

CLIMATE CHANGE & HEALTH  
IN FORT WILLIAM FIRST NATION:

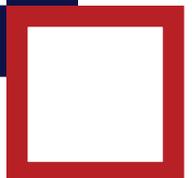
PLANNING FOR THE  
FUTURE, TODAY



*Community Report*

Lindsay P. Galway &  
Elizabeth Esquega

2020





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We acknowledge gratitude to Fort William First Nation Chief and Council members, Rob Pierre of FWFN, quilter Sam and artist Doug for participating in this project. We also thank Lakehead University and Indigenous Services Canada for their support. Most importantly, our thanks go out to the FWFN band and community members who participated by sharing their wisdom and knowledge. It was an honor to be part of this amazing journey that we ventured together. Mother Earth is sacred land that we call home. We must continue to seek ways to protect her, not only for today, but for future generations.

*Miigwetch.*

#### **CITATION**

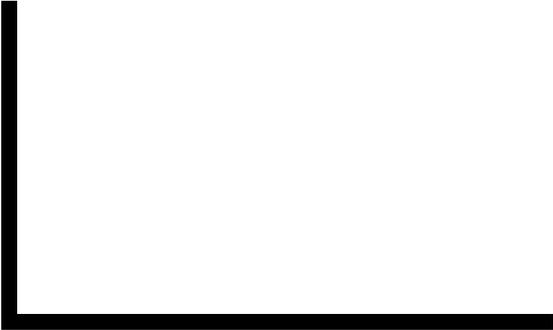
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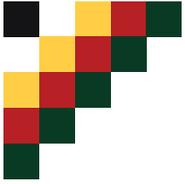


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# LIZ'S STORY

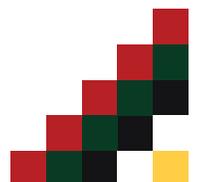
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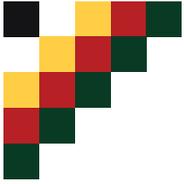
Dear Reader,

Fort William First Nation is home to many proud and resilient folks. There are lots of reasons to celebrate the beauty of this traditional territory. Towering over the area, Anemki Wajiw ("Mount McKay") stands glorious, keeping an ever-watchful eye. On the shoreline of Lake Superior, the sleeping giant is an ever-constant reminder of our glorious past and present. This is why we must protect this great land and be aware of climate change. Landmarks are the cornerstone of history. This is one of the reasons why it is also important to learn about climate change. Just as we protect our families, we must also protect our community and lands. To do so, we must learn from our Elders, grandmothers and grandfathers. It is in learning from our Elders that the passages of stories are shared. These stories are grounded in our sacred earth and also where my own grandmother's teaching begins. I would like to share some of this story with you...

As a child I didn't hear the term "climate change" as I am sure that many of you didn't either. Some grandmother's teachings are based on our relationship as family and our relationship with Mother Earth. My grandmother was born in 1911 and lived for 85 years in Fort William First Nation. The knowledge that she shared helps me to put into perspective what is happening today. Her stories are rooted in living off the land. She listened and observed the wonders of what made up her environment. Grandmother grew up in Squaw Bay and according to her, the term is actually Squall Bay. Life at the time consisted of "living off the land". Picking berries, hunting, trapping, fishing and cutting firewood was the way of life. Hauling water from the sparkling fresh waters of Lake Superior was common and the lifeblood of Squaw Bay.

Grandmother knew the lake and its mysterious waves and deep waters. More than 40 years ago grandmother said "there's something wrong with that water", "that water is making me sick" as she hesitantly drank from her cup. Hesitant, because this was her main and only water source in spite of already knowing that it was polluted. Grandmother's house at that time had no running water. Still today, there are many other First Nation communities who don't have access to clean drinking water.





Grandmother had always been an observant person. There were times she would gaze out the window for hours. It was as though she were transfixed on something of great particular interest. During these times, her observations would lead into stories rooted in teachings of the land. For example, grandmother said "come here", "look"! as she stretched out her arm pointing towards the shoreline. She refers to the tree that is swaying in unison with each slam of the waves. "See that tree"? Well, last year at this time the water was barely up the shoreline, you see that stump further down the shoreline... and so it began another teaching of how grandmother's observations tell how deeply connected she was in her surroundings.

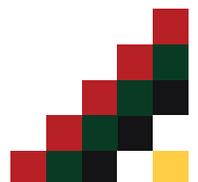
Grandmother shared many stories from what the songs birds were singing to what it meant when there was barely snow in late winter. Such are the ways of our grandmother's teachings. This is an example of being in tune with Mother Nature. When grandmother said come into her bedroom it was exciting as she gently tapped her bed. She would stare out the window as though going back in time reflecting on memories buried deep in the attic of her mind. Grandmother had years of wisdom and traditional knowledge of how the seasons merged with the flow of the breeze and the lull of the tides. At other times, she spoke about the blowing winds and what they whispered to the trees. Grandmother stories are laced with the beads of time stitched with fabric of the connection to the land. We are all part of this connection and it is our responsibility to care for Mother Earth.

We must honor and respect our Elders, and grandmother and grandfather teachings. Our Elders possess the knowledge and wisdom and they will gladly share, if we are willing to listen. These teachings are reflections of living life simply. Just as my grandmother shared stories of this sacred earth, I encourage you all to listen to your grandmother and grandfather's teachings. They are the breath of what legends untold may be spoken, for they can be heard in the whispering winds.

