YELLOWHEAD INSTITUTE

A Year in Review.

June 2019 - May 2020
OUR MISSION

Yellowhead Institute generates critical policy perspectives in support of First Nation jurisdiction.

www.yellowheadinstitute.org

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We have to recognize the Yellowhead family, including the late Vernon Yellowhead, but also Lori, and Bill McRoberts. They continue to sanction the use of the Yellowhead name and support our organization’s work with Indigenous students in particular. Thank you.

Dean Pamela Sugiman and our colleagues in the Faculty of Arts have ensured that we had the resources we needed in 2019 - 2020. We’ve taken those resources and continue to grow within the university but also outside of it into the community.

Our partnerships with Laidlaw and Inspirit Foundations (facilitated by Allison Urowitz) along with the donations from individuals and families means that we can compensate our collaborators fairly and continue to produce high quality research and programming.

Finally, we continue to be held up by a community of Indigenous people from across the country, people that have trusted us with their words, ideas and commitment. This includes our Board of Advisors, Research Fellows, researchers, and community collaborators. We will work to maintain that trust.
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Who We Are
This past year has seen Yellowhead’s emergence as what I think is an authoritative voice on Indigenous law and policy in Canada, as well as an organization that is learning more all the time about how to support young Indigenous leaders.

Between our last annual report and this one, we’ve influenced positive change, too: joining the Land Back movement, successful community campaigns against racism and unwelcome resource development, helping make the federal child welfare legislation better, being an integral part of scrapping a bad self-government agreement in Ontario and more.

I think this influence has continued into the tumult of the present. We’ve shifted our focus to support First Nations through COVID-19 and are considering closely the intersections of Black and Indigenous life against the context of structural racism. And, while this moment in time may feel uncertain, as our collaborators have shown us, there are also many reasons to be hopeful.

Yellowhead will continue to be guided by our mission and our growing community, while also remaining reflexive and responsive. After two successful years, I think I can say that whatever comes next, we’ll be there.

Hayden King
Executive Director, Yellowhead Institute
Highlights from the Year

2019

JUNE

Global Indigenous Solidarity Grant
Yellowhead and Ryerson International sends six Indigenous Ryerson students to attend the 2019 Native Association of Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) conference in Aotearoa (New Zealand).

Red Paper Accountability Workshop & Yellowhead Board Meeting are held

JULY

Growing our Team
Eva Jewell, Anishinaabekwe from Deshkan Ziibiing, joins Yellowhead as an Associate Fellow and Ryerson University as Assistant Professor, Sociology in the Faculty of Arts.

AUGUST

Freedom School
Yellowhead hosts 11 young Indigenous leaders in Rama First Nation for a week-long gathering.

SEPTEMBER

Special Report Release
The Rise of the First Nations Land Management Regime in Canada: A Critical Analysis by Shalene Jobin and Emily Riddle

OCTOBER

Land Back Red Paper Release
Yellowhead launches a new website to accompany this report and celebrates with a sold out event featuring a youth panel speaking on the topic of land reclamation.

NOVEMBER

Cash Back Red Paper Workshop
Yellowhead hosts the first community workshop for our second Red Paper on fiscal relations and economic self-determination.

DECEMBER

Vernon Yellowhead Student Award
Two First Nation Ryerson students are the first to be selected for this award honouring the legacy of Vernon Yellowhead; each student received $6,000.

2019 Highlights from the Year
**JANUARY**

**Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement Critique**
Yellowhead releases two briefs and a podcast discussing the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement.

**FEBRUARY**

**50+ Yellowhead Policy Briefs**
Yellowhead reaches a milestone by publishing over 50 briefs since launching. Our 51st brief, *Wet’suwet’en: Why Are Indigenous Rights Being Defined By An Energy Corporation?* received a record breaking number of page views on the Yellowhead website.

**MARCH**

**COVID-19 Call for Collaboration**
Yellowhead announces a Call for Collaboration for community work from any medium and on any area of policy, in support of Indigenous creators and researchers.

