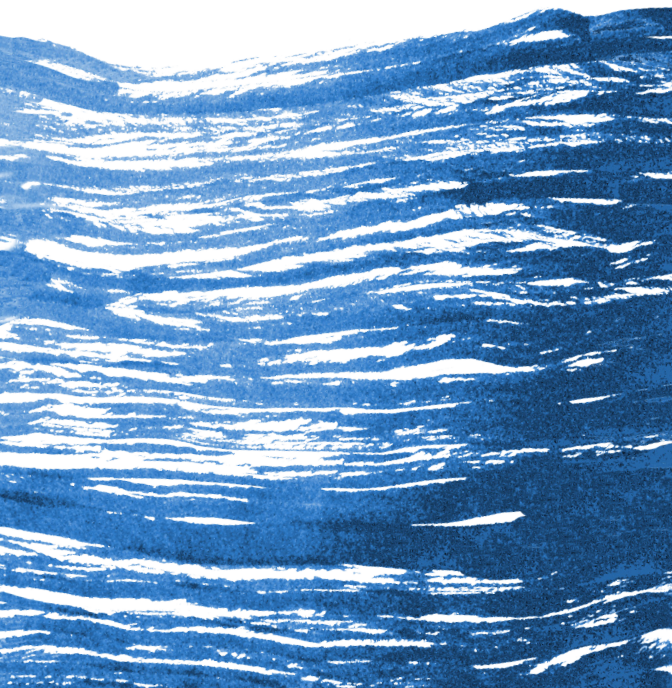


GREAT LAKES COMMONS
JOURNEY



A TRAVELER'S GUIDE

New Directions

This Guide was made to connect various journeys in the Great Lakes that are exploring different ways of knowing.

Water protection efforts usually focus on the water's quality. But what about the quality of our relationship to water? Surely we can improve our social bonds to water along with the chemical bonds.

What are your ways of knowing?

How do you measure distance by sweat?

How do you count risk in a test tube?

How do you find a resting place based on a tree's shadow?

How do you connect being in the wilderness to your wild being?

What song best describes your horizon?

What do you hear when you listen to your pain?

What memory guides your paddle?

What beauty pulls you forward?

Use this Guide for your field notes

First edition spring 2016. The Great Lakes Commons Journey Guide was written & compiled by Paul Baines (Great Lakes Commons) and designed and illustrated by Daniel Rotsztain (The Urban Geographer).

Many voices and languages are not represented in this edition and we want to expand our range for all following editions.

Please send ideas to: info@greatlakescommons.org



Ramble

You asked, why do I ramble?
Breaking up the lightning,
handing down the thunder,
chopping up the rain.
Drinking from streams,
splitting rivers and climbing the rib cage of
mountains.

Tracing ancient or never before traveled
pathways.

While the sun beats through me
and later I stew the stars over the coals
of a fire whose flicker warms my night.

Why is it I ramble, for what do I seek?
With only enough food for a couple days,
yet I always manage to eat.

Over these hills,
switch back to drift wood,
zig zag to riverbed,
no straight lines in sight.

Why do I ramble you ask?

It is in defense of the quiet places,
the primitive voices only found in snow fall,
the corduroy of leaf litter, waterfall mist,
coyote tracks, and tadpoles swimming
in the rainwater of this map folded heart.
The words only spoken round fires,
between cactus and lost ocean,



muddy cliff bank and screech owl,
from rock to rock, root to root.

Since it is in their nature to be quiet,
we must make noise for these places everywhere,
defending them on all fronts.
for as we loose wildness we lose vitality.

By the last star of morning,
through brim sweat and foggy breath.
I mark the way home by stumps, streams
and outcroppings, refusing any diversion of
my self-will,
with a body that has been earned out in the wild,
from arroyos, washouts, moraines, muskeg, alder,
and berry patches.

Though much of the wild has disappeared,
there is no losing the truth that we are animals
of the earth,
who make its dirt our home,
and since we still get to choose what to honor in
life,
and how we will walk forward on this ground: I say
to you with a full heart, that
to protect, honor and spread the wild seeds,
that is why we all must ramble.



- *Ben Weaver (a poet and musician who rambles
the waters by bike and wonder)*

www.benweaver.net

Two Row Wampum

The 'Two Row on the Grand' canoe paddle is a symbolic renewal of the Two Row Wampum – the original peace treaty between native and settler communities. It is a beaded belt uniting the Crown and the Haudenosaunee in peace, friendship, and respect “as long as the grass is green, as long as the water flows downhill, and as long as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west.”