Miigwetch,

*Liz Esquega*

(Community Project Lead)



*1*

# BACKGROUND

*1*

In 2019, Fort William First Nation received funding from Indigenous Services Canada through the Climate Change and Health Adaptation Program (CCHAP) to support a project called *Climate Change & Health in Fort William First Nation*. The CCHAP program was developed as a response to a range of concerns from First Nation and Inuit communities increasingly witnessing and experiencing the impacts of climate change and the many consequences of these impacts for health. The CCHAP funds community-based research and adaptation projects that “seek to build community capacity and raise awareness around climate change and health while respecting Indigenous sovereignty... to create tangible change within their communities, and therefore, increase awareness of climate change to reduce risks to health and well-being.”<sup>1</sup>

The *Climate Change & Health in Fort William First Nation* project was guided by a set of short- and long-term objectives (see below). Our project was also guided by the Anishinaabek Medicine Wheel and its teachings. We used the Medicine Wheel to guide the project activities, to emphasize our interest in understanding the links between climate change and physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health, and to orient our intergenerational relationships building. Project development, the processes and practices employed, and the knowledge sharing activities were also guided by a Two-Eyed Seeing approach.<sup>2</sup> Importantly, prior to applying to receive funding for this project, team members presented the proposal to Chief and Council. Support from the project was received from Chief and Council for the project. At the time of implementation, this was the only climate change focused project taking place in FWFN.

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES	LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a guiding framework based on the Medicine Wheel</li> <li>• Conduct 2-3 community workshops</li> <li>• Conduct interviews with community members to gather stories, traditional knowledge, and perspectives on the links between climate change and health focusing on Elders, traditional knowledge keepers, and those closely connected to the land</li> <li>• Create a quilt to visualize and share key messages about climate change</li> <li>• Conduct a photovoice project with FWFN youth to raise awareness about climate change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build capacity for climate change and health adaptation in the FWFN</li> <li>• Foster intergenerational knowledge sharing and relationship building between FWFN Elders and youth</li> <li>• Build respectful relationships between Lakehead University and FWFN</li> <li>• Share learning and experiences with the FWFN community and with other First Nation communities in the Lake Superior watershed</li> </ul>

This report describes and shares what we have learned from the interviews with FWFN knowledge holders. We conducted 22 interviews with knowledge holders including Elders, traditional knowledge keepers, and other community members with close relationships to the land. The 22 knowledge holders were invited to participate by the community project lead; interviews took place between November 2019 and January 2020. The interviews focused on four main areas of discussion: **1)** introductory questions about the knowledge holder and their relationship to the land; **2)** changes people have observed and experienced on the land; **3)** impacts of these changes; and **4)** actions to protect and promote the health of FWFN peoples in the context of climate change. Additionally, at the conclusion of each interview, knowledge holders were asked to share a key idea or a message about climate change for the youth of FWFN. For example, knowledge holders were asked “if there was a message or something you could leave for the children and grandchildren of FWFN about climate change, in a word or in a phrase or in a symbol, what would that message be”? These messages were then visualized by an artist in the community and subsequently woven together into a final quilt given back to the community as a gift and also shared with the youth that participated in the photovoice component of the project (a second community report titled *Climate Change & Health in Fort William First Nation: Youth Photovoice Project*, describes the photovoice component of the project).



DESCRIPTIVE  
SUMMARY OF  
COMMUNITY  
INTERVIEWS

In this section, key ideas and trends from the interview question are summarized. We have included a selection of quotes from the interviews with knowledge holders.



### *Question - Can you tell me about yourself?*

The majority of knowledge holders were born in FWFN and are band members. However, a few are considered tell us about community members, meaning that they are not official band members. When we asked knowledge holders to themselves, most people shared where they were born and described their families and their role in their family (i.e. grandmother, mother). A few knowledge holders also shared and described their experiences of colonization and the consequences of intergenerational trauma such as abuse and alcoholism in addition to the importance of reconnecting to the land and culture (relearning the language and ceremony for example) to carry through resilience and teachings to the next generation. Many also described themselves by speaking to their role in the community such as *"Elder"*, *"Language-Keeper"* or *"Knowledge-Keeper"*.



*"I'm an Elder first of all. I'm a member of the Fort William First Nation, have been forever."*

*"And ah, a bit about myself. I'm a language-keeper, first language was Anishinaabe..."*

*"So, I am a young, Anishinaabek mom."*

### *Question - What does the land mean to you?*

Knowledge holders described land in relational terms, most often locating themselves by saying things like, *"home"*, *"land is the place where I was born"*, *"where you live and belong"* or *"land is my roots."* Land was also described in terms that were more collective, referring to ancestral connections and histories such as *"Land is home and life, land is my people"*. One Elder was clear that the meaning of land is very different in Anishinaabemowin and for Anishinaabe people compared to western ways of knowing and for settlers. Mother Earth was also commonly mentioned when describing land and the meaning of land by the knowledge holders that participated in this project. Several people also stated that land is a gift emphasizing that land is sacred, that land is a provider, and that land is for everyone.



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*“This is why the roots are there, right? This is where I belong.”*

*“The land is everything to me. The land to me means Mother Earth”*

*“Land... it means all of our resources.”*

*“Land is sacred the world over. Land represents a gift, or has all the gifts that were given by the Creator and we acknowledge this as Mother Earth and she takes care of the land, and the water, and the air. All the – all our – all of the significant contributions for life is taken care of by mother Earth. And so the land of course is where we used to live on and as Anishinabek we celebrate that land and when we want to occupy a piece of that land we have ceremony and then when we leave that particular piece of land for another piece of land we have ceremony again. We give thanks for the use of that particular land and we ask that it be restored.”*

### *Question - Can you tell me about your relationship to this land?*

Knowledge holders stated that the land is about sustenance, healing, ceremony, connections, and a way of life. When describing relationships to the land, many knowledge holders described the ways in which the land provides for them, and the ways in which the land gives them life. Land was also described as the source of life, as medicine and as essential to health and wellness in a range of way. Sentiments such as living off the land and sustaining life by hunting, fishing, picking berries and gathering medicines were commonly shared. Overall, relationships to the land were described in highly interdependent and reciprocal terms.

