative was also successful in accessing value and meaning from participants, which may have not otherwise been privy to me. In one interview an Elder shared a significant amount of knowledge in order to describe the meaning of a picture. The in-depth description and actual tour of the site that I received typically would not have been shared with a non-Aboriginal person.

I feel that the best quality of this method is its ability to get people to open up and share their knowledge due to its non-invasive nature. The ability to have the photograph in front of the participant during the interview also helps to tap into the knowledge that might otherwise be left out because the exchange was not occur onsite.

3.5 Participants Photographs

Participant: Les Ainspac

Male Elder*

Photo Title: “Poison Ivy”



Location of Photo: Gardening Island.

Subject of Photo: Poison Ivy Root.

Story of the Photo: *“The poison ivy and the poison ivy root. It has a lot of history about the frog. Like everything around us you know, we have uses for the plants and animals and we try to use all of it. The story behind the poison ivy root was the frog escaping from their enemies and going into the poison ivy and then they get infected with the poison ivy and then they dig up the root and apply that to get rid of the poison ivy. That is how you get rid of poison ivy.”*

Photo Title: “Mukwa”



Location of Photo: Outside participant’s residence.

Subject of Photo: Bear skins.

Story of the Photo: *“The big bear there was hunted... at North Lodge, I cannot remember the name [of the exact place], up on Tarmagin Bay. They have that bear management area around here and apparently it was shot and the guys did not follow the bear, and it ran out onto the highway and got killed and that is where we picked it up. We don’t like to see any animals go to waste on the highway, so we brought it home and skinned it. Now we are drying it out. Traditional they just used them for blankets or coverings, clothing, and we used the bear grease for medicinal purposes. We just boil that down and we have some containers here. Let me just get it. It is very effective on open cuts and wounds. Oh, yeah and also for hair loss. You put it on a bald spot and you will have hair growing there. We got that one from the MNR, and they didn’t want it to go to waste. Yeah it is like a \$5000 fine. And for us to just see a bear or any other*

animal go to waste. Ah... and that bear is part of our clan system. When we use to have that other form of government, the traditional form of government, the bears there were are warriors they protected us. Yeah there was the bears, the lynx, the martin clan, they were all our warriors. These were our police officers and security people. They were held in high regard among the traditional native people.”

Photo Title: “Potato Island”



Location of Photo: Potato Island.

Subject of Photo: Site Visit with Elders and youth.

Story of the Photo: “Dating back to 1610 when the first European came into the Shoal Lake watershed our people did a lot of farming and this is one of the islands, one of the 52 islands that were developed for that agricultural purpose. There were other First Nations that used to live here that did the same long before the fur trade came in and spread up everything. Yeah there was the Dakota Sioux, Pawnee, Cree and Ojibway and we all did our agricultural stuff on these islands. Trade kind of changed that, and war broke out and we ended up being here.”

Participant: Kelly Blackhorse

Female youth

Photo Title: *“Economic Development”*



Location of Photo: Isobel Pinesse Memorial Health Centre.

Subject of Photo: Isobel Pinesse Memorial Health Centre.

Story of the Photo: *“...I felt that I really should show part of our economic development throughout the past couple of years.”*

Photo Title: *“Economic Development”*



Location of Photo: The Landing Store & Gas Station.

Subject of Photo: The Landing Store & Gas Station.

Story of the Photo: *“...I felt that I really should show part of our economic development throughout the past couple of years.”*

Photo Title: *“Economic Development”*



Location of Photo: David Kejick School Green House.

Subject of Photo: David Kejick School Green House.

Story of the Photo: *“...the green house is a part of how we grew our vegetables and all our foods that we eat.”*

Participant: Gordon Greene

Male youth

Photo Title: “Untitled”



Location of Photo: Crow Duck Lake.

Subject of Photo: Old shoe found at site.

Story of the Photo: *“The reason why I took a picture of the shoes is because they used to have shoes a long time ago, and instead of moccasins they used shoes. And that is why I took a picture of that because they weren’t still wearing moccasins, they were still wearing shoes back then- so if they had shoes back then, they must have had cans, and bottles.”*

Photo Title: “Untitled”

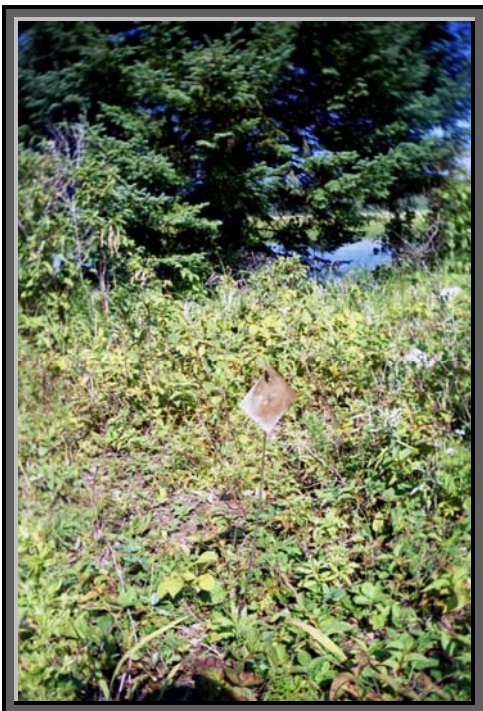


Location of Photo: Crow Duck Lake.

Subject of Photo: Old glass baby bottle found at site.

Story of the Photo: *“The reason why I took a picture of the baby bottle is because they use to have glass before instead of plastic.”*

Photo Title: “Untitled”



Location of Photo: Crow Duck Lake.

Subject of Photo: Old trail marker found at site.

Story of the Photo: *“The reason why I picked the picture of the trail marker is because they used to have trails going in there before, used to camp there, and used to leave from there using markers.”*

Participant: Robin Greene

Male Elder

Photo Title: “Crow Duck Lake”



Location of Photo: Crow Duck Lake.

Subject of Photo: Looking out onto the rice in the bay.

Story of the Photo: *“Well first of all that’s the area at Crow Duck Lake where the wild rice used to be pretty plentiful at one time and this has to do with a water level that has to be maintained in order to have a good crop of wild rice.... You see in the picture that it is not really half as much as it used to be when it grew in that bay. So, what you are looking at is something that needs to be regulated in the way of water levels. Until such time when that is done in that way then the wild rice will be growing every year. It is all*

a matter of maintenance and that is all it will take to have wild rice grow back where it use to be.”

Photo Title: “Crow Duck Lake”



Location of Photo: Crow Duck Lake.

Subject of Photo: Sparse amounts of rice in the bay.

Story of the Photo: *“Well there is not really too much to add to what I have just said because of the problem is always water level. That is the main thing about wild rice, having a good crop of wild rice is the water levels. And the other thing that I notice about this particular area of Crow Duck Lake is the water is coming from the other lakes. So that water has to keep moving in a sense from one lake to another. If it is blocked then naturally, which has happened in Crow Duck Lake when the beaver made dams... where the water flows, then it becomes flooded and then again there are all the other things that grow in the water that are not supposed to grow there. So this is what I have learned about my experience with the wild rice and the stories of what my Dad use[d] to tell me, what makes it grow and why some of the things... probably this has to do with the*

vegetation in the water while the water has to move from one place to another. When it is blocked naturally it is disturbing the system of the flow.”

Photo Title: “Crow Duck Lake”



Location of Photo: Crow Duck Lake.

Subject of Photo: Site Visit with Elder and Youth at Crow Duck Lake.

Story of the Photo: *“I included this picture so that people will know they were there.”*

Participant: Spencer Greene

Male youth

Photo Title: *“Potato Island”*



Location of Photo: Potato Island.

Subject of Photo: View of Potato Island from the speed boat.

Story of the Photo: *“...this is Potato Island... [the picture is a] nice view of the water.”*

Photo Title: *“Grandfather’s Island”*



Location of Photo: Les’ Gardening Island.

Subject of Photo: View of Gardening Island from the speed boat.

Story of the Photo: *“This is my Grandpa’s Island ...the island where my grandfather is buried.”*

Photo Title: *“Gardening Island”*



Location of Photo: Les’ Gardening Island.

Subject of Photo: Spencer sitting on the rocks at the Gardening Island.