**APRIL**

**Community Collaborations**
Yellowhead supports a donation drive for Eabametoong First Nation, releases two briefs on COVID-19, and collaborates on an animated video on Anishinaabe Pandemic Prophecies as part of our Call for Collaboration.

**MAY**

**COVID-19 & Bad Data Brief**
Yellowhead releases a brief written by Research Fellow Courtney Skye exposing the discrepancy in COVID-19 data between First Nation communities and the Canadian government.
Reach & Influence

At a Glance

- **Site Visitors**: 91,231 (137% increase)
- **Site Page Views**: 355,303 (104% increase)
- **Twitter Followers**: 6,787 (38% increase)
- **Facebook Followers**: 1,358 (94% increase)
- **Newsletter Subscribers**: 1,331 (50% increase)
- **Media Features & Mentions**: 88+
- **10,000** downloads of Yellowhead reports and accessible resources
- **70+** briefs, special reports & community tools/resources produced in collaboration with over **50** Indigenous writers and researchers
Yellowhead
Research

Our research portfolio includes policy briefs, reports and special features.

We produce and publish works – primarily by Indigenous leaders and researchers – that address key questions of Indigenous governance and offer critiques and alternatives to settler colonialism in Canada today.

This year, we released two special reports, 35 Yellowhead Briefs, our inaugural Red Paper, Land Back, and a number of related accessible resources.
Yellowhead Briefs continue to be a priority and flagship initiative. From June 2019 - May 2020, we published 35 policy briefs on a wide range of topical and pressing issues.

Published almost weekly and written by 90% Indigenous authors, our aim is to provide critical, community-grounded Indigenous perspectives on relevant policy topics and issues.

For example, in February 2020, as Wet’suwet’en Strong solidarity actions were happening across Canada, Yellowhead received an unsigned agreement between a Wet’suwet’en First Nation and Coastal GasLink, along with financial documents. The resulting brief, written by Research Director, Shiri Pasternak, reinforced Yellowhead’s assessment of the ways these private contracts can dramatically undermine First Nation rights and jurisdiction. The brief, which also expands on some of the concepts discussed in our Land Back Red Paper, is our most read with over 32,000 pageviews and led to multiple media requests and features. Briefs like Eva Jewell and Ian Mosby’s TRC Calls to Action Accountability: A Status update on Reconciliation, and Courtney Skye’s Colonialism of the Curve: Indigenous Communities & Bad COVID Data also had tangible and wide-ranging impacts.

Top 10 Most Viewed Briefs from June 2019 - May 2020

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>BRIEF TITLE</th>
<th>AUTHOR(S)</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Calls To Action Accountability: A Status Update on Reconciliation</td>
<td>Eva Jewell, Anishinaabekwe, Deshkan Ziibiing &amp; Ian Mosby</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The Rise of The Anishinabek Nation: Self-Government for the Status Quo?</td>
<td>Hayden King, Anishinaabe, Beausoleil First Nation</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Colonialism of the Curve: Indigenous Communities &amp; Bad COVID Data</td>
<td>Courtney Skye, Mohawk, Turtle Clan, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>COVID-19 did not cause Food Insecurity in Indigenous Communities but it will Make it Worse</td>
<td>Elisa Levi, Chippewas of Nawash &amp; Tabitha Robin, Swampy Cree</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Making the Most Out of Canada’s New Department of Indigenous Services Act</td>
<td>Naiomi W. Metallic, Listuguj Mi’gmaq First Nation</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>G’ganoonigonaa Zaagigan</td>
<td>The Lake is Speaking To Us: Nuclear Waste in Saugeen Ojibway Nation Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The Green New Deal in Canada: Challenges for Indigenous Participation</td>
<td>Eriel Tchekwie Deranger, Dënesųłiné, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The Promise & Pitfalls of C-92: An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Children, Youth and Families

By Naiomi Walqwan Metallic, Mi’gmaq, Listuguj First Nation, Hadley Friedland, and Sarah Morales, Su-taxwiye, Coast Salish

In July 2019, Yellowhead released a follow up report to our Does Bill C-92 Make the Grade, after Bill C-92 An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families became law. The site page featuring Bill C-92 is one of our most visited pages ever with over 12,000 pageviews.