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*“It means everything that is provided for us as humans, medicine, food, water, shelter, place for serenity, teachings ... home, connection yeah.”*

*“My relationship to the land [pause] is the medicines. The medicines, the animals [long pause] ah, the water is very important. The medicines are very important.”*

*“My relationship to it [land] is a way of life, everything that we do and live by every day is part of this land, this Nation that we live in.”*

*“...picking herbs and medicines from the land and wildlife forms.”*

“

*“Land is a give and take – what one takes from land one must give back as well.”*

*“...all those things are collected in a sacred manner and [pauses] before you can use those um, things that are on the land, you have to offer tobacco and then you can take ah, what you need to use for the ceremony.”*

While describing relationships to the land, many knowledge holders also highlighted the degradation of land and pollution that is taking place, impacting their relationship with the land, their livelihood, and their health and wellbeing (cancer, specifically, was noted by several people as an example of a specific illness resulting from the degradation of land). Others spoke to the impacts of colonization here as well, as a root cause of land degradation.

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*“We have to acknowledge what’s being done to the land. The cutting of the trees that aren’t being replanted.”*

*“Mother Earth is really taking a beating from all the industry that causes pollution and sickness”*

*“Industry takes precedents where economic development enterprises work and that greed is the end result thus resulting in destructive forces: mining, forestry”*

*“I have come to appreciate the land more because I am connected not only to my spirit as an Anishinaabe, and in that brings a lot of uh, knowledge, a lot of awareness of what was missing in my life.”*

*“The history mainly, of not being ah – not learning all about the land, all about our culture, about our teachings, about our – our – our um, language and all of that. Even though, my parents ah, spoke fluently, Ojibway, but ah – you know, back then, you know, um – treaty Indians, you weren’t – you know, because of residential school and the history of – of that, well, we lost that connection to the land. We lost that connection to our culture, to our language, and everything like that, so – yes.”*



## *Question - Have you noticed or experienced any changes on the land throughout your lifetime?*

Knowledge holders spoke to, and described in significant detail, many changes on the land that they have both noticed and experienced throughout their lives. Specific changes and impacts were diverse and often described in very interconnected ways. Specific changes, and impacts of these changes, included: changes in lake and river levels, loss of wildlife, changes in wind intensity, invasive species, poor water quality, poor air quality, more common forest fires, cutting of woodlands, changing rain and snow patterns. Changes to the water quality and air quality due to industrial activity, resource extraction, and pollution was a main trend and a common concern shared.

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*“There’s the invasive species that I’ve seen, there’s more and more and more of them, in terms of the climate change.”*

*“Ah, the winds ah – have become greater and stronger. The lake is still protecting us, but even ah, she has gone 7 and 8-foot waves with the weather changes in the world that have been going on, and we used to drink out of this little spring... and that’s not there no more.”*

*“It’s all about economic development and it’s – the land is kind of just being stripped away of – of all the medicines, the trees.”*

*“...some people talk about the fish in Lake Superior, that you know, because of the different levels and the warming, I guess of the lake, and everything, it affects everything. It affects all of the ecosystems.”*

In addition to these specific changes, some knowledge holders also shared concerns about changes in terms of seasons and seasonality while also describing that the weather has become more extreme and less predictable. The changes to seasons and less predictable weather, were described as concerning for land-based activities such as fishing and hunting. One respondent stated that currently, there are only two seasons, as a result of climate change.

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*“...the weather has changed a lot, it’s become more – ah – turbulent. It’s ah – as Indian people see it, it’s been polluted and the Mother Earth is really struggling to restructure itself and clean itself and um, that’s one of the reasons why there’s big fires and all of these different kinds of things.”*

“

*“We have a lot of changes in the seasons. They’re - [pauses] unpredictable. We don’t know when it’s going to snow. We don’t know when it’s going to turn spring. We have ah - a longer time to get to spring, longer winters, I guess it would be and then, you know, spring is shorter a-and summer is a - there’s a lot of changes in the weather, in that sense.”*

Many people went on to also describe how these changes to the land and the impacts of climate change result in loss. Specifically, loss of medicines, loss of the blueberry patch, loss of culture, loss of streams to drink water from, etc. It is noteworthy that many knowledge holders spoke to the loss of the blueberry patch. Knowledge holders also expressed that loss of culture, language, and traditional activities caused by colonialization and residential schools impacted connections to the land. Taken together, these losses make Mother Earth, non-human creatures, and people unhealthy. Again, several participants spoke to concerns around levels of cancer in the community as a specific kind of illness linked to industry and pollution.

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*“My mom used to - we used to go blueberry picking, like every weekend on a Saturday or Sunday. She’d gather up, like, you know, a luncheon and make a tea in the bush and we’d all pick blueberries and then we’d have a lunch and pick again ...”*

*“The water is becoming polluted and in a lot of places you cannot eat the fish that we were once able to use to support our lifestyle.”*

*“Animals are getting sick. There’s animals out there that have three legs, one eye... and the fish.... the water is poisonous. And that makes the land ill.”*



*“I think our Earth is dying, to tell you truth. I - I think there’s been so much done by humans, by atmospheric things, by things out of our control, that it’s almost unforgivable at this point.”*

*“Water is becoming polluted and in a lot of places you cannot eat the fish that we were once able to use to support our um - lifestyle.”*



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When describing the changes observed and experienced, the large majority of knowledge holders emphasized the role that industry, economic development, and resource extraction have played in the degradation of land and the loss of connection to the land that they have witnessed over time while also recognizing the connections between these activities and our changing climate. Industries such as mining and forestry were mentioned in the vast interviews conducted when describing changes seen on the land. The degradation of land and pollution caused by industry gouging resources and the lack of respect for the land were common statements. Woven throughout the descriptions and discussions of the changes to the land was a high level of concern for Mother Earth being caused by industry and resource extraction; this is a primary concern among the FWFN members that participated in this project.