Story of the Photo: *“This is Les’s Gardening Island... [it is a] nice view of the water.”*

Participant: Stephen Kejick

Male Elder

Photo Title: *“Untitled”*



Location of Photo: Outside the participant's residence.

Subject of Photo: Traditional medicine.

Story of the Photo: *“This here is a herb medicine that is used for diarrhea, this particular... I don't know what it is called in English but you could probably find that out in your dictionary or plant dictionary. That's use generally for cleansing of your system. You will generally find these in the rocky area.”*

Photo Title: “Holistic”



Location of Photo: Outside the participant’s residence.

Subject of Photo: Inside the Round House.

Story of the Photo: *“Well this is the structure of the traditional Round House. The inside of the building, it has four pillars and four different colours as well. It has four different identities of each direction... As you notice in the picture there is a star blanket behind it and also a traditional drum, and that drum is two in one drum- it represents two meanings of our traditions and each pole has a symbol of a clan system- moose, lynx, wolf and eagle. And there are other clans that are not here at this present time that will be eventually coming into the round house to resemble the clan system of the community. So that’s what the photo is telling you. As you see the traditional drum is also located right in the centre and that’s the drum itself, that’s the traditional. That is how we have our traditional ceremonies throughout the year. The whole round house itself it has a very detailed legend to it, every item there in traditions... like the materials, the logs, the rafters, and what not... there are a certain number in there that were put in there. Each item is, like I said, recognized as a number. Each of it has its own spirit, lets put it that way. And that represents all the First Nations within Turtle Island, this particular round house. It is not only meant for this community it is also meant for the whole Turtle*

Island. Whoever wishes to participate or wishes to come and do healings or fast cleansings or what not, this is the place for it. The star blanket represents... it is a healing blanket; it is not just any blanket. We do use that when someone is ill. We tend to use that for the person to use. There is one located I believe in the health centre here in the community, but they are a lot of different designs, but it still represents the star blanket as the universe, lets put it that way. As you see it here it has four different colours, it represents four different directions, also the seasons it represents with those colours. And that is about it that I can describe at the moment.”

Photo Title: “Respect”



Location of Photo: Outside the participant’s residence.

Subject of Photo: Traditional respect for animals.

Story of the Photo: *“This... shows the respect of an animal, particularly a deer. ...to show respect for an animal you have to do something special for that animal to show the respect of what it was made out of. Like particularly the antlers itself is for his own protection from its own species. In traditions our ancestors, when they got the deer they would hang the whole head itself and it would come to that in a period of probably two to three years. So it will look in this particular way. So as you noticed in the first picture there, the moose... yeah there it is there... that is the same as it is here, respecting the animal, the nature of what was given to us. Not only that but it is hung in a tree,*

particularly a tree that is going to last for a really long period of time. For instance, this particular one is hung on an oak. As you know an oak stands for a good number of years. Probably if this is not bothered by anybody that will probably grow right into that tree... the antlers itself. So anytime you see out in the bush antlers, it is best not to touch it or bother it. It has been hung there by probably a person that knows the respect of that particular animal. Other than that, that is what that picture is telling you."

Photo Title: "Neglect"



Location of Photo: Outside the participant's residence.

Subject of Photo: Over growth consuming disposed of items.

Story of the Photo: "...this one tells you the neglect. Sometimes we tend to not bother things and they will just deteriorate. This particular thing it's deteriorating and it's neglected and the environment is taking over... taking over its course."

Participant: Ed Jr. Mandamin
Male Elder*

Photo Title: “Teaching”



Location of Photo: Crow Duck Lake.

Subject of Photo: Elder and youth on site visit to Crow Duck Lake.

Story of the Photo: “...here is a generation that use[d] to pick and a generation that is not picking but just hearing it from the Elders. And I think that this is where this is going to all start up again, with the Elders and the youths and talking about wild rice and that came with it, the legends, the ceremonies and the teaching of environment and something like that... good eating.... It captures what they used to do when they use to go pick was teaching the younger ones about the wild rice, because wild rice is so significant in our culture and it is placed up there very high in regards and respect and that was part of it. It brought a lot of animals to be hunt there and stuff like that. So, these young ones that are growing up don’t know that, they don’t even know what it is. She’d never seen wild rice until we got there, this young lady here. By him sharing his experiences with her,

* Individuals I perceive as ‘Elders’ because of the vast amount of knowledge they hold about their people and their environments.

they both finish off that cycle of learning that our people did way before the intrusion of any other culture or media that came in. It was always a circle going and it was continually going until the residential school broke it up, but now we are just starting to redo it again. Put the links back together in that chain or circle there.... That is what we are doing hopefully with this picture here. There's a historical significance of that. For sure our people have been there. And there is evidence of that and the evidence is in Robin here who has stories about that and Jimmy Redsky and those guys here.... That is evident that this place was used and they had management practices put in place and all that. So they were really well sufficient in terms of looking after themselves health wise and spiritually and also looking after the earth too.... Putting things back, sustainable development. So that is why this has to happen again. With this project here and this picture, that is what I see this here."

Photo Title: "Footprint in Time"



Location of Photo: Crow Duck Lake.

Subject of Photo: Old shoe found at main campsite on Crow Duck Lake.

Story of the Photo: *"I have taken a picture of an old shoe, which tells me that there were people there before and we are sort of retracing their footprints back to where it all*

started from. By taking the picture of the can and the old shoe, that again signifies that that was a use there. Just by looking at them and being there you could feel the history and feel the spirits of the people that were there and the spirits want us to come back there an they want us to teach these young ones about that, and that is what these pictures tell me.”

Photo Title: *“The Culture is in the Can”*



Location of Photo: Crow Duck Lake.

Subject of Photo: Old can found at main campsite on Crow Duck Lake.

Story of the Photo: *“This can here represents that people stayed and ate there, you know kind of following that footstep of that shoe. The other people are eventually going to eat there and hopefully start picking wild rice over there.”*

Participant: Gina Mandamin

Female youth

Photo Title: *“Native Pride”*



Location of Photo: Behind the Isobelle Pinesse Health Centre

Subject of Photo: Teaching the Little Eagles Drumming Group traditional Pow Wow Songs.

Story of the Photo: *“...he [Gina’s Brother] is teaching them how to sing the traditional Pow Wow songs. Every song he teaches has a purpose and meaning. All Pow Wow songs are used to acknowledge our creator and culture.”*

Photo Title: *“Native Pride”*



Location of Photo: Isobelle Pinesse Health Centre

Subject of Photo: Teaching the youth how to make tradition drum sticks.

Story of the Photo: *“He [Gina’s Brother] comes down pretty much every summer to teach the young boys how to sing and learn new songs. In this picture he is showing this little guy how to make a drum stick. Drum sticks are used to beat the drum. By teaching our children and youth at an early age, we hope to preserve our cultural and traditional gifts given to us by the creator.”*

Photo Title: *“Native Pride”*



Location of Photo: Treaty Three Area

Subject of Photo: Picking Sweet Grass

Story of the Photo: *“...he [Gina’s brother] took the kids out on an outing and they are collecting sweet grass in the Treaty Three Area. And he was showing them what the sweet grass looks like and how to pick it. Our kids pick sweet grass annually so it can be used at our annual Pow Wow as gifts for our visitors. Sweet grass is used for purifying your mind and body so you can think clear and positive.”*

Participant: Laura Mandamin

Female youth

Photo Title: *"Crow Duck"*



Location of Photo: Crow Duck Lake.

Subject of Photo: Tin can grown into trees at campsite.

Story of the Photo: Unavailable.

Photo Title: *"Rice on the Lake"*



Location of Photo: Crow Duck Lake.

Subject of Photo: View of the rice on Crow Duck Lake.

Story of the Photo: Unavailable.

Photo Title: *“Bottles from the Past”*



Location of Photo: Crow Duck Lake.

Subject of Photo: Old bottle found at the campsite at Crow Duck Lake.

Story of the Photo: Unavailable.

Participant: Shauna Mandamin

Female youth

Photo Title: *“The Making of a Tik’ninagan”*



Location of Photo: On-reserve.

Subject of Photo: Tik’ninagan making workshop.