Knowledge Mobilization: The report was released with a factsheet outlining 21 implementation strategies for the Bill aimed at assisting Indigenous communities in navigating and working with the new law.

BY THE NUMBERS

1,059 report downloads 684 factsheet downloads

The Rise of the First Nation Land Management Regime in Canada: A Critical Analysis

By Shalene Jobin, Cree and Métis, Red Pheasant Cree First Nation, and Emily Riddle, nehiyaw iskwew, Alexander First Nation, Treaty Six

As more and more communities move rapidly into the First Nations Land Management regime this special report provided a much needed analysis on the regime’s philosophy, process and outcomes, providing answers to the following questions: 1. What are the benefits of the First Nations Land Management regime and the threats?; 2. How are communities transformed through the land code process?; 3. Does FNLMA represent a substantive form of self-determination?

Knowledge Mobilization: The report was released with two factsheets, one providing an overview of FNLMA and one outlining the pros and cons of the regime.

BY THE NUMBERS

685 report downloads 495 factsheet downloads
LAND BACK
A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper

The project of land back is about reclaiming Indigenous jurisdiction: breathing life into rights and responsibilities. This Red Paper is about how Canada dispossesses Indigenous peoples from the land, and in turn, what communities are doing to get it back.

Land Back is the culmination of a year-long research process informed by Indigenous leaders and land defenders through our community-based research model. It is also a collaboration with artist Julie Flett and many researchers and technicians. The resulting body of work exemplifies a dynamic intersection of research, knowledge mobilization and art. Land Back launched in October 2019 with a microsite featuring the report, a resource library with related infographics and factsheets, and the Minesweeper Map, a searchable map of mining claims in Ontario and Quebec. Within weeks of launching, the site and resources featured on the site all hit record highs for Yellowhead in terms of engagement and downloads.

BY THE NUMBERS:

5,040 report downloads
12,554 site visits
49,400 pageviews

"Just clicked through for my first look at this excellent tool. I'll be returning to it and reading the full report later on. Check it out - not only because the content is essential context for Canadians, but also because it's a great example of quality knowledge translation!"

"This is amazing. So much work must have gone into this to make this powerful & visually striking report. The Minesweeper Map really drives home the scale of extraction. Can’t wait to read all of it and go to launch event tomorrow!"
On October 30th, we celebrated the launch of the Red Paper with a sold out event in partnership with Ryerson University’s Social Justice Week featuring a youth panel discussion on reclamation strategies.

The moderator and panelists were (L to R): Riley Yesno (Anishinaabe), Eabametoong First Nation; Amy Norman (Inuk), Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador; Clyde Brandon Moonias (Anishinaabe), Neskantaga First Nation; and Quinn Meawasige (Ojibwe), Serpent River First Nation. Riley, Amy and Quinn were also participants in Yellowhead’s Freedom School (see page 15).

**LAND BACK COMMUNITY TOOLS AND RESOURCES**

![Image of community tools and resources](image)

**KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION:** The Land Back microsite includes a Community Tools and Resources page with downloads to multiple infographics visualizing the data found on injunctions; a glossary of terms used in the report, factsheets on consent and mapping; and an analysis of the Coastal GasLink Notice of Application for Injunction. These were some of the tools identified by the Red Paper community collaborators as an essential aspect of ensuring both accessibility and practicality of the Land Back research for communities.

**1,060 total tools & resources downloads**

**Top 3 most downloaded resources**

1. INFOGRAPHIC | A Review of 100 Injunction Cases
2. SCAN | Resource Revenue Sharing Chart
3. FACTSHEET | Three Frameworks of Consent

Land Back was funded in part by the Laidlaw Foundation and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.
At the end of 2019, Yellowhead Institute began the process of developing our second Red Paper on the topic, “Cash Back” by welcoming over 20 Indigenous leaders for a twoday workshop on the sources of poverty in Indigenous communities and models for new financial relationships.