Another commonly shared concern shared when answering this question was concerns that the impacts of resource extraction, pollution, and climate change are getting worse over time, Therefore, the consequences are accumulating and a concern for future generations. The consequences of the changes for children and grandchildren was commonly expressed as a key concern when knowledge holders spoke about the changes that they have seen or experienced. Overall, knowledge holders indicated that industry, resource extraction, pollution, and climate change are great causes for concern now and, even more so, for the future.

### *Question - Why do you think these changes are happening?*

When asked about the causes of the many changes being observed and experienced, again, the role of resource extraction and industry in destroying the land, causing pollution and causing climate change was a common thread. Some knowledge holders described that other people (including settlers and other members of the FWFN community) are not aware of or “not realizing” the consequences of resource extraction and connections to climate change, in large part due to a lack of connection to the land. Many also attributed greed, money, and power as causes. Connections were made again to colonization when discussing the causes. Some people also brought up technology, TV, internet, computers and gaming as factors causes these changes, related to a loss of connectedness to the land.

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*“They [settlers] are ruining the land and they don’t even realize that they’re doing it.”*

*“I think greed, power, money, control, and – just – it’s just like somebody’s got their head in the sand.”*



“

*“My mom knew that changes were coming. And I see the changes happening. And I see it getting worse. It's kind of uncontrollable because there's not enough people that are listening and not enough people that are doing thing to take care of Mother Earth.”*

*“Ah, these changes are happening because of disrespect for Mother Earth.”*

*“When the Europeans came and they started colonizing the Aboriginal people, they lost their way. They lost their language, they lost their traditions, they lost their way of life. Not only that, they lost their spirits.”*

*“...people are being greedy.”*

*“I don't like to say 'white people', but ah, because of them cutting down all the woodland.”*

*“...people getting sick from cancer and other sicknesses big companies and - like, oil companies and everything around, it's all about money for them.”*

*“...well, in our society today I think some of the changes are happening because of technology. TV, internet, computers, gaming those kinds of things keep people in the house.”*

Knowledge holders repeatedly indicated that the changes they are witnessing and experiencing on their land are due to outside influences such as pollution, changing weather and climate, disrespect for Mother Earth, colonization, industry and large corporations. Underlying all of these factors, a lack of care and respect for Mother Earth and Indigenous peoples and imbalances were described as root causes.

*“People just don't care and not honouring the seasons and the way that we're supposed to live.”*

*“And people, from our reserve, from Fort William First Nation, um, don't seem to care about the land... Not everybody, I'm not saying everybody is like that.”*

*“There's an imbalance there and I believe that Native people, Aboriginal people, are going to play a major role in making that - or bringing about a normalization and a respect for all of nature.”*

*Question - Have you noticed any changes in traditions or ways of living in your community throughout your lifetime?*

We specifically asked Elders this question. Elders noted that traditional ways of living and their culture have generally been lost. Specifically, traditional activities such as eating and living off the land have become uncommon. While a loss of respect was mentioned by some Elders, the loss of respect has taken them away from their spirituality. Some also returned to the role of industry and resource extraction when answering this question and in relation to a lack of respect and care for the land. However, some Elders also noted that *"culture is starting to come back"* and that the people of FWFN are reclaiming their teachings and traditional ways.

“ *“Ya, well, not too much of us are really eating out of the land anymore...”*

*“...there isn't very much of our traditional teachings going on very much.”*

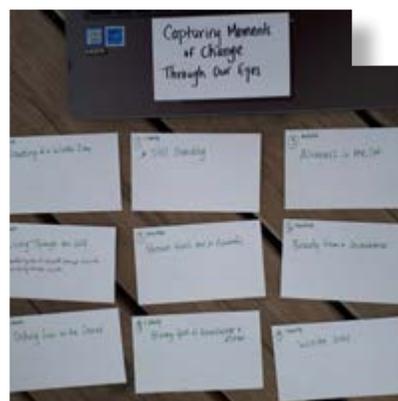
*“No respect for the traditions, sharing of wild meat when moose killed like long ago.”*

*“It's the loss of respect - respect being number one and that we were taught, number one, respect. I see. There's no respect about anything that I see, about the trees, because I know everything has a spirit and there's no respect to leave those dead trees down there, or even you know, bears are shot for their um, paws and for their gallbladder, and there just left at our dump and, you know? And I know our hunters wouldn't do that.”*

*“...all these changes collectively, have their good, contemporary benefits like, roads and houses and TV, and all these things, but ...it has taken them away from their respect - respect for the land and it has taken them away from their spirituality.”*

*“15 years ago where it seems culture was, not being denied, but it certainly wasn't recognized on this reserve now I see more cultural aspects coming forward, which is healthy. It helps the children.”*

*“...starting to walk the good path and learn about traditional ways again.”*



## *Question - What does the term climate change mean to you?*

When we asked knowledge holders about the meaning of the term climate change, a common idea was that climate change is very interconnected to pollution and resource extraction. Some knowledge holders mentioned health and pollution, the controversial nature of climate change, while others spoke to their fears and concerns for future generations. Answers to this question highlighted that knowledge holders in FWFN recognize that climate change is much more than just warming weather; it is a complex issue connected to many causal factors, leading to a whole set of consequences for the land, other non-human creatures, and humans. As one knowledge holders said, climate change is “a collection of things”.