Story of the Photo: *“The [kind of] tree [you need] when you want a Tik’ninagan done....*

You go out into the bush and you look for a straight ash tree. It has to be completely straight, it can’t have no curves, nothing, and I think you have to find a certain one a female or male. I think it was a male that we had to look for. Which the way... I don’t know how we did that. And we offered tobacco, said why we needed the tree and what we were going to use it for.”

Photo Title: “*The Making of a Tik’ninagan*”



Location of Photo: On-reserve.

Subject of Photo: Tik’ninagan making workshop.

Story of the Photo: “[What] *I am holding in my hand is a tub of water and then what you do is soak the loopy part of the Tik’ninagan, which is called a visor. Then you boil it in there, and there is another picture in there that shows it. And this is the main board where the child... the baby lays on. You put that thing in there and soak it for a couple [of] hours and bend it into shape using sticks.*”

Photo Title: *“The Making of a Tik’ninagan”*



Location of Photo: On-reserve.

Subject of Photo: Tik’ninagan making workshop.

Story of the Photo: *“You can use the board for your child, grandchildren; and so on and so on... it is something that can be passed down.”*

Participant: Victoria Pinesse

Female youth

Photo Title: *“The View”*



Location of Photo: On-reserve.

Subject of Photo: View of Shoal Lake.

Story of the Photo: *“I like the view there.”*

Participant: Jimmy Redsky

Male Elder

Photo Title: *“Potato Island”*



Location of Photo: Potato Island.

Subject of Photo: Rayne and Spencer in the water at Potato Island.

Story of the Photo: *“Why I chose that [picture] was way back in biblical... I cannot remember [the story exactly], the [one] walking on the water. The little boy doing that thought it was funny, but I think if he knew.... I don’t think he was aware of it. [I don’t know] if he has read the bible. It looked like this guy was sitting on the water. That is why this reminds me of that, without a question.... I have nothing [for or] against Christianity though. Take the road that you want to take, nobody is forcing you. My kids, I never forced them.”*

Photo Title: “Pow Wow”



Location of Photo: Pow Wow.

Subject of Photo: Pow Wow Princess and Brave Pageant.

Story of the Photo: *“You mentioned when you gave us the cameras to take pictures of things cultural. Culturally I guess is the reason that I have taken this picture at the Pow Wow. I wasn’t concentrating on who it was. I just wanted that picture. I think this guy was in Rat Portage. The young, they evolve in the Pow Wows.”*

Photo Title: “Pow Wow”



Location of Photo: Pow Wow.

Subject of Photo: Community member, Elder and the research team at the Pow Wow Elders tent.

Story of the Photo: “...I...took this at the Pow Wow, because of the trip around the lake with you people [research team]. The reason that I put that thing in there [picture] is because you have been with us for this summer and I thought it would look nice. Being involved all these kinds of things; it is why I choose it.”

Photo Title: “Young & Old”



Location of Photo: Iskatewizaagegan First Nation’s Pow Wow.

Subject of Photo: Elders and youth at the Pow Wow Elders tent.

Story of the Photo: *“The reason I picked this is that I thought it looked nice to have that picture, a setting like that at the Pow Wow, where the two Elders sitting out on the side and the young ones in the front. That is the reason that I picked that one. It is the young and the old.”*

Participant: Rayne Wapioke
Male youth

Photo Title: *“The Vortex”*



Location of Photo: Gardening Island.

Subject of Photo: Spider web on the rocks at the gardening island.

Story of the Photo: *“I like the way it looked.”*

Photo Title: “*The Island*”



Location of Photo: Gardening Island

Subject of Photo: View of Gardening Island from the boat.

Story of the Photo: “*I like the way it looked.*”

Photo Title: “*The Cliffs*”



Location of Photo: On-reserve near to the landing.

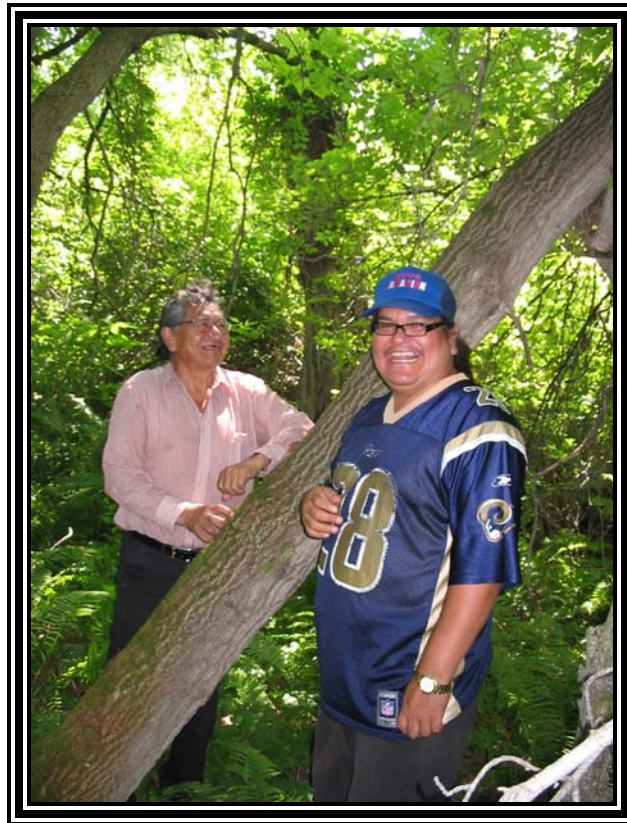
Subject of Photo: Cliffside.

Story of the Photo: “*I like the way it looked.*”

Chapter 4 – Site Visit Methodology

“Land belongs to life and life belongs to the land. In order to maintain health, one must maintain the relationship with the earth.”

(Colomeda, 1999: 4)



“Stull Island Site Visit”

Subjects: Edward Sr. Mandamin & Ed Jr. Mandamin

Photo By: Christa Foley

4.1 Introduction

Aboriginal culture is based on oral tradition and history. Traditionally, knowledge is passed down through experience, stories, songs, and games. It is for this reason that I choose to utilize a methodology that would be sensitive to traditional methods of knowledge transmission and create an opportunity for an onsite exploration of the culture and history with both youth and Elders.

4.2 Site Visit Methodology

Each of the five sites, were visited by the researcher and at least one Elder. The two focus sites, Crow Duck Lake and Potato Island, were also visited by a grouping of one or two Elders and two youth between the ages of 13 to 24 years [see Appendix B. Site Visit Consent Form]. The purpose of this activity was to obtain a free-flowing dialogue with regard to the history of each of the five sites and to provide opportunities for intergenerational exchange and interaction. The site visits were documented by the researcher with a video camera, and a digital camera. During the Elder and youth site visits the participants also had cameras to document the sites. It was my hope that the Elders would impart their memories, knowledge and stories about the site to the youth and stimulate questions and dialogue between the youth and Elders. A list of cuing questions was developed and kept on hand in the case that the process did not run smoothly (see Table 3)

Table 4. Cuing Questions for Site Visits

1. How did this site get its name?
2. What was the importance of the site when you were young?
3. Does the site look different today? How?
4. How was the site maintained when you were young?
5. How often did you visit the site? Any particular time of year?
6. What was harvested from the site?
7. How did you harvest_____? What part of the plant etc...?
8. Were there any special plants or herbs that were harvested here that are no longer here today?
9. Why is the restoration of the site important?
10. Are there any stories or legends about this site that you can recall?
11. What role do you envision for the youth with regard to the restoration of this site?
12. What do you want to see happen with this site? What do you envision?

4.3 Data Collection & Analysis

Throughout the course of the field season, a number of visits were made to the five sites. The participation of the youth in the site visits only occurred during two visits; one to Crow Duck Lake and one to Potato Island. I chose only to involve youth at these locations because the sites were the easiest to access and were the two focus sites. Since the Elders are the keepers of the knowledge, I chose to involve them as much as possible in order to gain a clear and conscience understanding of the cultural history. I visited each site at least once with an individual or group of Elders.

Trying to organize and conduct the site visits with both youth and Elders was a lot more difficult than I initially thought it would be. I found it very difficult to recruit youth to participate in this methodology. I was told by a community Elder that “...it is hard [and] difficult to motivate them [youth] and get them [youth] interested” (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). The majority of the youth from the community were busy working, attending Pow

Wow's on other reserves, busy with other activities for the summer, or otherwise disinterested.

