

Spirit of the Island: Manitoulin's People  
Stories of Indigenous-Settler Historical Dynamics

Ezhi-minidoowang Minis: Minidoo-wining Bemaadizijig Wiin E-zhi-kendaang  
gaa-zhiwebizid nji Anishinaabewid-Gaa-bi-daajig gaa-bi-zhi-giigdoowaad

English/Anishinaabemowin Translation - Closed Captioned Video: Gathering Thirteen  
'Sacred Water' ~ 'Gchi-Nibi'



by Dr. Rhonda L. Paulsen  
with Anishinaabemowin Translators Elder Shirley I. Williams-Pheasant and Isadore Toulouse



FIRST NATIONS UNIVERSITY, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA





*Walking in Birches*

*oil on canvas, L. Thippawong*

## GATHERING THIRTEEN:

### 'Sacred Water' – 'Gchi-Nibi'

Elder Shirley I. Williams-Pheasant and Dr. Rhonda L. Paulsen

**Cross-Curricular Subjects, established by Ontario's Ministry of Education, are:**

- Social Sciences and the Humanities
- Native Studies
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Environmental Sciences
- Canadian and World Studies
- Politics and Citizenship

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Heading time on video</b>
Thirteen Grandmother Moons and Turtle Island	0:09
Sacred Water Walks	2:58
The Right for Water	7:24

*Learning Outcomes – upon completion of this Gathering, learners will be able to*

1. Realize the importance of maintaining a strong knowledge base of historical and current issues concerning Inuit, Metis, and First Nations societies.
2. Ethically and morally discuss historical and contemporary events in the context of Indigenous-Settler dynamics/experiences.
3. Assess meanings embedded in public statements; be socially responsible.

## GATHERING THIRTEEN: ANISHINAABEMOWIN TRANSLATION

(Closed Captioning on Video)

### *Thirteen Grandmother Moons and Turtle Island*

#### *Mdaaswi-shi-nswi Nookimis Giizis, miiniwaa Mshkenh Mniss*

The Anishinabek, as shared by Bruchac ...

relate the cycles of the moon (called Grandmother Moon) to the seasons. In every year, there are thirteen moon cycles, each with twenty-eight days from one new moon to the next... the Turtle's back is a sort of calendar, with its pattern of thirteen large scutes standing for the thirteen moons of each year. It reminds them that all things are connected and we must try to live in balance.

**Bruchac e-zhi-dbaajchigaadeg giw nji Anishinaabek ...**

**Dbaajimomgad wi sa e-zhi-waawyebizod aw dibi-giizis (ezhi-nikaanin Nokimis-giizis) wi sa. Ensa ngo-bboon, aawnoon mdaaswi-shi-nswi dibi-giizis eshsed giizis biimskobizod, ensa niizzhtana-shi-niizhwaaswi nji sa aw shki-dbi-giizis ni aabjibizod miiniwaa... Mshiikenh bwokinang mii wi doogindaaswin, wi sa ezhi-mzinkaad nji niw mdaaswi-shi-nswi gchi-mzikozod tenoon mzinching niw mdaaswi-shi-nswi dbik-giizoon enza ngod-bboon. Kina niw minjimendaagod aawaang aakobiziiyang miiniwaa ji gjitooying wii-mino-maadiziiyaang ji ni dbaabiishkoodooying.**



### **Sacred Water Walks - Gchi-Nibi mosewinan**

A Sacred Water Walk is formed through people coming together to walk for a ceremony, demonstration, or festivity. For the Anishinabek, it is the responsibility of Grandmothers to lead women in protecting and praying for the water, however, men and children also join these walks, with men in their traditional roles of protecting the women (Williams-Pheasant 2018). Men and women share carrying a copper pail of water to lead the walks (copper being used due to its cleansing properties), which have become a time of celebrating the sacredness of water. People come together to pray, sing, speak, feast, rest, and bless the water in the Anishinabe way, which involves sharing a pipe ceremony, walking to the drum, and usually stopping four times to bless the water in four directions. At the end of the walk, the water that has been carried in the copper pail is returned to body of water where they started to complete the four directions, as reciprocity is important. As Elder Williams-Pheasant explains: “We walk for water because we care for what happens to water, based on the belief that water is sacred and alive to us and therefore we should treat it with respect and dignity” (2018).