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*“Ah, when I hear the word “climate change,” it’s very one-sided. Climate change is not just that, it’s a whole collection of things. It’s a collection of the fish. It’s a collection of the forest. It’s a collection of the grasses that grow. It’s a collection of the herbs that ah, Aboriginal people use to heal themselves, as well as others. It’s ah, talking about all the animals and – and – um – so, I can’t say it’s just about climate, it’s about more than that.”*

*“Well, when I think of the word climate change it alarms me because it’s such a reality. It instills fear for my children, for my grandchildren, for the next generations.”*

*“Well, all the weather – all the weather is going to be changing and there’s going to be less and less of the goodness of the land.”*

*“Probably one of the first things, there’s all the controversy about it. Is it happening? Is it not happening? That immediately comes to mind, right? Then to filter through what does it actually mean to me and – firsthand experience is it true or is it not true for me, right? Not in somebody’s else opinion. And looking at that, climate change is real. Things are changing and so fast now in the weather, in the patterns and precipitation. I can’t deny what I see with my own eyes– what I see and feel with my own senses.”*

*“It means hotter and colder. When you least expect it or want it. [laughs] But it’s a – it’s got to do with – atmosphere has got to do with trees. It’s got to do with carbon in the earth, so there’s many things.”*

Several knowledge holders also described climate change as a message from Mother Earth:

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*“I think Mother Earth is trying to tell us something, but we’re not listening. We’re not listening and so, it’s affecting – it’s all over the world.”*

*“Climate change, I also look at that as Mother Earth dealing with like purging herself of what is happening to her so she’s reacting in certain ways too just like a human body would react if you put this in it, this junk in it, this junk in it then you’re going to get sick and so I see it as that as well. I also think that we have to adapt to changes and with change - when we have change I think that it creates another option for a new way to start up.”*

*“I think the climate is – basically, crying for help and it’s giving us little clues and if we’re blind enough to not see them, then we’re not really one with our land anymore.”*

*Question - How do you feel about the changes that you described to me and about climate change?*



Knowledge holders shared a range of emotions and feelings in relation to the changes that they are seeing and experiencing on the land and about climate change. Most commonly, the feelings and emotions described were negative. Nearly all knowledge holders shared feelings of concern, fear, worry, and sadness with a clear focus on the ways that the degradation of our lands and climate change will impact children and grandchildren. Knowledge holders expressed a deep-seated concern and fear for future generations.

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*“I feel sad about it, you know, because my children and that and grandchildren are not going to have – or even experience the kind of world I used to live in as a child growing up, the beauty of it...”*



“

*“I feel very hurt for our people, in that they don't have the same way of life that they used to. And - but I feel that - and I feel that there's a change coming for our people, in that they're going to start to pick up their ah, traditional aspirations and begin to use those to better themselves and their communities.”*

*“Well again I'm worried about the changes just because of the generations to come. I think they have a very hard journey that they're going to be experiencing, but I also think if they are prepared and by prepared I mean if they have our knowledge of our 7 grandfather teachings, the knowledge of Mother Earth, the knowledge of respect those traditional, cultural knowledge that can move forward in a good way to help make those changes happen because they'll care about what's happening.”*

*“I'm worried about these changes and because I have ah, sons, as well as grandchildren, I'm wondering what's going to left for them? Are they going to be having to walk around with oxygen masks on, you know?”*

*“I feel for my future generations. I feel for the people that are in - our own people are ignorant and it's like, they forgot. They forgot about our ancestors and how hard they worked and to, ah, live and to take care of the land and - they forgot. And you know what? It's like a hierarchy. A hierarchy. A partial hierarchy. Money is at the top, chief and council at the top, the Elders, the youth are forgotten about and before, we had our own systems, we had our own laws, and the elders were the go-to for advice, for council, to go and ask questions.”*

However, several people also described feeling a sense of hope and possibility with respect to returning to traditional ways, emphasizing that this will better serve themselves and communities as climate change continues to unfold. Throughout this, knowledge holders also described the importance of Elders, sharing teachings and raising awareness with youth, and building intergenerational relationships. Getting in touch with culture is paramount, along with traditional teachings; together this may ease some worry if Indigenous people connect with their Elders, traditional knowledge, and teachings.

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*“No, I'm not worried about the changes. I'm very hopeful that things are going to eventually, even themselves out and that Native people, or Aboriginal people, are going to get back to living the way we once did.”*

“

*“I know they say it only takes one person to make a difference.”*

*“I see it as not a situation that’s going to take place over night. I see it as being a process where our people, our Aboriginal people, are going get, reacquainted to their environment and reacquainted with each other, reacquainted with the communities, and reacquainted, most importantly, with their spirituality.”*

*Question - How do you think these changes impact your health and the health of our community? How do you think it will impact the health of our children and grandchildren?*

When discussing this question, we referred to the Medicine Wheel to consider the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health impacts of changes to the land and climate change. An underlying idea is that when the land is sick and when Mother Earth is sick, people become sick. Physical health impacts of the changes described above were commonly described in general terms as increasing sickness and illness was commonly noted. As noted above, cancer was identified and described as a specific health-related concern in FWFN; attributed to pollution of the air, food, and water and to industry\*. Concerns around Lyme disease were also discussed as a specific physical health concern related to climate change.

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*“Everything’s changing around the world, not only us. Everybody’s getting sick.”*

*“...people are getting sick from cancer around here.”*

*“Ah, yes. In the last, I’d say about the last 10 years, I’ve heard more and more people dying of cancer from – it’s got to be from the – industries and stuff and people that worked in different kinds of materials, where that poison got into their bodies.”*

*“It’s [climate change] going to affect my breathing physically, I mean it’s in the air we breathe, it needs to be clean – and it’s not.”*

*“...people are more prone to Lyme disease, viruses, things like that.”*

\* On a side note, in a prior survey conducted, an Elder who is now deceased expressed grave concern about cancer in FWFN. This Elder has now passed (from cancer) and he adamantly stated that something must be done in regards to the high cancer rate affecting FWFN members.