The first site visit that brought together youth with a community Elder was a visit to Potato Island. Unfortunately I was unable to recruit participants within the preferred age group, so I was forced to expand the age grouping to allow for younger participants. The visit did not occur as I had imagined it would. The participants were quite visibly disinterested in learning about the history and use of the site, reaffirming the reasons why I had wanted to obtain participants between the ages of fourteen to twenty four. Another factor may have been the fact that the two youth were of the same age and wanting to play together.

The second youth and Elder site visit, this time to Crow Duck Lake, was far more successful than the first. Unlike the site visit to Potato Island, I was able to recruit two participants within the age group I desired. Upon arriving at the site, the youth began engaging with the Elder about the history and use of the site. We walked around the main campsite area and discussed the layout of the camp, the activities that coincided with the harvest of the rice, and the traditional harvest. As I had hoped, the presence of the youth and their curiosity spurred a great deal of discussion. The youth were very excited about the site. They even expressed a desire to return and learn traditional harvesting techniques.

A number of site visits were also made with Elders alone. The first of these site visits was two single daytrips out on the lake with a small group of Elders, community members and the research team near the start of the field research. We had the opportunity to visit three of the five culturally and historically significant sites: Potato Island, Stull Island, and various blueberry sites; along with a couple of other sites the Elders wanted to share with us. The tour on the lake was a great opportunity to get to know everyone and begin to understand each Elder's area of knowledge, and their willingness to share that knowledge for the purposes of the research.

With a firm understanding of each Elder's area of knowledge I gained during the boat tour on the lake, I invited each Elder to visit the focus sites individually with me to discuss the knowledge and history they held about the sites. Several trips were made to both Potato Island and Crow Duck Lake with different Elders. I felt it was necessary to take the Elder to the sites individually, because, during the boat tour on the Lake I noticed that some Elders preferred not to discuss what they knew around the other Elders perhaps because they felt that did not possess as much information in comparison to another individual. So, in an effort to make each of the individuals comfortable enough to express their knowledge of the site, each Elder was taken to the site separately. The knowledge collected from the Elders during the site visits are compiled below.

4.4 Cultural and Ethno-Ecological Site Histories

The history of IIFN, as with other aboriginal cultures, has been passed down from generation to generation since time immemorial. In order to understand and document this extensive history, each of the five sites were explored through the stories of the people during site visits and interviews. The following information is a collection of the ethno-ecology and cultural histories obtained from the Elders of IIFN and other community members throughout the entire research project.

4.41 Gardening Islands (*Gitiiganii Minis*)

Historically there were over fifty gardening islands used by the First Nation's people of Shoal Lake to grow various vegetable crops. The crops grown commonly included: potatoes, pumpkin, squash, corn, tomatoes, onions, carrots, parsnips, lettuce, parsley and peas (Les Ainspac, 2003). The people chose the islands as the site for their gardens for a variety of reasons. The main reason for the use of the islands as gardening sites is a historical one. The Ojibway people started gardening on the islands during the time of the Indian Wars between the Ojibway and the Sioux in the 1600's. The Ojibway could

not plant on the mainland as they had done prior because the enemy would destroy the gardens, so instead Islands on the Shoal Lake Watershed were used including Potato Island because the enemies did not possess canoes (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). Another reason for locating on the islands was the quality of the soil. The islands that were selected had a rich and dark loamy soil that was perfect for gardening (Technical Report No.1, 2003). Additionally, locating the garden on one of the island sites dealt with a lack of available space and quality soil within the community in order for families to garden successfully (Les Ainspac, 2003).

Gardening was never a fulltime job for the people of Shoal Lake, and the islands were adapted to allow for the people to be away for prolonged periods of time. Prescribed burns were done by the people to clear the site for the garden (Technical Report No.1, 2003). Nutrients were returned to the soil as a result of the burn, and with whitefish scales and bones that were added to the soil to fertilize it (Les Ainspac, 2003). Large trees were planted along the outside of the island to serve as wind blocks, keep the islands contents unknown, and provide much needed shade during the hot summer months when the garden was left unattended while people harvested fish, wild blueberries, wild rice and game (Les Ainspac, 2003).

Today, as a result of these control mechanisms it is easy to spot an island that has been used for such a purpose as there a number of very tall trees along the outer edges of the island, coupled with a new shorter stand of trees and bushes in the inner sections that previously would have been burned away in the maintenance of the site for the garden (Technical Report No.1, 2003). Islands that have not been gardened have a more even distribution with taller height and size of trees.

For the purposes of the research project only one of the gardening islands was focused on in the research in relation to ethno-ecology and cultural history. Potato Island, as it is commonly referred to by the community, is one of a grouping of islands located approximately 7 kilometres to the south of the reserve, with a total land area of approximately 1.5 hectares (Technical Report No.1, 2003).

Potato Island has a very interesting history that dates back several centuries. In 1610, explorers from the Northwest Company became the first known white men to pass through the area, and by Potato Island, looking for the riches of the western world (Les Ainspac, 2003). The island also played a central role in the lives of many young people when the Cecelia Jeffrey Residential School opened adjacent to the Island in 1902 (Lake of the Woods Museum Archives). The school grew various root vegetables on the island until it was closed and moved to Round Lake, 42 miles away from the community, in 1929 (Lake of the Woods Museum Archives). The community was told that this move was made to become less isolated and closer to the services Kenora offered (Lake of the Woods Museum Archives). It was not clear whether anyone in the community was using the islands at the same time as the school, or whether someone was displaced as a result of the school's use of the island.

Potato Island was and still is an important site for various bird species. During the wild rice harvest, the Potato Islands were important sanctuaries for birds. The birds would feed on berries on the island and then fly off to feed on the wild rice at sundown (Walter Redsky, 2003). Even today the site is home to many varieties of song birds that feed on a wealth of berries which are slowly being choked out by nettles because the site has not been burned for a very long time and the berries are dependent on fire to regenerate.

After the closure of the residential school, the use of the island slowly diminished. Community members were unaware of the last time that the island was used by a member of the community for the purposes of gardening vegetables. The Elders believed that the last time someone gardened the island dates back to the 1960's (Robin Greene, 2003).

4.42 Crow Duck Lake (*Kaagaagiishib Zaagegan*)

Crow Duck Lake received its name because it was a breeding ground for cormorants, also known as crow ducks (Robin Greene, 2003). The lake has traditionally been an important site for the people of Shoal Lake for the harvest of wild rice in the early fall

and hunting of various game animals in the spring (Technical Report No.1, 2003). In the past, the lake was used regularly by the community for the traditional harvest of wild rice, but over the years the abundance of wild rice has diminished along with the traditional harvesters (Jimmy Redsky, 2003).

Crow Duck Lake is relatively isolated with only two access roads: Rush Bay Road and a gravel road off the main reserve road from which you must boat 15mins. Both of these access points have highly undesirable launch areas for a motor boat or mechanical ricing boat. In the past, with the use of canoes, access would have been easier, but today the majority of ricing that occurs now is done by mechanical harvesters (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). With the combination of isolation and poor rice crops, there has been little draw for people to harvest rice in this area.

The traditional harvest of wild rice at Crow Duck Lake was well organized and very social in nature. A group of Elders, usually four, would govern and manage the workings of the camp. The Elders would hold the ceremonies to thank the Creator and bless the harvest. They would select a crier, “...*a person with a big voice,*” to signal the start and stop of picking each day (Walter Redsky, 2003). Since the position of the Elders was honoured and respected, everyone would listen to what they had to say and do what was told.

The traditional harvesting of wild rice was done with ricing sticks from a canoe. Ricing sticks were no longer than 2 or 3 feet and were made of wood. The sticks were decorated and prior to their use, ceremonially blessed (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). Typically, everyone in family was involved in the harvesting and processing of the rice. They would set out in the canoes and rice for hours, filling up the bottoms of their boats with rice. The ricing sticks were used in a crossing motion which knocked the rice right off the stocks and into the boat (Patrick Kejick, 2003). When the boats were filled the rice was laid out too dry in the summer sun. With the rice was dried, the next step was to roast the rice over the fire. The rice was roasted over the fire in a tub, a process that partially cooked or finished the rice.