The Haudenosaunee are a sovereign people composed of six Indigenous nations bonded into a Confederacy. They are:

Kanien'kehá:ka - The Mohawk Nation

Onenote'á:ka - The Oneida Nation

Ononta'kehá:ka - The Onondaga Nation

Kaion'kehá:ka - The Cayuga Nation

Shotinontowane'á:ka - The Seneca Nation

Tehatiskaró:ros - The Tuscarora Nation

The belt has two purple rows separated by three white rows. The purple rows symbolize two paths or two vessels travelling down the same river. One row for the Haudenosaunee and one for the Europeans. The white rows symbolize peace, friendship, and respect. While neighbouring nations move together side-by-side, they honour the self-determination of each other.




South Summer

**Ceremonial Canoe Journey
for the Water**

June 15 - July 15



Paddling the Eastern Shores of Lake Huron to bring together Anishinaabek on the land and shorelines, to be in ceremony together, asking the questions we must ask in order to know what more we can do for the Water. What we the people of the Great Lakes must do to protect and honour the sacred responsibility we have to Nibi -- Water. When we paddle each day making camp as we go, we will be searching for the knowledge left behind for us.

What that will be, what we can receive from putting our hands to the work in this way, will come in the way all knowledge does – by living it, by embodying it, and by committing to it.

One day people will look at us and pity us. Maybe that we did not do enough. That we weren't courageous enough to live out these dangerous ideas.

In the slightest chance they will be proud of us,

we commit to working for that. To be worthy of a distant relatives prayers. So that one day they will have the same feeling as we do now -- what an incredible honour it is to realize that at one point in the past someone thought of us all.

It isn't a coin of phrase being this 7th generation to someone. It is an incredible responsibility and honour. We have to be brave in these times of reckless consumption. To hold fast to the teachings of moderation and respect for life. To know what the Water is asking of us.

So we will journey as our ancestors did once to a historic gathering at a traditional gathering place of our people. We are looking forward with the vision of picking up what we must to be true to who we are – the Anishinaabek of the Great Lakes.

- Nibi Onji Canoe Journey to Great Lakes Gathering
www.facebook.com/canoejourneynibionji

JOURNEY LOG #1

What knowledge did your ancestors leave behind for you?

When the water goes, where will you?



To know each crack and curve of an ecosystem, water must take time. So must we. How do we witness the land as water does? We must move through it too, slow as a trickle, rabid as a rapid.

What if the water ceases to move as it always has -- from cloud to ground to lake? If water stops flowing in the ways that we are used to we will have to move in new ways too. What lengths might you travel if your faucet runs dry or the water comes out sour? What lengths might you go to stop that from happening?

Through our journey we want to move like water moves. To spend time on the shoulders of roads, on the fringes of field and forest, to witness and love the edge where the natural and the built connect. From here we can see how water moves with both trees and highways and begin to learn how we must move forward.

- *Our Shores (a team of long-distance runners exploring Lake Superior one story and one stride at time)*

www.ourshoresrun.org

The Nibi Song

Ne-be Gee Zah- gay- e- goo
Gee Me-gwetch -wayn ne- me - goo
Gee Zah Wayn ne- me- goo

Water, we love you.
We thank you.
We respect you.

- This song was written by Doreen Day at the request of her grandson. There is both speaking 'about' water and speaking 'to' water. This lullaby is written in Anishinaabemowin and again in English. Indigenous cultures around the world understand the aliveness of the non-human world. This aliveness is respected by speaking and listening to water.

The Honorable Harvest

The canon of indigenous principles that govern the exchange of life for life is known as the Honorable Harvest. They are “rules” of sorts that govern our taking, so that the world is as rich for the seventh generation as it is for us.

The Honorable Harvest, a practice both ancient and urgent, applies to every exchange between people and the Earth. Its protocol is not written down, but if it were, it would look something like this:

*Ask permission of the ones whose lives you seek.
Abide by the answer.*

Never take the first. Never take the last.

Harvest in a way that minimizes harm.

Take only what you need and leave some for others.

Use everything that you take.

Take only that which is given to you.

Share it, as the Earth has shared with you.

Be grateful.

Reciprocate the gift.

Sustain the ones who sustain you, and the Earth will last forever.

