

Niizhoo- gwayakochigewin: Two Ways of Doing the Right Thing in the Right Way

Erika Bailey-Johnson and Alyssa Hauser

Sept 27-28, 2019

UMACS Conference, 2019



Land Acknowledgement

The Bemidji State University Sustainability Office acknowledges the land we are meeting on today, and the land from which we traveled, are the original homelands of the Ojibwe and Dakota.

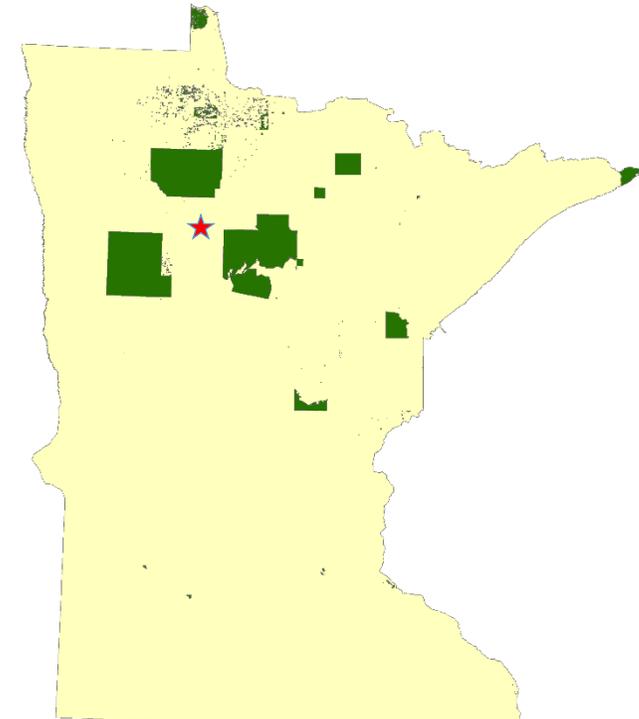
We acknowledge the painful history of genocide, forced assimilation, and efforts to alienate the indigenous inhabitants from their territory here.

We honor and respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land on which we gather, their retained sovereignty, and unbroken linguistic and cultural thriving.

Bemidji, MN

- Population (2016): 14,942
- Area: 14.14 sq. miles
- Bemidji State University, Northwest Technical College, and Oak Hills Christian College
- Median household income (2015): \$36,766
- Red Lake, Leech Lake, White Earth
- Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement signatory (2007)
- Bemidji Sustainability Committee (2009)
- Minnesota GreenStep Cities (2011)