The next step was dancing on the rice. Dancing on the rice was an essential part of the process as it separated the edible rice from the husk (Patrick Kejick, 2003). Separating the two was very important because if the husk of the rice was not removed and someone ate it, that person could choke (Walter Redsky, 2003). So, in order to remove the risk and the husk, the people would dance on the rice. Preparation was required before the dance began. A ricing bowl, small circular pit in the ground shaped like a bowl, was created. With clay-based soils, the clay would be smoothed into a bowl shape and would harden in the sun. For soils that did not contain a clay-base a bowl would still be dug, but would be covered with canvas or skins to prevent the rice from getting stuck in the soil (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). The individual dancing on the rice would have the support of a rice dancing pole. The pole would either be attached to a nearby tree or was held by another person horizontally to provide balance (Robin Greene, 2003). The dancer wearing moccasins would then dance on the rice whilst another fanned the bowl with a ricing basket. Fanning helped separate the rice from the husks, as the husks would catch in the grass that surrounded the ricing bowl. The ricing baskets were made of birch bark and varied in size, but were usually a square shape (Patrick Kejick, 2003)



“Birch Bark Ricing Baskets”

Subject: Patrick Kejick

Photo By: Christa Foley

After all the husks were removed and only the rice remained, the rice was cleaned and bagged. The rice was packaged into 100lbs bags which had to be hauled from the campsite at Crow Duck on the backs of the pickers down the trail to the rice buyers at the

highway (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). The two main buyers for wild rice and other goods during this time were two men by the last name of Silverman and Ratuski (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). Not all the rice harvested was sold. People would collect for those who could not participate in the harvest, i.e. those not fit to harvest because of health or age (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). They would make sure that they kept a supply to last them through the winter. What was sold was essentially surplus harvest.

The site at Crow Duck Lake hosted many other activities during the wild rice harvest. People would hunt the abundant wild game that fed off the rice, while some would harvest berries and medicinal plants nearby (Robin Greene, 2003). In the evenings, nearly the whole camp would participate in various social activities such as: a square dance, a Pow Wow, or a round of cards (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). The original campsite, located on an inlet jetting out into the bay, could hold approximately thirty to forty people (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). On this site, a store was operated during the rice harvest by an individual who worked for Ratuski [the length of time that the store operated on the site is not definitively known]. The store provided the people with foodstuff and extras like candy, prior to the construction of the Rush Bay Road (Robin Greene, 2003). Alcohol was not a big problem at this site until the road was put in. When the road was built, another campsite was cleared at the outlet of Crow Duck Creek. The Elders say that this was where all the rowdy people were cast to spend the night and sober up (Jimmy Redsky, 2003).

In the last fifty years, Elders have noticed a great deal of change in the area attributable to a number of factors. One factor is fluctuations in water levels. The fluctuations are caused by changes in the volume of annual precipitation and by blockages to the natural flow of water. Crow Duck Creek, an outlet draining into Crow Duck Lake, is overrun by bog and beaver dams which previously did not exist. Another factor impacting the rice fields are the lily pads. The Elders have said that in the past the lily pads were removed from the water in order to increase the success of the rice crop, as the lily pads block the sunlight from reaching the seeds that lay below the water impacting the germination of the rice seeds (Jimmy Redsky & Robin Greene, 2003). The lily pads are no longer being

removed so they have begun to take up a great deal of surface area. In the past, Elders said that the rice would have filled up the bay from the mouth to the outlet, now it is patchy sporadic and amounts to one-quarter of what used to be harvested (Jimmy Redsky & Robin Greene, 2003). Elders also feel that another factor is the movement from traditional harvesting. When the people harvested traditionally, a great deal of rice would fall into the water replenishing the crop for the next year. With the mechanical harvesting process, far less rice is dispersed unless the mechanical harvester purposely spills back some of the rice into the water (Stephen Mandamin, 2003). Another factor that has been mentioned is the absence of ceremonies during mechanical harvesting which use to be practiced when the people harvested traditionally. Intricate ceremonies were previously held before the harvest and today these are not practiced, and some Elders attribute this lack of respect to the Creator negative response of diminishing rice fields (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). Many also feel that the area has been neglected by the people for a long time. In the past harvesters would pull out the lily pads, and had even cleaned out the bog that is now built up at the outlet of Crow Duck Creek (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). According to one Elder the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources in 1962, at that time called the Department of Lands and Forests, promised the people of IIFN that they would build a dam so the water running from Crow Duck Creek to Crow Duck Lake could be regulated. Unfortunately, no action was taken after the promise was made (Robin Greene, 2003).

4.43 High Lake & High Lake Access Trail

High Lake and the High Lake Access Trail are considered culturally significant among the community members of Iskatewizaagegan First Nation. The Lake itself is located north of the reserve boundary, while the access trail lies entirely within the boundary. The community has been using this area for decades for fishing and hunting, and in the past for access to the highway (Technical Report No.1, 2003).

Fishing on High Lake was and still is a very popular activity mainly due to the population of Rainbow Trout not found in Shoal Lake, but this activity was done illegally for many years (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). Prior to the boundary disputes regarding the Manitoba and Ontario border, High Lake laid within the territory of Manitoba, and the Ontario Government had no rights to grant permission to members of the reserve to fish in Manitoba waters (Jimmy Redsky). So, when band members went fishing there they did so illegally until the boundary was finalized making High Lake as part of Ontario.

The primary function of the access trail was to provide a connection between Shoal Lake and High Lake for people to gain access to the resources of the area (Technical Report No.1, 2003). It was rich in wild game and fish, which is a draw for people even today. At the southern tip of the Lake, where High Creek originates, lies an old campsite that was used by hunters when on overnight trips (Technical Report No.1, 2003). Evidence of the campsite still remains with an old fire pit blackened by flame. In the vicinity of the campsite are small patches of blueberries that were harvested by visitors to the area. The trail was also used to travel to the highway near the town of Falcon Lake (Oliver Pinesse, 2003). The distance which one had to travel to get there was no more than ten or fifteen miles (Oliver Pinesse, 2003). With the construction of the main road off the highway running into the community of IIFN, use of the trail as an access to the highway dropped significantly (Jimmy Redsky, 2003).

The high water levels occurring on Shoal Lake during my 2003 field season made it impossible to access High Lake Access Trail directly. So, during my visit to the area, we had to hike in from Nobbie's Road and bisect the trail in order to gain access to the area. The road intersects with the trail after a hike of about 20 to 30 minutes. You could see where the grass had been flattened and widened by ATV's or hauling vehicles. I was told that Band 40 hauls sand and gravel from the pits half way up the road (Oliver Pinesse, 2003). Logging has also been carried out in the area for a long time. At one point poplar was harvested here, but that has not occurred for more than 60 years now. Cedar is the main wood type that is currently harvested from this area (Oliver Pinesse, 2003). Nobbie's Road was named after a German man who took up residence on no-man's-land,

an area of overlap between the boundaries of Shoal Lake reserve numbers 39 and 40 where each band's rights to land was questionable (Oliver Pinesse, 2003). Nobbie held no title to the land on which he lived and worked. He operated a store which created easy access to goods, and was a significant draw for the people of the community (Patrick Kejick, 2003).

In an area off Nobbie's Road, is a spiritual site which is translated from Ojibway to mean Manitou Rock. The site was the lookout point during the Indian Wars, and from its top you can see in all directions for miles and miles (Oliver Pinesse, 2003). The highest point on the rock face appeared to have stairs carved out and a pedestal for one person to sit and look out for the enemy. From this point you are able to see the radio towers at Falcon Lake, Kenora, Shoal Lake and the Aqueduct. I was also told that some community members still visit the site and hold ceremonies or go on vision quests.

Access to High Lake was impossible during my 2003 field season because of the impact of beavers. In order to get to the lake you must canoe across a creek, but since the beavers dammed the area the creek can be more accurately described as a swamp. In the winter the creek is not an issue, as snowmobiles can traverse the area with ease (Oliver Pinesse, 2003). In previous years, a number of school programs brought out children from the David Kejick School to the site, but because of site access issues caused by fluctuation water levels, the programs have had to find more accessible locations (Oliver Pinesse, 2003).