**Gchi-twaa Nibi Mosewin gii-nji zhoowan zhiw bimaadizijig bi-maawnjididwaad wii-mosaadimowaad anamewin, wii-wiindimaagewaad, maage wii-mnaaji'aad Eshkakimi-kwen nji sa iw gaa-miigooying. Giw Anishinaabek, mii iw e-ge-gchi-piitendaagozijig Ookimisag wii-niigaaniwaad wii-gzhaadimowaad miiniwaa wii-anametaamowaad nibi, boo'ooj dash wiigo, niniwag miiniwaa binoojiinyag gewiiniwaa aankobijigewag nanda mosewinan, niniwag nji wii-semaawaan kwewan nji wii-naanaagide'enmaawaad kwewan (Williams-Pheasant 2018). Niniwag miiniwaa kwewag maandookiinaawaan niw naamaabig biiwaakong-asin wii-moodoowaad nibi wii-niigaanimiwaad nibi mosewaad (naamaabig biiwaakong-asin enji nookaaswaad nji daa'aan wii-biinaagisidood eteg nibiing), mii dash nji iw ni aawang pii wii-naajitooyan Gchi-twaa nibi. Bimaadizijig bi-zhaawag wii-anamaawaad, wii-ngamowaad, wii-giidoowaad, wii-mnjtoowaad wiikigewinan, wii-nebiwaad,**

miiniwaa ji anametaamowaad nibi Anishinaabegying nekeyaa, naanooshkaawaad niwiing minik wii-anametaamowaad nibi niwiing nekeyaa eshseg maanda ki. Shkwaaj mosewaad, aw nibi emoodoowaad neyaab ziiginaanaawaa gaa-nji maajtaawaad nji sa wi neyaab wii-toong gegoo gaa-daapinomon. “Ndoo-mosaadaanaa nibi nji ezhi-zaagtoowaang nji sa e-zhiweaweziimogak nibi, nji sa e-zhi-dbwe’ndimaang iw nibi aawaang gchi-twaayiiwang miiniwaa go maadiziimgak miiniwaa go dash gdaa-mokwendaanaa ji mnaadendimong iw miiniwaa e-zhi-gchi-piitendaagok” (2018).



### **The Right for Water - E-zhi-ndowendaagok Nibi**

The urgency around pure water is evident in the state of many First Nation communities across Canada. For example, there are 169 First Nation reserves across Canada that are under boil-water advisories, with 79 in Ontario alone. Some of these communities have been under an advisory for years, even decades, such as: Neskantaga (in the district of Kenora) has been under an advisory since 1995; Shoal Lake (which borders Ontario and Manitoba) since 1997; and the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte (on Lake Ontario) since 2003.

**Ezhi-gchi-ndawendaagok maanda e-biinaagimik nibi nongwa kendaagod aanii e-zhi-naagok niibino Ntam Anishinaabek e-zi-ngodoodenaazwaad maan-pii Canada. Nowaa go, ngodwaak-shi-ngowaaswi-shi-zhaangswi Ntam Anishinaabe shkwaanganan maan pii Canada, tenoon wii-zaamowaad nibi gaasngewin, Niizhwaaswi-shi-zhaangswi Maan pii Ontario nchike tenoon. Nanda aanind ngodoodenaazwinan gii-tenoon ji aangwaamziwaad wii-zaamowaad nibiin niibino nsa bboon minik zhaazhigo, ngoji go ooshime mdaaswi bboon ooshime, naasaab go Neshkantaga (oodi nekeyaa Kenora) gii-naawaang wii-aangwamziwaad wii-zaamowaad nibi aw pii 1995, Shoal Lake (besha Ontario miiniwaa Manitoba aankosing) aw pii 1997, miiniwaa giw Naadiweg oodi wiikwediwang Quinte pii nash 2003.**



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