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*“So, there’s the ah, element of things floating through the air ... and germs and such and um, readapting themselves, mutating, you know, and I think the more severe the weather conditions are, ah, if it’s very, very wet out, that brings b-bugs and toxins from the earth, you know, that we would normally not see unless it were wet.”*

*“Forest fires, all that. I mean, we had that experience this summer with - and we’re hundreds of kilometers away from a forest fire and yet, our breathing was affected, right? And so, it doesn’t even need to be local.”*

*“Hm, well for one thing I think the food and the water. We’re seeing a lot more allergies. We’re seeing a lot more - just a lot more allergies due to the climate change from the food, the GMOs, the pesticides all that kind of stuff being grown, and the money makers who just don’t care and they just want to make money. So they devastate the land and yeah, it’s affecting us physically for sure the children, and the next generations are going to be affected.”*

*“...our government, you know, still is okaying things to pipelines to run through here and run through there, poisoning our water and everything, and - like, you know? I’m worried and concerned because you know, what’s going to happen when all the water, we can’t even drink from the water.”*



In terms of emotional, spiritual, and mental health, the majority of knowledge holders described that emotional, spiritual, and mental health has declined in FWFN in recent times and identified links between declining emotional, spiritual, and mental health and land degradation, loss of connection to land, climate change, and colonization (as discussed earlier in the interviews). Many of the emotional impacts and mental health impacts, again, were discussed in relation to fear and concern for future generations.

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*“I believe that because we’re messing with Mother Earth and it does have a certain effect. There’s more mental illness, you know, and there’s more drug abuse and alcohol abuse. It’s always been there, it’s just - becoming more rampant and more - like, it’s tripled in size as compared to when I was a kid... there’s more, mental illness.”*

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*“As far as ah – as far as mental illness, I don’t know how that become, but it seems to be more and than before.”*

*“So, when you went there [to the land to hunt for food], ah, you were emotionally affected because uh, you were unable to ah, fulfil what you’re looking for. ”*

*“And for mental health, worrying about what’s to come in the future and not knowing, but just the fear of not knowing, that really affects it in a harsh manner, because then that’s something that keeps you up at night.*

*“I think that it’s very important to understand that we drifted away from the ah – relationship that we had in the environment, since the beginning of our people’s ah, creation on earth. And I think that one day our people are going to realize that in terms of who they are, they’re – they’re very much in a situation where they’re bankrupt, and that’s a – a – a challenging place for anybody to find themselves. I think it’s going to spur on the idea that we have to, as Indian people, as individuals, as families, as communities, we have to get back into healing.”*

*“Fear, it’s already affecting those children and grandchildren, they’re all afraid. So what does fear do to the body, it creates stressors. People look for relief through drugs and alcohol to get away from that fear. It can be feared that they might not know where it comes from but I guarantee you in large part they are afraid for their future.”*

*Question - What contribution, if any could you make, or would you like to make, in response to changes on the land and climate change that you are seeing and experiencing?*

We asked a set of questions about the kinds of action that could be taken in response to changes on the land and climate change. We began by asking knowledge holders about the possible contributions that they could make, as individuals. Several individuals emphasized that now is the time for action, emphasizing a sense of urgency, for example: *“...the only eagle that has not left those mountains is the eagle of action. So people have to start taking action locally now in order to effect global change.”* Several key ideas emerged when knowledge holders described the kinds of actions that they could and should take, these ideas are summarized in the table overleaf.

Among the Elders that participated in the project, sharing traditions, traditional knowledge, and teachings with youth was described as being particularly important.

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL CONTRIBUTIONS	EXAMPLE QUOTES FROM KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS
Respect, care for, and give thanks to the land and Mother Earth	<p><i>"Well, the little bit of change that I do is um, [deep breath] – first of all, I thank the Creator every day for another day of life. I thank the – the Mother Earth, you know, for – and I – I treat Mother Earth with respect. I wouldn't even spit on the ground because to me, that's disrespectful."</i></p> <p><i>"You know, um – start paying attention to Mother Nature, because she doesn't give away clues that are false, you know? She does them for a reason. We should be listening to that and following her lead."</i></p>
Hold industry accountable for impacts	<p><i>"I try to hold industry accountable for their actions. They're in denial about what they've done to the planet."</i></p>
Use only what you need, recycle and don't waste	<p><i>"Well, the one thing when I pick medicines I just pick enough ... So for myself I can be mindful of how much I pick, go to different areas. Also with my garbage you know, I don't use those plastic bags as much as I can now. I heard Fort Francis is going no plastic straws, no Styrofoam so I think I want to implement that."</i></p>
Raise awareness about climate change	<p><i>"...spreading the word what we're doing and the harm we're doing and that we've got to stop..."</i></p>
Learn about one's culture	<p><i>"I believe that for me, I got to start living my own culture, I- and learn more about it, rather than all my life I rejected it you know?"</i></p>
Elders sharing traditional knowledge and teachings with youth	<p><i>"I would say that the first thing we have to do is get our Elders together and develop programs where they can learn and listen to the Elders because they have the answers to all the questions."</i></p> <p><i>"I see my role, as long as I am living, as the ah – ah – passing that information on to the coming generation."</i></p>