4.44 Stull Island (*Siizibaakoto Minis*)

According to the Elders, Stull Island did not naturally have maple trees growing there. The maple was transplanted from the cuttings of a Manitoba maple, which was brought to the island by a member of the community sometime in the early to mid 1900's (Stephen Mandamin, 2003). The island is located 17 km south of the community and since the tapping process needs to begin in the early spring, transportation to and from the site

becomes a major issue, and in some cases an obstacle to harvesting the sap (Stephen Mandamin, 2003). The trees were planted at this site because the environment was well suited to support the maple tree and people traditionally travelled great distances throughout the year to harvest many different resources, making the distance of little importance (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). The island's soil is rich, dark and spongy (Technical Report No.1, 2003). The island has an almost jungle-like appearance, with ferns, vines, and enclosing trees, which trap heat making it very humid on the island.

Prior to the recent tapping done by a community member in the 1990's, the last time the trees were tapped was sometime in the 1940's (Stephen Mandamin, 2003). The main reason for the fifty year break from tapping was largely due to risk versus benefit. The distance and danger involved with getting to the island was high in comparison to the rewards. In an interview with the last known person to tap at the site, I was told that in the spring it is hard to get in and out. In most cases you would have to drag a boat behind your snowmobile over the ice to the site (Stephen Mandamin, 2003). I was warned that you must be very cautious of the ice and the weather. During one tapping season, two individuals noticed themselves sinking on the ice during their travels back from the site over near Nelson Landing (Stephen Mandamin, 2003). It is interesting to note that this was the last time the trees were ever tapped, back in 1993.

When tapping resumed on the island in the 1990's there was a specific need for the sap. The converted form, syrup, was used as an Aboriginal made food product. The product was a popped wild rice candy bar (Stephen Mandamin, 2003). Unfortunately, the market was unsteady for the product and so was available funding for the project. The difficulties of collecting and processing the syrup also had a major impact. Collecting and processing the sap was labour intensive and the amount produced was not proportional to the amount of work required (Stephen Mandamin, 2003). Approximately 40 gallons of sap were required to make one gallon of syrup, and if you wanted to make maple syrup the process had to be done just right. The sap needed to be boiled for a certain length of time at certain temperature in order to make maple syrup. If it was

boiled too long it would turn out like brown sugar and if you don't boil long enough and planned on storing it, it would go mouldy.

Typically, the best time to begin the tapping process was at the beginning of the month of March (Stephen Mandamin, 2003). The sap would run for about two months on average. Interestingly, I was told that the sap stops running when the sky is clouded over (Stephen Mandamin, 2003). So, not only did the weather affect transportation, but also how much could be harvested.

During site visits with Elders in mid July, an old pot was found. The Elders told me that the pot would have been used to process the sap back in the 1940's (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). While we were there we also viewed evidence of the latest use of the island. Intricate tapping lines had been used in 1993 to make the process more efficient and easily accomplished by a small number of people. Before the use of tapping lines, the sap was collected in buckets that would have to be emptied each day (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). With the tapping lines, all the sap flowed to the same collection area. Technology does have its flaws, however. I was told that the lines often froze up especially in the early morning and would need to be thawed out to get the flows of sap once again (Stephen Mandamin, 2003). In both the past and more recent use in the 1990's, all the sap collected had to be processed onsite in order to prepare it for travel as it was implausible to haul all the sap (Stephen Mandamin, 2003).

4.45 Blueberry Sites (*Miniikaa*)

Blueberries have been associated with the lives of the Ojibway people in Ontario for centuries. The most productive sites are those that have seen fire in recent years or have been disturbed by processes that mimic forest fires, such as logging (Technical Report No. 1, 2003). Within the Shoal Lake watershed are a number of sites that people visited to harvest blueberries, but according to Elders most of the sites are not as productive as they remember (Jimmy Redsky & Patrick Kejick, 2003). They are largely unproductive

because they are dependent upon fire to create an ecosystem in which they can thrive [i.e. disturbed sites] and this is a management technique that has, for the most part, been suppressed by the Ministry of Natural Resources (Les Ainspac, 2003).

The Elders told me, that in the past, the people of Shoal Lake travelled far distances during the blueberry harvest (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). The harvest was similar to the wild rice harvest, in that it was often a big social event. People would gather from all around. The picking of berries was done in a rather solitary manner, but in the evenings people would gather for a square dance, a Pow Wow, or other social activities at the camps (Jimmy Redsky, 2003).

Community members would travel all over Ontario to harvest blueberries. The areas I was made aware of included: Reddit, Ena, Andy Lake, and Farleen (Jimmy Redsky & Patrick Kejick, 2003). Reddit was the site that stood out in the minds of the Elders as being the most commonly traveled to site, and also happened to be where one of the buyers operated. Ratuski was one of the biggest buyers in Redditt and operated a small store there (Jimmy Redsky & Patrick Kejick, 2003). He was also a buyer for the wild rice, amongst other things. The other buyers out of Reddit were Duggan and Julius Kobel (Patrick Kejick, 2003).

Berries were collected by hand and sold by the pound. The basket, used to collect the berries was made from wood, and could hold up to fifteen and a half pounds (Jimmy Redsky, 2003). At the start of the season the price of berries started out at \$.75 per pound, but as the buyers stock was getting full the prices would drop as low as \$.30 per pound (Patrick Kejick, 2003). In the early 1970's the price of blueberries was further affected with the advent of blueberry farms, new harvesting technologies, and access, which made the traditional hand picking harvest of wild blueberries highly unprofitable for the Aboriginal people of IIFN (Patrick Kejick, 2003). Today, the people mainly pick for their own use or for friends and family. The main areas to pick berries are: various areas on the sides of the highway, at the site where the reserve's garbage dump was placed,

and out at Gundy Lake if you are able to avoid being spotted by Cottage Watch (Patrick Kejick, 2003).

Chapter 5 – Conclusions & Recommendations

“For many, a sense of personal relationship to nature or place evokes an ethical commitment to practical action to protect and care for the natural environment...”

(Holmes, 2003: 31)



“Crow Duck Lake 2003”

Subject: Robin Greene

Photo By: Christa Foley

5.1 Limitations of Research

There are a few limitations to this research that must be noted. The research was conducted during the summer months when many people are busy and/or away from the community. Had the research been conducted in the fall time or the early part of spring there may have been more willingness to participate because people would not have had their time consumed with: summer work programs; attending Pow Wows in other communities; and, fishing, harvesting and/or hunting; etc. As it stands, no female Elders were involved in this research due to availability, which limited the research results. Another limitation to the research is the number and distribution of participants in terms of both age and gender. Since the research did not involve a large and distributed number of participants, it is not possible to interpret the result as being descriptive of the whole community. There are still many community members who currently make a living or at least subsidize their living from the land; however these people were not interviewed and did not participate in the photo-narrative exercise. There are commercial fisherman, trappers, hunters, and wild rice harvesters. The thesis is not meant to imply that the connection is lost, only draw attention to the fact that it needs attention and restoration. The thesis is also not meant to imply that all the youth hold no traditional knowledge, but rather show its unequal distribution. In essence, the results of the research simply serve to pinpoint the emerging issues and problems impacting the community's connection with the land.

5.2 Indicators for Social-Ecological Health

The identification of indicators for social-ecological health for the community of IIFN is modeled upon the causal-based framework. As noted in the literature review, on page 29, this framework examines the differing interactions between the elements in the community and organizes the indicators into three categories -- stress, condition, and response (Environment Canada, 2001). Below is a listing of the social-ecological indicators for Shoal Lake First Nation. The indicators were developed mainly out of

numerous conversations and interviews with community Elders who have witnessed a great deal of change to both the people and the land.

1. The level of communication and transmission of knowledge between generations is indicative of the people's connection to the land.