These sources of course include ongoing dispossession and colonialism, but also the modern phenomenon of program devolution. Linking to Land Back, we asked how dispossession became a “fiscal” problem. In this collaborative workshop, we aimed to map the political histories and current structures of Crown-First Nations fiscal relations and to work together to build real bases for Indigenous economic self-determination.

Key questions we discussed include:

- Why does the status quo remain? What or who enables these issues/challenges?
- What are examples of ways to destabilize the status quo? What is foundational to a new fiscal relationship?
- What would you want to communicate to communities and the general public to understand about the importance of this issue and impacts?

The outcomes of this workshop will help shape and inform Yellowhead’s flagship initiative, the Red Paper, which is slated to be released in late 2020.
Youth Leadership & Student Support

Yellowhead is committed to supporting the next generation of First Nation advocates and leaders.

With this in mind, this year we focused on building and strengthening our relationships with young Indigenous leaders. We held our first Freedom School in Rama First Nation and we developed two awards for Indigenous students at Ryerson University. We also worked with nine young First Nation researchers during the year.
FREEDOM SCHOOL

The Freedom School was a co-created experience that included facilitated group dialogue, art activities, land-based education, peer-to-peer mentorship and guest speakers.

Seven Indigenous youth leaders and three youth advisors/mentors engaged in advocacy/policy on behalf of their communities participated in this week-long program. Based on their feedback, participants felt like this experience was unique and different than other gatherings; they felt a sense of freedom and ownership over the structure of the week and activities, developed strong connections with other like-minded youth, and nearly all have continued to collaborate with Yellowhead.

Topics and key questions include:

1. Building Solidarity & Alliances
   How (and when) do we organically build solidarity / alliances between and across communities, and create more spaces like these to foster relationship building? How do we do this across isolated spaces and places?

2. Addressing Difference & Conflict
   How do we organize while having fundamental differences, such as apolitical divides, different kinds of knowledge and understanding of issues, experiences/existences? When is it useful to “call people out”? How do we do this without “cancel culture”? What has the resources and relationships to do so?

3. Safety for 2SLGBTQ folks
   How do you create safety for women and 2SLGBTQ folks in movements? Toxic/harmful structures are often reproduced in ‘progressive spaces.’

4. Self-Care (collective and Individual)
   How do we try to organize while burning out and having compassion fatigue? How can we use organizing to heal? How can we be intentional about our own personal boundaries - for safety and to avoid being exploited for being kind/radical?

Stamp making projects by participants
“I was so happy to meet everyone and intend to foster several of the connections and to support them as allies going forward. I definitely came out with questions and ideas around fostering accepting communities, being true to oneself in a safe way, making change efficiently, and what emerging issues we will all face.”

- FREEDOM SCHOOL PARTICIPANT
STUDENT AWARDS

Vernon Yellowhead Award

This award honours Vernon Yellowhead, a passionate advocate of environmental stewardship and Indigenous knowledge. Vernon was a direct descendant of Chief William Yellowhead and Hereditary Chief of the Reindeer Clan.

This annual award is open to all Indigenous students at Ryerson pursuing work in environmental stewardship or Indigenous knowledge; annually, two students will receive $6,000 each. This year, we were proud to award Sarah Dennis-Kooji (Anishinawbe Kwe, Nipissing First Nation) and Gillian Kyle (Kanien'kehá: ka / Mohawk from Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, Turtle Clan) with the Vernon Yellowhead award.

This award is made possible by Lori Yellowhead, Allison Urowitz and Ryerson’s PACE program.

"Learning and working hard for our communities is so important and it’s also important to have those degrees backing up that work we do for our own. This award has made it possible to support my family while in school and avoid having to access other less ethically sourced forms of student award monies. Thank you for your support, it means so much to us."

SARAH DENNIS-KOOJI
Anishinawbe Kwe,
Nipissing First Nation

Global Indigenous Solidarity Grant

The Global Indigenous Solidarity Grant is an opportunity for Indigenous students at Ryerson University to travel to Indigenous territories beyond the borders of Canada and help build global relationships and solidarity.