How can we reciprocate the gifts of the Earth? In gratitude, in ceremony, through acts of practical reverence and land stewardship, in fierce defense of the places we love, in art, in science, in song, in gardens, in children, in ballots, in stories of renewal, in creative resistance, in how we spend our money and our precious lives, by refusing to be complicit with the forces of ecological destruction. Whatever our gift, we are called to give it and dance for the renewal of the world.

- by Robin Wall Kimmerer (a teacher and author with this writing from Yes! Magazine: The "Honorable Harvest": Lessons From an Indigenous Tradition of Giving Thanks, November 26, 2015

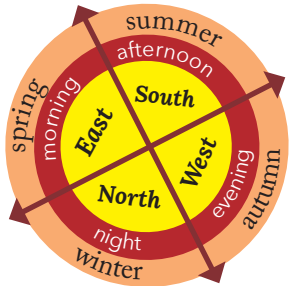
JOURNEY LOG #2

What gifts of the world did you experience today?

How will you reciprocate these gifts?

WAABISHKIIGOO

NIIGAANI-GICHIGAMI
ONTARIO



ANISHINAABEWI-GICHIGAMI
SUPERIOR

GICHIGAMI

ERIE

ININWEWI-GICHIGAMI

MICHIGAN

HURON

NAADOWEWI-GICHIGAMI



Love Your Greats

The Great Lakes are our lifeblood, our backyard and our home. For anyone who has ever walked along their shores, paddled their waters or simply stared over their surface to the horizon -- they are a source of wonder, of joy and of life. Whether you live by or visit the Great Lakes, it is so important that we do not take them for granted. Instead, we need to protect them, care for them and act as good ancestors of the Lakes for future generations. As someone who spends pretty much every waking moment on, in and around water -- I feel it's my responsibility to care for it -- in whatever way I can.

Although my main efforts are around raising awareness and decreasing the presence of plastic pollution, it always returns to my love for the Great Lakes, and understanding that we are all interconnected. That there is no "away" and everything we do effects someone or something else, somewhere else, at a future point in time. I hope to help and encourage others feel this sense of interconnectivity through their journeys this summer -- not only between humans and the environment, but with each other. We are water, and the Great Lakes are our home -- we need to treat them that way.

- Jen Pate is leading 'eXXpedition Great Lakes' on August 20th, fostering community-based leadership in microplastics sampling in the Great Lakes, Lake St. Clair and the Saint Lawrence river.

www.exxpedition.com/greatlakes2016

Giving Thanks

In our consumptive society, we track how much we take from mother earth but how much do we give back? In a world reduced to resources, actions that honor water as a source of life must shine.

Some cultures have ceremonies and habits that offer this kind of thanks.

"In almost all facets of their lives, Native people of the Great Lakes had reason to solicit the spirits for acts of kindness or to give thanks for past favors. Dry tobacco was placed at the base of a tree or shrub from which medicine was gathered, and a pinch was thrown in the water before each day of wild rice gathering to assure calm weather and a bountiful harvest. Before setting out in a canoe, a safe return was assured by offering tobacco on the water". (www.mpm.edu/wirp/ICW-166.html)

What will you give thanks to when journeying the Great Lakes? Use the next page in this Guide to show your thanks.

Keep it or tear it out and offer it back to the land and water.

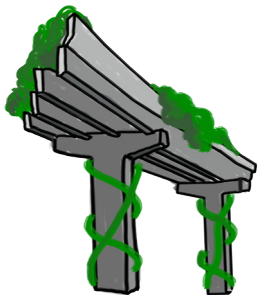


North Winter

Abandon all despair, ye who enter here

Inspired by Dante's *Purgatorio*, Children of the Wild's The Wastelands Project passes through Great Lakes communities on a journey through the seven stages of ecological grief and pleads in the silence of their steps to consider the intersections through which we all pass: how does racial disenfranchisement relate to the fresh water? How do we tap wellsprings of hope in a world of

crumbling infrastructure? Where are the access points? Who owns the water?



A transmigration is upon us. This belief, this way of looking at our shared predicament, this *othered* perspective is how

Children of the Wild sees the states of the lakes: as steps on a spiritual journey, dark at times, depending on the adjustments of

your eyes, into a place beyond all sight, into a place superior.

At the heart of this journey is the question of *rewilding*—why it happens, where it happens, and how it happens in the human soul.