Minnesota

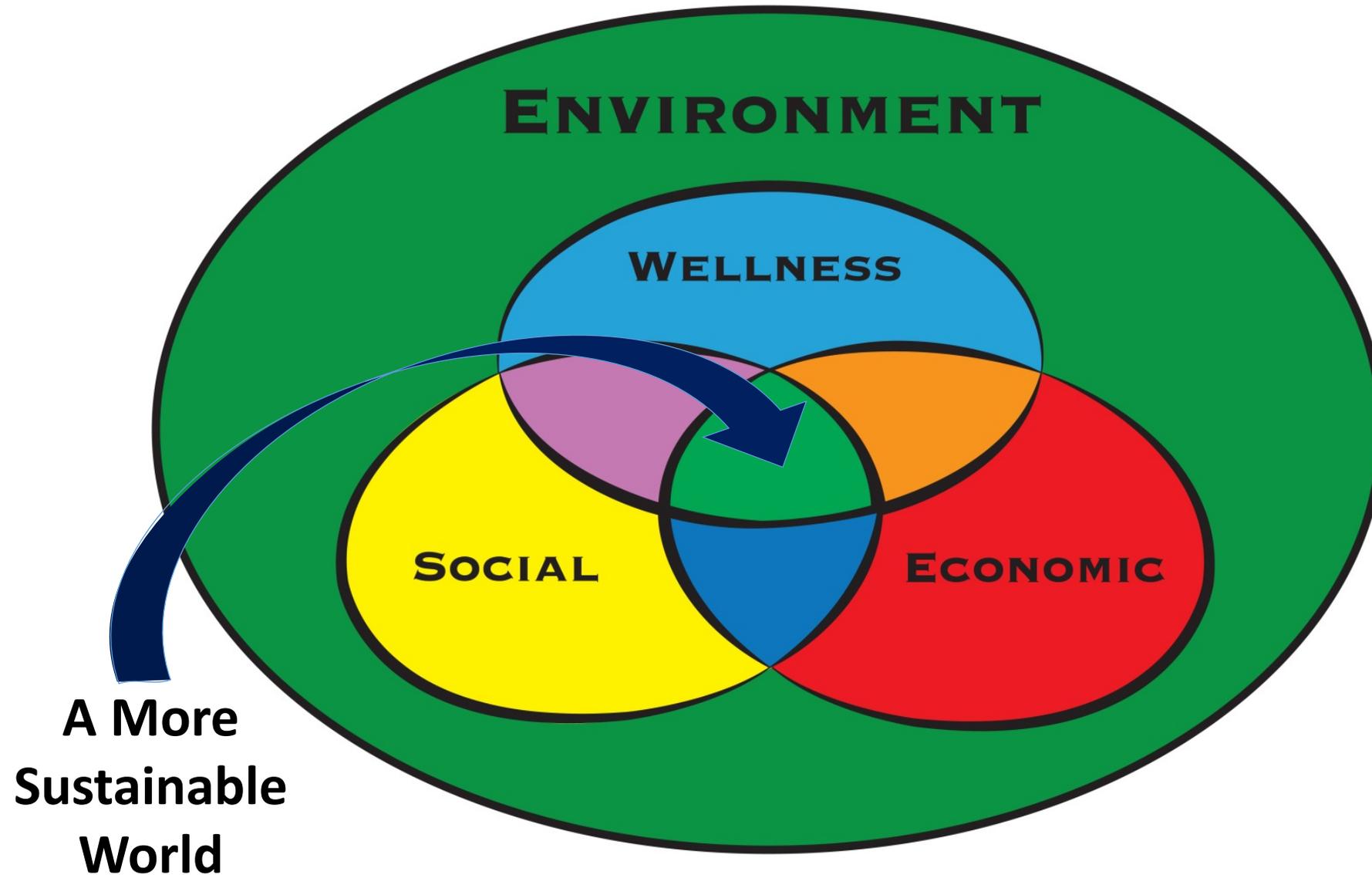


Bemidji State University

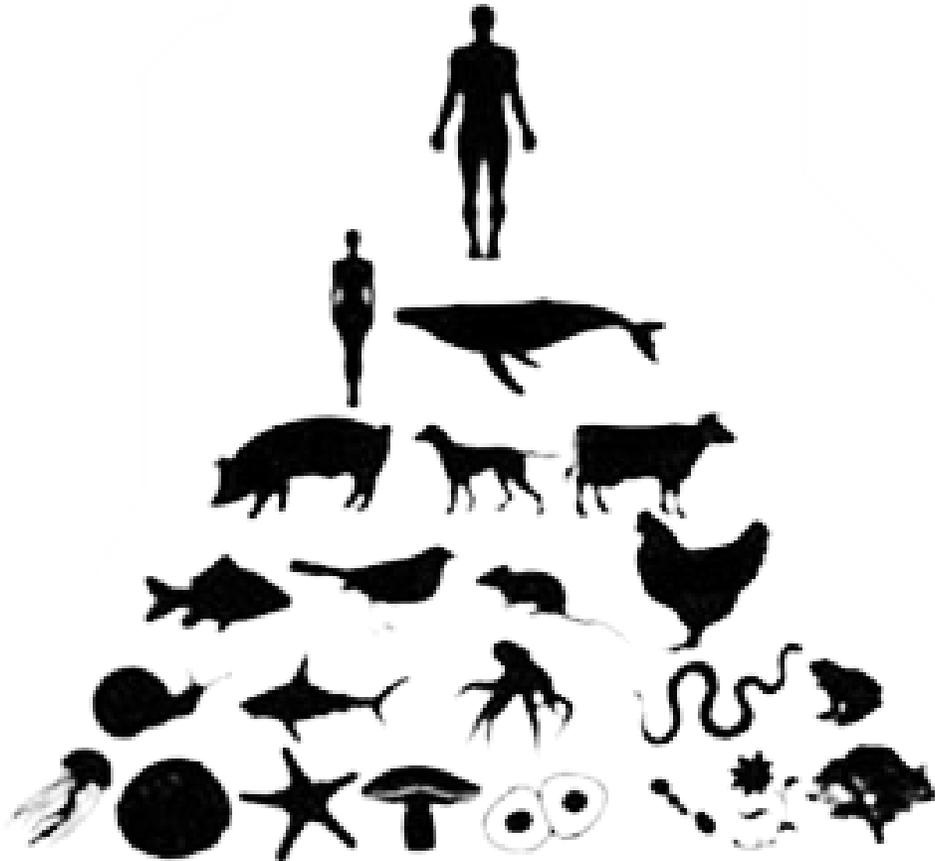
- Member of the Minnesota State System (54 campuses; serve 375,000+ students)
- BSU is a Public liberal arts institution
 - ~5000 students
 - ~1200 students living on campus
- Environmental Advisory Committee (1992)
- Talloires Declaration signatory (2005)
- ACUPCC signatory (2008, 2050 target date)
- Green Fee (\$5 per semester, started Fall of 2008; increased to \$7.50 Fall of 2015)
- Sustainability Office (started in the Fall of 2008)
- Students for the Environment Club (since the early 1990's at least)
- U.S. Dept of Education Green Ribbon School Awardee (2017)