Yellowhead Institute, in partnership with Ryerson International provided six Indigenous Ryerson Students with a grant covering travel, accommodations and expenses up to $5,000 to attend the 2019 Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) annual meeting and related symposia at the University of Waikato, Aotearoa (New Zealand) from June 20 - July 4, 2019.

"Walking into the assembly hall with thousands of Indigenous people from different backgrounds, speaking their own languages and wearing their traditional dress. The atmosphere in that room was unlike anything I've ever experienced."

HOLLY MONKMAN
Plains Cree, Peguis First Nation
Community Responsiveness

Deepening relationships within our network allows us to know what the important issues are on the ground — emerging and long-standing challenges — and address them in collaboration with researchers, analysis, educators, artists and writers.

We respond quickly with accessible Briefs, reports, or community tools, that influence discussion and debate, opening up space for Indigenous alternatives. This year, this was embodied in our response to the COVID-19 with our Call for Collaboration as well as our Truth and Reconciliation status update, work on anti-racism, and the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement.
COVID-19

Call for Collaboration

To help support those impacted by COVID-19, Yellowhead launched A Call for Collaboration, offering small grants of $500 - $1,500 with the hope of boosting the generation and mobilization of creative and intellectual content for communities.

By May 31, 2020, we released 16 collaborations with Indigenous researchers, artists, and creators, with numerous others in development. Here are some examples of the work we supported:

**BRIEF**

*Colonialism of the Curve: Indigenous Communities & Bad Covid Data by Courtney Skye*

Research by Yellowhead revealed that the numbers of COVID-19 cases in First Nation communities were nearly triple those reported by Indigenous Services Canada in May 2020. Revealing this data discrepancy led to mainstream media picking up the story and Indigenous Service Canada was forced to explain the discrepancy. The following week they committed millions to Indigenous health data research.

5,000+ pageviews within 2 weeks of launching

#1 most viewed Yellowhead site page in May 2019

"The work @Yellowhead_ is doing is so important. Thanks to the indomitable @MOHAWKEMOTIONS for digging in here to direct the conversation back to the fact that bad data carries devastating consequences."
FACTSHEET

Highlights From A COVID-19 Fireside Chat with Indigenous Health Professionals

On March 21, 2020 a group of Indigenous medical professionals got together to provide advice to Indigenous families and communities on COVID-19. Yellowhead Institute compiled highlights from the workshop into a downloadable factsheet.

25,000+ video views on YouTube

“...traditional knowledge plays an important role in ensuring safety and security from COVID-19. Together when we use the teachings of the past along with current strategies, we can make a difference and make our families and communities safe. The Land has all the answers.”

- Isaac Murdoch, Serpent River First Nation

Additional COVID-19 Call for Collaborations include:

PODCAST
On-Reserve During COVID-19 with Heartberry Podcast (Shanna Peltier and Yotakahron Jonathan)

BRIEF
COVID-19 and Inuit Nunangat: Research, Responsibility and Infrastructure Inequality by Jessica Penney and Patricia Johnson-Castle

BRIEF
COVID-19 Did Not Cause Food Insecurity in Indigenous Communities but it Will Make it Worse by Elisa Levi and Tabitha Robin

FACTSHEET
Ethical Engagement with Indigenous Youth: Seven Requirements by Indigenous Youth Voices

VIDEO SERIES
Powwow 101 with Sissy Thiessen Kootenayoo
TIMELY RESPONSES

Resources & Tools

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Update

In December 2019, Yellowhead released a status update on the TRC Calls to action by Associate Fellow, Eva Jewell, and historian, Ian Mosby. The update showed that in the four years since, the TRC report and calls were released, progress has been slow. By 2019, only nine Calls to Action were completed out of 94.

Yellowhead Resources

» BRIEF | Calls To Action Accountability: A Status Update On Reconciliation
» INFOGRAPHIC | Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action: 2019 Status Update

9,000+ brief page views
654 infographic downloads

Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement

In February 2020, Anishinaabeg communities in Ontario voted to ratify a regional self-government agreement. Yellowhead Institute released a series of resources providing breaking down the agreement and providing a missing perspective and analysis on the potential impacts of the policies communities were voting on, contributing to increased public discussion and a subsequent vote against the Agreement.