<b>INDIVIDUAL LEVEL CONTRIBUTIONS</b> <small>CONTINUED</small>	<b>EXAMPLE QUOTES FROM KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS</b> <small>CONTINUED</small>
Get involved in ceremonies and healing	<p><i>"And I think we need to have more healing things like sweat lodges and – you know, is – retreats that people can go and take where they can just heal themselves, because without that they're not really helping anybody else. Until they heal themselves first."</i></p>
Engage in acts of resistance	<p><i>"And so there's a lot that the individual person can do, it's just getting past our fears. "Oh, they might throw me in a jail for a night because I went and slashed these tires, I might have to pay back for the tires." So what, you know, what did you do as a result of that. Well, that logging truck was unable to haul anymore trees that they cut down for a full day or two, you know. How many trees did I save that day, I shut down their logging operation for at least a good, you know, 24 hours. So how many trees did we save, well maybe 10,000 trees if we got lucky, you know."</i></p> <p><i>"...some people, like some reserves, some First Nations, want to keep – want to keep their lakes and they – they they fight for and stand up to um, ah, companies and organizations that want to come and ah, extract the resources."</i></p> <p><i>"And if people just get over those fears and, myself included, there's a lot of important things that we could do, you know. Writing letters to our politicians instead of going on a forum and complaining, write a letter to your politician, local, provincial, federal, you know, cc it to all of them. Or, you know, start writing letters because when enough people start to complain about the same thing they have to listen, right."</i></p>

*Question - What contribution, if any do you think FWFN Band and Council should make in response to changes on the land and climate change?*

Several knowledge holders did note that Band and Council has started to head in the right direction, and many were happy to hear that Band and Council had approved and supported this specific project on climate change. Several specific areas for action were recommended by those who participated in this project, to continue to make progress in terms of addressing changes on the land and climate change in FWFN. Again, there was a focus on youth, and the importance of youth, across many of the ideas that knowledge holders shared when answering this question. Key ideas are summarized in the table below.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM BAND AND COUNCIL	EXAMPLE QUOTES FROM KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS
Support awareness raising and educational programs	<p><i>"... for starters, hold like, info sessions. So, that you know, the community are more informed. Not everybody knows what climate change is, or has a full idea and it doesn't help – or I mean, it doesn't hurt to you know, basic your knowledge and better yourself."</i></p> <p><i>"I think our band should be putting out more notices and more science-based truths about what's really going on with the planet. I think we should be making them, I think our band should be bringing in speakers, for example, those young kids from the United States that are holding that lawsuit, let's bring a couple of those kids up here. Let's invite that Greta girl that's from Sweden into our community to talk, you know, our band should be doing that, not people in the community."</i></p>
Support programs for Elders to teach youth	<p><i>"I think they should have – get elders in a school and teach them jum- younger generation to learn, you know, the medicines and everything, how to – you know, to plant, how to pick, how – what to pick and all different things so that people carry on that generation."</i></p> <p><i>"I know you mentioned that the Elders play a critical role there, but how do you think we can say to the chief and councils and a lot of the communities, "Hey, let's get on board. Let's bring in more Elders and let's be the caretakers of the land that we're supposed to be."</i></p>

<b>CONTRIBUTIONS FROM BAND AND COUNCIL</b> <small>CONTINUED</small>	<b>EXAMPLE QUOTES FROM KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS</b> <small>CONTINUED</small>
<b>Strong leadership and leading by example</b>	<p><i>"I think that the - any - anyone's role, Chief and Council, community members, it's what - th- what I say is that the most powerful Indian medicine is the power of example. And if people are willing to give themselves and opportunity to learn something new, to reach out and begin ah, the first steps towards finding their own personality, then I'm hopeful that Fort William and other First Nations communities can have an opportunity to make a difference."</i></p> <p><i>"I would like them to see or to be more involved, right? --- As a leadership of the community, it would be nice to see more involvement --- However, right, through um, community involvement and - and - like, asking for suggestions - --- It would be nice to see them have more, um, of a leadership role."</i></p>
<b>Limit resource extraction and pollution on reserve</b>	<p><i>"I think by- stopping all the people from doing landfills on our reserves."</i></p>
<b>Restore the land</b>	<p><i>"I think they should - try to re- replant the trees that were taken down - and to try to get that blueberry patch going again - ...if they can. Because those in itself are medicine."</i></p> <p><i>"the process of either reforestation or ah, very much involve in rebalancing, inconsistencies in the environment and ah, helping to bring back the , good way of life."</i></p>

<b>CONTRIBUTIONS FROM BAND AND COUNCIL</b> <i>CONTINUED</i>	<b>EXAMPLE QUOTES FROM KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS</b> <i>CONTINUED</i>
Balance the need to protect resource with economic development	<p><i>“And so I feel like because of economic development being a priority in our community they are overlooking the resources that we have to sustain us as Indigenous people. Well I think they can focus more on protecting our land here rather than the main focus be economic development. That’s the one recommendation I would say.”</i></p> <p><i>“You know, there are ways to do all this stuff in balance. Right now it’s all out of balance because profits and getting rich are the motivators and we have to change those primary motivators.”</i></p>
Gather ideas and input from the community	<p><i>“They should just ask for more input...They’re telling us what we need. We need to tell them what we need.”</i></p>
Support gatherings and community building	<p><i>“I just feel that um, the community needs to bond, not just as families, but as neighbours and um, be truly a – a helping part to the community.”</i></p> <p><i>“I believe that, we are entering a – a time of great challenge and I don’t think that anybody has the perfect answer. I think that the most important thing that we can do right now is begin to work together...I believe that the health and welfare of Aboriginal people or people on Fort William or in other communities will be a lot better-off down the road when they start to realize that they need each other and that the biggest thing that we can do is learn to work together.”</i></p>

*Question - What should the provincial and federal governments be doing in response to changes on the land and climate change?*

We also asked about the kinds of action that are needed from government bodies. One knowledge holder emphasized that our governments have a major responsibility to do something about climate change, to protect the lands and the health of FWFN, but that provincial and federal governments “choose to ignore” this responsibility. Key ideas are summarized in the table below.