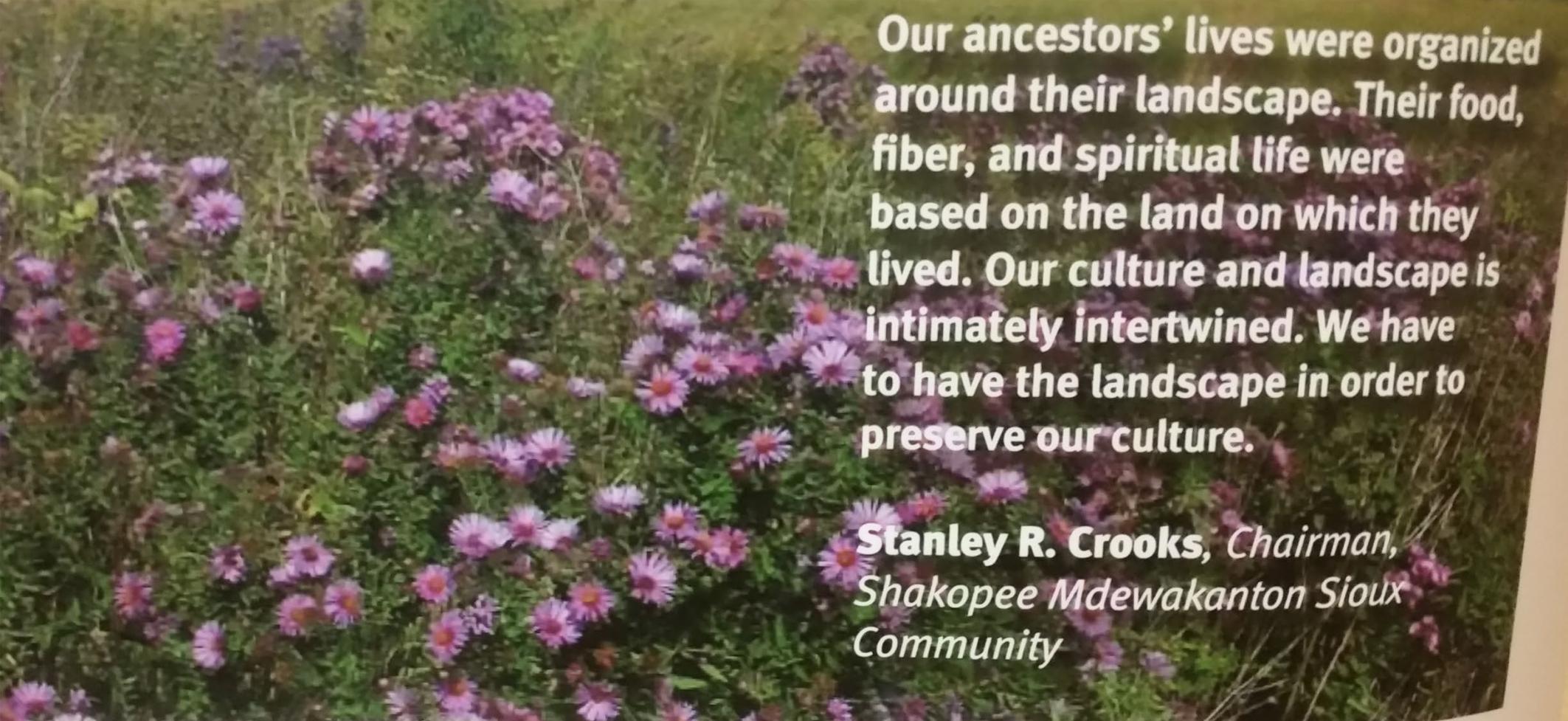
Sustainability, our definition



We are a part of nature, not apart from it.
It is our responsibility to care for Mother Earth,
not our right to do as we please.



Sustainability Through the Lens of Indigenous Knowledge



Our ancestors' lives were organized around their landscape. Their food, fiber, and spiritual life were based on the land on which they lived. Our culture and landscape is intimately intertwined. We have to have the landscape in order to preserve our culture.

**Stanley R. Crooks, Chairman,
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux
Community**



Niizhoo-gwayakochigewin

(two ways of doing the right thing in the right way)

Bemidji State University is part of a 3-year grant project with a goal to have students appreciate and use both Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge perspectives to help bring about long-term, sustainable changes in the world.



History

- Invite Only grant
- Indigenous-led Grant Team:
 - Indigenous Studies Faculty: Vivian Delgado, Michael Lane
 - Environmental Studies Faculty: Carl Isaacson, Bill Sea
 - Graduate Student: Ashley Locklear
 - Indigenous Staff: Erika Bailey-Johnson, Bill Blackwell
 - Ojibwe Language Faculty: Anton Treuer
 - Education Faculty: Timothy Goodwin
 - Administration and Grant Writer: Randall Westhoff, Erika Adams, Michael Anderson
- 3-year
 - began Jan. 1, 2018
- \$600,000 total



Objectives

- #1 BSU will more fully address the educational and career needs of its students through a new, combined **Indigenous Studies/Environmental Studies Sustainability degree program**.
- #2 There will be strong, interdepartmental relationships in place at BSU that will have begun to facilitate the **addition of Indigenous knowledge sustainability perspectives into all degree programs**.
- #3 A new “**Niizhoo-gwayakochigewin Collaborative**” will have become established as the administrative base for the IS/ES Sustainability program at BSU.
- #4 BSU will have an established **undergraduate Indigenous knowledge and sustainability internship** program to provide students with experiential learning opportunities key to developing their multiple worldview thinking and leadership skills.
- #5 BSU will have an established **Sustainability Fellows** program to provide graduate students with first-hand experience in how to create institutional change in social sustainability.

Indigenous Sustainability Studies undergraduate degree program

- First of its kind in the country
- Core Indigenous Studies and Environmental Studies courses
- Major and Minor
- New cross-listed courses
- LOTS of elective options



Niizhoo Interns and Mentors



Graduate thesis, coming soon

- “An Assessment of the Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviors & Practice of Indigenous Knowledge at Bemidji State University”
- *By Ashley Locklear (McKenzie)*



- Minnesota Indian Education Association Conference, Nov. 2018
- Rising Voices Workshop, May 2019
- Native Studies Summer Workshop for Educators, June 2019
- Wilderness Awareness School, Art of Mentoring, July 2019
- *National Indian Education Association Conference, Oct. 2019*