Yellowhead Resources

» BRIEF | The Rise of the Anishinabek Nation: Self-Government for the Status Quo?
» PODCAST | Roundtable on the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement
» BRIEF | The Rise Of The Anishinabek Nation, Part II: The Fiscal Agreement
» FACTSHEET | Funding Sources: The Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement
Racism at the Bank of Montreal

The December 2019 arrest of Max Johnson of the Heiltsuk Nation and his family at the Bank of Montreal in Vancouver followed a trend of casually criminalizing Indigenous people. Yellowhead collaborated with the Heiltsuk Nation, Nikki Sanchez and Eva Jewell on three resources to contextualize this incident within the larger issues of structural racism in Canada.

Yellowhead Resources

» BRIEF | Banking While Brown: Indigenous People and Structural Racism In Canada
» TOOLKIT | How do we solve Structural Racism? A 5X5 Review
» FACTSHEET | Recommendations Related to Structural Racism

(1) Representation in Society

While not often discussed, there is evidence that Indigenous peoples are experiencing continued psychological harm when instances of anti-Indigenous racism and violence are reported in the media. Studies show that when Indigenous youth are exposed to mythical, stereotypical, and otherwise negative depictions of Indigenous peoples (including news headlines that focus on poor health and well-being of Indigenous peoples), they report lower self-esteem scores.

This shows a clear link between the lack of positive Indigenous representation and decreased well-being of Indigenous peoples.

A separate but related problem is the online engagement of a racist Canadian public. Since 2015, CBC has disabled comments on all Indigenous-related content as these stories prompted a disproportionate number of “vitriolic” comments that “violate the CBC’s guidelines”.

The various inquiries and commissions of the last 30 years have maintained that positive Indigenous representation in society will not only have psychological benefits for Indigenous peoples, but can contribute to normalizing Indigenous presence and perspectives in mainstream Canadian society.

All Yellowhead Resources and Tools can be found in our Community Resource Library at yellowheadinstitute.org.
Who We Are

Board of Advisors

Emily Riddle
nehiyaw iskwew, Treaty Six, Alexander First Nation (Kipohtakaw)

Janice Makokis
nehiyaw iskwew, Treaty Six, Saddle Lake Cree Nation (Onihcikiskwapiwin)

Judith Sayers
Hupacasath First Nation

Kris Statnyk
Gwich’in, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation

Naiomi W. Metallic
Mi’gmaq, Listuguj First Nation, Gespe’gewa’gi

Peter Di Gangi

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Sákéj Henderson
Bear Clan of the Chickasaw Nation and Cheyenne Tribe

Shalene Jobin
Cree and Métis, Red Pheasant Cree First Nation (Treaty Six)

Tanya Kappo
Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation

Dënêze Nakehk’o
Dene, Liidlii Kue First Nation

Sherry Pictou
Mi’kmaw, L’eskikuk (Bear River First Nation)

Brock Pitawanakwat
Anishinaabe, Whitefish River First Nation

Raven Sinclair
Nehiyaw (Cree), George Gordon First Nation, Treaty 4 Territory

Courtney Skye
Mohawk, Turtle Clan Six Nations of the Grand River Territory

Tim Thompson
Mohawk Nation, Bear Clan Family, Wahta Mohawk Territory

Vanessa Watts
Anishinaabe and Mohawk

Matthew Wildcat
Nehiyaw, Ermineskin Cree Nation

Tara Williamson
Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Gaabishkigamaag

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Wapesewisipi First Nation (Swan River), Treaty 8 Territory

Marc Kruse

Stephanie Matchiwiita
Anishinaabe Garden River First Nation

Carrie Robinson
Anishinaabe Timiskaming First Nation

Josie Slaughter
Mi’gmaq, Listuguj First Nation

Samantha Sorenti
Ojibwe

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Shiri Pasternak

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