Stress:

- The number of Elders in the community is decreasing while the number of youth in the population is increasing. The Aboriginal population is experiencing, fifty year delayed, a substantial growth in their population. The rest of Canadian society saw populations rise with the boom in the sixties and the bust and echo of a great demographic shift that followed;
- After the completion of grade seven, the youth must attend high school off-reserve. The teen years are a very important stage in development of a person's life, and it is during these years that one develops their self-concept -- "*...the contents of the self; that is our knowledge about who we are...*" (Aronson et al, 2001: 149); and self-awareness -- "*...the act of thinking about ourselves...*" (Aronson et al, 2001: 149);
- Popular culture has also created a rift between the generations. Studies have shown that society's youth often hold negative attitudes toward the elderly and view them as senile, isolated, helpless, useless, lethargic, unproductive, and stubborn (Pinquart et al, 2000). Television and media further perpetuate this image of the old as weak, feeble and absent-minded, which serves to reaffirm the stereotype;

Condition:

- Life, technology and education has changed a great deal since the Elders were young;
- A great deal of traditional knowledge and history has been lost;
- The youth are not learning their history and traditional knowledge to the same extent as the Elders once did;
- It is very difficult to encourage youth to participate in activities that bring them together with Elders;

Response:

- Recorded historical and cultural site histories to be used as learning tools for the community;
- Methodology that bring together Elders and youth to learn from each other and explore their history and culture;
- School curriculum includes aspects of TEK and aboriginal history;

I was startled by an Aboriginal youth during a site visit to Crow Duck Lake. The young teen came to me and asked me to point wild rice out, as the youth had never seen the plant before. In my haste upon arriving at a culturally and historically important site, I did not stop to think that the young youth might never have seen wild rice in the wild before except maybe on her plate at home. Being an outsider, I assumed that I would be the one with the least amount of knowledge, but this situation proved my assumption was indeed wrong.

2. The amount and quality of activity on the land, a factor in health status, is indicative of access.**Stress:**

- The activities of people on the land have drastically decreased over the years because of access issues and restrictions which have made many activities unprofitable;
- CottageWatch is a network of cottagers in the Interlake Region who actively protect their property and the property of their neighbors by calling the police when they see people ‘trespassing’ in the area. First Nation’s people gathering blueberries and other items from these areas, their traditional territory, are now effectively prevented from accessing the area or have to face the possibility of prosecution.
- The islands that served as gardening islands are the traditional territory of IIFN but not part of the reserve – limiting rights to access as the islands are owned by

the provincial government. Gardening on these islands is not allowed unless negotiated with the government.

- Restricted access has limited people's access to healthy traditional foods;
- Availability of food on-reserve is confined to two small convenience stores. Both stores stock far more food that would be classified as unhealthy, and the distance of travel required to access healthy market foods is approximately 50 km away therefore necessitating the need for transport;

Condition:

- Important sources of nutrients are not consumed in sufficient amounts and diets are unhealthy;
- Population has high rates of obesity and the poor diet is related to diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, etc;

Response:

- Fitness Facility on-reserve was constructed;
- Sand was imported to create a beach area on-reserve;
- Community garden and green house was started in 2003;
- Research project to examine the connection between people and the land and the health implications;

In a conversation with a community Elder on the way out to Crow Duck Lake, he began to tell me of the extensive trapping blocks that existed in the area. He told me that he used to go out with his grandfather when he was young to trap along this route for months at a time on foot. The Elder referred to the current absence of people on the land and the increasing health problems facing the people today, like obesity, and diabetes. He commented on the fact that a lot of youth today would not be able to do what he had done as a youth.

3. The practices of traditional teachings have an impact on land management.

Stress:

- Some members of the community no longer hold ceremonies and give offerings to the spirits when harvesting from the land;
- Far fewer people are harvesting traditionally because it is no longer profitable given new technologies, farming practices, changing markets, restrictions, and growing concerns about environmental health issues;
- Traditional management techniques are not practiced or they have been forbidden by government;

Condition:

- The harvest yield is far lower in comparison to harvests of the past;
- The environment is experiencing a loss of biological diversity;
- New harvesting techniques hinder the regeneration of natural stock;

Response:

- The community is researching ways to restore the productivity and health of the environment one site at a time;
- Certain areas are allocated for a given time in order for people to harvest traditional;
- School curriculum includes aspects of TEK and Aboriginal history;

At the main campsite at Crow Duck Lake I questioned an Elder about the ceremonies and offerings that were commonly practiced during the traditional rice harvest. The Elder explained that there were several ceremonies to show thanks and respect for the gifts given by the Creator. The harvest that occurs today is primarily mechanical, and the majority of the mechanical harvesters no longer practice these ceremonies when they harvest. The Elder felt that the absence of this respect had lead to the declining health of the rice.

5.3 The Connection between People and the Land

Literature supports the notion that people and the land are intimately connected, “*One cannot give or uphold life without the other*” (Johnston, 1976: 23). Impacts to the health of the land will affect the health of the people living on it, and vice versa. It is for this reason that I have adapted the work of Dr. Maureen Woodrow (Figure 5), which is itself an adaptation of the traditional medicine wheel.



Figure 4: Concept of Health Wheel

(Woodrow, 2001)

In order to place sufficient focus and visually connect the environments role in relation to human health it was necessary to visibly connecting the health of the environment with the health of the individual, family and community.

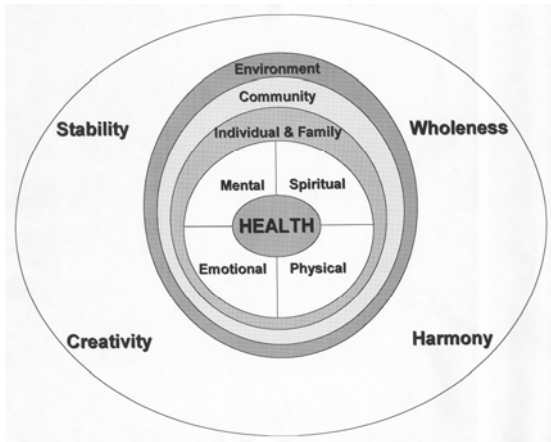


Figure 5. Social Ecological Connection Wheel

(Foley, 2004)

With growing concern about the health of the environment and the impacts it has on human health, there is a need to examine health in new terms. The wheel presented here views health in terms of a balance between the individual, the family, the community and the environment. When balance is attained, stability, creativity, wholeness and harmony, are within reach. Stability is defined in terms of peaceful and desirable behaviours and attitudes which are maintained toward the individual, the family, the community and the environment. Creativity is the ability to discover new solutions for problems and issues that arise. Wholeness is descriptive of systems, both human and environmental, which have achieved equilibrium. Harmony is the ability of the human relationship to connect with the environmental relationship in a manner that brings about a respect that commands a relationship in which people are one with nature.

The wheel is based on the fundamental Aboriginal belief which places people not in control of nature, but as a part of nature.

5.4 Communication and Exchange of Traditional Knowledge

The community of IIFN, like other First Nations in Canada, is dealing with the impacts of weakened communication and the exchange of traditional knowledge between youth and Elders. Knowledge exchange was once an intrinsic part of childhood learning that set the stage for a life on the land in terms of adaptation and experimentation. The community has realized the problem they are facing and is looking for ways to reverse this phenomenon.

The school at IIFN helps to bridge the gap by inviting Elders to teach traditional knowledge. The students from the school participate in hunting and trapping workshops, and even learn the art of processing wild rice traditionally. The one item that I see missing from this knowledge sharing occurring in some of the school programs is the absence of the physical connection to the land and First Nations history. The students do not get to visit many of the sites where the traditionally activity they are learning about has occurred which impacts their connection to the land. When you give youth the opportunity to visit sites and learn about the site, they are more receptive to the idea of learning more and helping in the process of site restoration. The research conducted by Schlag (2004) is supportive of this same finding. In her work with Inuvialuit youth in northern Canada she also found that there was an unequal distribution of knowledge between youth and Elders making them unprepared, but not uninterested, in stewardship activities on the land.

One of the outputs of my thesis is a photo gallery presentation of the pictures taken for the photographic narrative. The gallery will impact the people of IIFN in a very positive way which will improve communication and the exchange of traditional knowledge. It is easy to sit and think about what you would expect people to take pictures of, but it is harder yet to understand the values and motivations that hide behind what each person chooses to photograph. The gallery display will fill the community with pride, as they will be given the opportunity to see the work of their people and explore the meanings behind each of the pictures. The art will also be left in their possession should they wish

to display it further. It may also give the people a better sense of how their people connect with the land, and how differently this connection is interpreted by members of their community. The gallery will serve to motivate people to examine their connection to the land and look at ways in which they can strengthen that connection and begin to restore and protect the sites they value.