Artistic Director Walken Schweigert says about *the theatre of presence*: “Art is not separate from the water, and the water is not separate from us. It is us.”

When the stories we tell ourselves change with the climate, when we *are* the change we seek to stop, how do we find common ground on which to gain footing and finally feel, all the way through, our grief? How else do we know of what to let go? To these questions, and more, we look to the lakes for guidance.



- Children of the Wild (An ensemble theatre collective traveling through the Great Lakes performing The Wastelands Opera)

www.childrenofthewild.org

Great Lakes Commons

CHARTER DECLARATION

WE, THE PEOPLE OF THE GREAT LAKES, LOVE AND DEPEND UPON OUR WATERS TO SUSTAIN OUR LIVES, OUR COMMUNITIES AND ALL LIFE IN OUR ECOSYSTEM.

It is therefore with growing alarm that we confront a painful reality – that despite decades of effort the Lakes are more threatened than ever. As people from across the Great Lakes, we find this unacceptable. We cannot stand by while our waters are treated as an expendable and exploitable resource when we know they are a source of life.

Moved by a hope that we can yet create a thriving and life sustaining future for our Lakes, we step forward to take up our responsibility to care for and act on behalf of these waters, our Great Lakes Commons. Seeing that the health of our waters is intertwined with our own health and that of generations yet to come, we are called to assert a deeper connection and more powerful role in the future of our waters.

We hereby set forth the Great Lakes Commons Charter, a living document that affirms and empowers the wisdom and

rightful role of the people of the Lakes as stewards of our waters.

This Declaration and the First Principles emerge from the collaborative work of people and communities around the lakes. Together we reflect many walks of life, histories and cultures. At the same time, a single purpose unites us: to transition to a mode of Great Lakes governance by which the waters and all living beings can flourish.

TOWARDS THIS END, WE AFFIRM:

That the waters of the Great Lakes have sustained the lives of the people and communities in their basin since time immemorial and they should continue to do so in perpetuity.

That the waters, ecosystems, and communities of the Great Lakes are entwined and interdependent. Damage to any of these causes harm to the others.

That the Great Lakes are a gift and a responsibility held in common by the peoples and communities of the Lakes and must be treated as such as to ensure their preservation for coming generations.

That the boundaries of states, provinces and nations crisscross the Lakes but do not divide their natural integrity. All decision-making that impacts the Great Lakes must place the well-being of the bio-region and ecosystem as a whole at the center of consideration.

That the inherent sovereignty and rights of Indigenous peoples as codified in treaties and international agreements must be upheld as foundational to commons governance.

THEREFORE:

We join our voices in affirming the spirit and necessity of this declaration as the foundation for a renewed relationship and mode of governance for our Great Lakes Commons. We welcome the wisdom, standing and power that this document will accrue over time to shape the future of our Lakes. We invest it with our hopes and commitments to that future and to the future generations who will inherit the legacy of our actions.

In signing this Charter, we embrace our responsibility, individual and collective, to act on behalf of these waters and of future generations.

An Invitation...

Drawing on the rich knowledge of commons and Indigenous traditions, the Great Lakes Commons Charter is a participatory effort to build community engagement, agreement and shared responsibility for the water.

With the Charter Declaration you see in this Guide and the connected First Principles you can read about on our website -- we are creating a living agreement that embodies a common governing philosophy: that these lakes are irreplaceable, sacred, and necessary for life and must be carefully shared and protected in perpetuity.

Beyond a petition of protest, this Commons Charter sings a new song for the lakes and our active partnership in their protection. Add your support at: www.GreatLakesCommons.org

JOURNEY LOG #3

What action will you take to bring this Charter Declaration to life?

The **Great Lakes Commons** initiative is a grassroots effort to protect the watershed as a sacred and shared commons. We are an alliance of people from across Nations, geography, ancestry and traditions.

We work to:

Awaken and restore our relationship to these incredible waters.

Activate a spirit of responsibility for the water.

Foster governance that enables communities to protect these waters forever.

Why should we work towards a Great Lakes Commons and how?

This is the question used by the Great Lakes Commons Map to collectively learn what is possible.

The GLMC connects people of common concern through place-based storytelling. We awaken, witness, and celebrate our belonging to these waters and our mutual ties with each other.

Add your journey story using words, photos, or videos to mark your worry or wisdom. Join a growing community of other commoners doing the same.

www.GreatLakesCommons.org