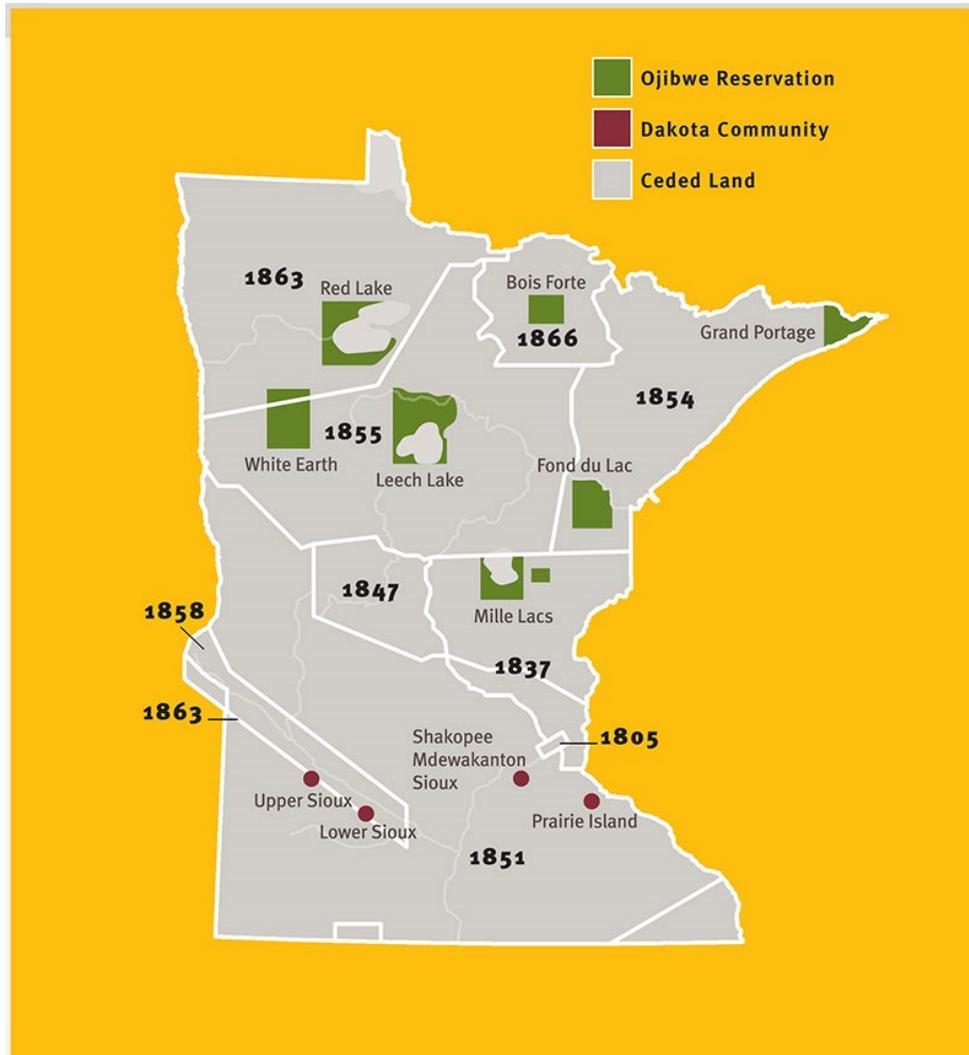




NSSWE
NATIVE STUDIES SUMMER
WORKSHOP FOR EDUCATORS



Land Acknowledgement



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Some additional main points

- Mni Sota Makoce: “land where the water reflects the sky”
- Gakina Awiiya: “we are all related”
- All tribes are not alike
 - Ex. there can be multiple truths (Jingle Dress)
- Indians are not just a part of the past
- Complex relationship with institutions



Future Plans

- Formal Land Acknowledgement
- CPD workshop
- Student presentations (NIEA)
- Marketing
- Summer workshop
- Future funding



Miigwech!

Thank you!

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