The second output of my thesis, an interactive cd-rom created with CultureScapes Software, will also serve to improve communication and the exchange of traditional knowledge. The cd-rom will give the community the ability of visiting the five sites through pictures, video and written histories. It is my hope that the cd-rom will be used in the David Kejick School and the IIFN Community Learning Centre in order to keep the oral histories alive for years to come.

5.5 Reflections on NVivo

For the purposes of my research, I found that using NVivo served more to confuse and occupy my time than provide benefit. This was the first time that I have ever used this program and I realized that the methods I used to collect my data did not lend themselves to the effective use of this program. Had I chosen to conduct structured interviews instead of semi-structured interviews, I may have found the software to be of more use. When I was conducting my research and transcribing the data I was able to draw connections and categorize common themes out of the research far easier on my own than with the software, largely because I categorized based on only visual elements. The only element of NVivo that was beneficial to me was the program's ability to search all of my data and group information on a specific site, making it easier to compile the information that was used to write up the site histories.

5.6 Conclusions

My thesis embodies the results of living with the Ojibway people of the community of Iskatewizaagegan Independent First Nation No. 39, in Shoal Lake Ontario. A great deal is owed to the community members for their contribution of knowledge and photographs to make the substance of this thesis.

The purpose of this study was to document the cultural history of the five sites, determined by the community of Iskatewizaagegan First Nation, enabling the analysis of several media forms (audio, video, photographic) to be used to document the relationship between the health of the land and the health of the people and consider indicators for social-ecological health. The objectives of the research were:

- 1) to explore and document traditional ecological knowledge regarding the history, use, and cultural importance of the five sites;
- 2) to determine community level indicators of social-ecological health;
- 3) to facilitate an opportunity for intergenerational exchange and learning by linking community youth with Elders in an effort to bridge the generation gap;
- 4) to develop a multi-media resource on the five sites for use by the community and their school with the various documented media forms and methodologies.

The objectives were satisfied by: utilizing methodologies which created an opportunity for intergenerational exchange and knowledge sharing; providing baseline historical data on the cultural history, value and uses of the five sites for future restoration, educational purposes and tourism opportunities; and by developing indicators for social ecological health.

The involvement of the community in this research was a very powerful tool. The youth and the Elders were able to strengthen their connection with the environment by sharing and exploring it with one another. In order to begin the restoration process, the people must first start to rebuild the relationship between the people and the land that has been strained by history and issues of access. In order to do that, increased opportunities must

be created to bring together youth and Elder's. Once the relationship has been healed, site restoration can help to restore the cultural activities that occurred at the sites and lead to the re-establishment of the community's sense of place and an equal distribution of traditional knowledge.

5.7 Recommendations

A number of issues were examined in this research, but it was not possible to answer all the questions that arose. The following are recommendations will help to answer those emerging questions.

- 1) Further research to explore what is required to effectively create, maintain and improve programs to bring together youth and Elders and allow for a more equal distribution of traditional knowledge;
- 2) Further research to incorporate additional information sources such as historical documents, text or photos with relation to the history and use of the five sites;
- 3) Incorporate the photographic narrative gallery in a visible spot in the community, in the interactive CD-Rom, and in various publications so that it may serve as an enduring learning tool.

Appendix A. Photographic Narrative -- Consent Form

Understanding the Connections between People and the Land: Implications for Social-Ecological Health at Iskatewizaagegan First Nation

Photographic Narrative

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you a basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Dear Participant,

My name is Christa Foley and I am a Masters student working on a joint research project with your community and the Natural Resources Institute at the University of Manitoba. The purpose of my research is to document the cultural history of the five sites identified as culturally important by your community. The research examines the linkages between the health of the land and the health of the people to try to come up with indicators for social-ecological health.

If you choose to take part, you will be given a non-disposable camera complete with batteries and film, which will be yours to keep at the end of the research, to photograph the people, places, or objects that you feel are central to your culture and history during the site visits. You will be asked to take photographs following the discussion on the cultural history of the site, with emphasis on your interpretation of the connection between the health of people and the land. Transportation will be provided so that lack of mobility does not limit what you can photograph. Once you have completed this task and the film has been returned to the researcher, interviews will be conducted with you to provide you with the photographs to understand the meaning and or importance of the picture taken. Participants will be selected on the basis of what they have photographed - – to find out further information in order to understand the meaning and or importance of the picture they have taken. Recording devices, both voice recorder and camcorder, will be used to document the interview. The footage and the voice recordings will then be stored in the multi-media database and will be used in the creation of the interactive cd-rom for the school.

The research setting is the outdoors, therefore any risks relate to the interaction with the wilderness environment and or the travel to and from the five sites, therefore extensive attention to ensure safety will be made.

Once the pictures have been developed and interviews have been conducted, participants will be asked permission for the use of their photos and or interview obtained by the

researcher in both written and verbal form. Should you wish to remain anonymous you may do so. You can choose to pick a pseudonym or have the photo and or interview omitted. A draft copy of the interview transcription will be provided to you to verify and change, where necessary to protect anonymity. At no time will any confidential records be consulted for this research.

Once this segment of the research is done, a gallery presentation of the photos taken by yourself and the other participants will be held in the community, with all credits going to the participants. You will also be given the opportunity to help plan and organize the event.

To express my thanks to you and all of the participants involved in the project a luncheon will be held when the research has been completed.

Thank you for time and consideration.

Yours Truly,

Student Researcher

Christa G Foley

Master Student
Natural Resource Institute
70 Dysart Rd
University of Manitoba
Wpg, MB R3N 2T2
(204)781-5406
christa_foley@hotmail.com

Supervisor

Dr. Shirley Thompson

Assistant Professor
Natural Resource Institute
70 Dysart Rd
University of Manitoba
Wpg, MB R3N 2T2
(204) 474-7170
s_thompson@umanitoba.ca

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature

Date

Guardian's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix B. Site Visits -- Consent Form

Understanding the Connections between People and the Land: Implications for Social-Ecological Health at Iskatewizaagegan First Nation

Site Visits

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you a basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Dear Participant,

My name is Christa Foley and I am a Masters student working on a joint research project with your community and the Natural Resources Institute at the University of Manitoba. The purpose of my research is to document the cultural history of five sites identified as culturally important by your community. The research examines the linkages between the health of the land and the health of the people to try to come up with indicators for social-ecological health.

The five sites chosen include: Gitiigani Minis (Gardening Islands), Kaagaagiishib Zaagegan (Crow duck Lake), High Lake & High Lake Access Trail, Siizibaakoto Minis (Stull Island) and Miniikaa (Blueberry harvesting patches). One or two Elders and a group of four to six youth selected from the community will be brought to each site on a specified date subject to weather. The site visits will be documented in various media forms: video, voice, and photograph. It is hoped that Elders will impart their memories, knowledge and stories about each of the sites to the youth, and that the youth will be eager to learn, stimulating questions and dialogue about each of the sites.

The research setting is the outdoors, therefore any risks that could be suffered, relate to the interaction with the wilderness environment and or the travel to and from the five sites, therefore extensive attention to ensure safety will be made.

Anonymity and confidentiality are not a central issue in this research, but if people wish to be anonymous effort (e.g., name changed in written material and identifying information deleted) will be made to do so. A draft copy of the interview transcription will be provided to the participant to verify and change, where necessary to protect anonymity. At no time will any confidential records be consulted for this research.

The information collected from the Site Visits (photographs, video, audio recordings, and narratives) will be used in the creation of an interactive CD-ROM for the community and a gallery showing.

To express my thanks to all of the participants involved in the project a luncheon will be held when the research has been completed.

Thank you for time and consideration.

Yours Truly,

Student Researcher

Christa G Foley

Masters Student
Natural Resource Institute
70 Dysart Rd
University of Manitoba
Wpg, MB R3N 2T2
(204)781-5406
christa_foley@hotmail.com

Supervisor

Dr. Shirley Thompson

Assistant Professor
Natural Resource Institute
70 Dysart Rd
University of Manitoba
Wpg, MB R3N 2T2
(204) 474-7170
s_thompson@umanitoba.ca

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature

Date

Guardian's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

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