CONTRIBUTIONS THAT GOVERNMENTS CAN MAKE	EXAMPLE QUOTES FROM KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS
<p>Create incentives for connecting to the land and learning traditional ways</p>	<p><i>“They probably could offer more incentives to develop um, stronger, relationships with the earth, where it will benefit the future, not just today. So, I think there needs to be more ah, funds available.”</i></p>
<p>Support sovereignty and reconciliation</p>	<p><i>“I think they have to stop interfering, you know, with ah – trying to govern like, the – the First Nations and they got to realize they gov- like the First Nations are their own people and they have their own governor – their own government.”</i></p> <p><i>“Well, of course. They should’ve actually in the beginning listened to First Nation people of North America. You know, how – how things were you know, they were cautioned in doing many things.”</i></p>
<p>Restore and give back to the land</p>	<p><i>“Well, they’re – they – the governments get out from – from our land too, so they should contribute back.”</i></p> <p><i>“I think they should also do the replanting of the trees that are being knocked down. All over the land.”</i></p>

CONTRIBUTIONS THAT GOVERNMENTS CAN MAKE <i>CONTINUED</i>	EXAMPLE QUOTES FROM KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS <i>CONTINUED</i>
Limit resource extraction and polluting activities	<i>"I think they should be stopping all the clear-cutting and – and trying to preserve our lakes and water sources and that."</i>
Additional funds climate change research	<p><i>"Um, where it will benefit the future, not just today. So, I think there needs to be more ah, funds available to do the research."</i></p> <p><i>"We have to get better research into what's happening and the research can help us identify the depth of the problems and from that we can develop actions that will help to change the attitude and increase the level of responsibilities individually and as communities."</i></p>

*Question - What role can traditional knowledge play in protecting health now and in the future?*

We also asked about the specific role that traditional knowledge can play in terms of protecting and promoting health in the context of increasing land degradation and climate change. Traditional was described as being able to contribute a set of connected benefits in terms of healing and wellness while also addressing a set of interconnected issues related to health and climate change. As with several other questions, there was a focus on Elders as teachers, and a focus on teaching youth about traditional knowledge and teachings in response to this question.

“*“Get back into our Native way, our – our medicines. Our – what our gr- what our elders taught us.”*

*“I think that the critical question now is one of example. If you have a community that is involved in healing and wellness and that community is beginning to flourish once again.”*



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*“It’s not just ah – it’s not just ceremonies, but how people inter-related with one another, how they feel about the direction that they’re going. How they see what it means to an individual in terms of what is healing and wellness to them. And those small things collectively will begin to reshape a community and that community will be much stronger and as the children get older, they begin to see the change in their elders and the change in their communities.”*

*“So, I’m very hopeful about the future. I know that there’s a lot of gloom and doom scenarios about the future and how we don’t have this and how we don’t have that, but maybe that’s a good thing, because it gives us an opportunity to um, explore these other areas of how we can arrive at a new concept of healing and wellness in our communities.”*

*“There are women in our community that do the water ceremonies. They do the moon – they have those ceremonies. The moon ceremonies, all these are our responsibilities in the Anishinabek way to do those things at a minimum.”*

*“...bringing that cultural road back and bringing the communities into a place w- that’s more healthy.”*

*“...being Anishinabek that we have that, we hold that responsibility. The women in particular hold a responsibility for the water.”*

*“...for land-based to me is there’s a lot of healing. Lot of healing walking in the woods and just being with nature, and having that connection to the tree, to the grass you know?”*

*“...once we feel we’ve got a good understanding even if we don’t have a good understanding we know that what we’re doing is hurting Mother Earth then we should join together with other families. And then we should join together with other families and other communities because that’s how things get done is through the family. And that’s where I can have more impact, with my family than with like – that you know, more impact and be able to initiate the responsibility that we have in – from our own – just from our own being Anishinabek that we have that, we hold that responsibility.”*

*Question - Do you think it is important to do something about climate change? If so, can you explain why you think it is important?*

All knowledge holders agreed that it is important to do something about climate change. Several reasons why this is important were shared. Importantly, the idea of responsibility was shared, more specifically that Anishinabek peoples have a responsibility as stewards of the land: *"they say that Anishinaabe people are... the managers. They're like the people that keep the environment [pauses] balanced."*

There was a very strong consensus that we need to do something about climate change for our children and for future generations. There was also a common thread that the issue of climate change, the impacts it will have on health is not only an issue in FWFN, as one knowledge holder stated *"...doing something about climate change is important because it's the future. That's the future of our people. That's the future of humanity."*

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*"I think it's important because if we don't do something now, there ain't going to be no future for our youth."*

*"I kind of feel that my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren, future generations, I don't know what they're going to - survive - be - survive what's going to happen down the road. Because at the rate climate change is happen, it's - and it seems to be getting worse."*



*"I believe that the health and welfare of Aboriginal people or people on Fort William or in other communities um, [pauses] - um, will um, be a lot better-off down the road when they start to realize that they need each other and that the biggest thing that we can do is learn to work together."*

*"Ya, it is important to do something about climate change because pretty soon, only 3% of the world's water is drinkable and they get the majority of it from us. You know, Lake Superior is one of the few - we have four Great Lakes, but Lake Superior is one of the few - the few that's left. So, if we don't change, we won't - if we have no water."*



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*“I think it's important just for the preservation of our species as human beings and all of the other animals on the Earth. I think there needs to be a shift of - and I can see it happening. I can see it happening in the little pockets of ... agencies and people, and ceremonies and stuff of people coming to mindfulness more of honouring Mother Earth, honouring ourself, honouring each other. And just as we learn we need to educate though, educate our youth. Because our youth are the ones that are going to need to be prepared. So the focus has to also be on the youth.”*

*“Well again I'm worried about the changes just because of the generations to come. I think they have a very hard journey that they're going to be experiencing, but I also think if they are prepared and by prepared I mean if they have our knowledge of our 7 grandfather teachings, the knowledge of Mother Earth, the knowledge of respect those traditional, cultural knowledge that can move forward in a good way to help make those changes happen because they'll care about what's happening.”*

*“...it's important because we do have to have - we have to leave our children with knowledge, and strategies, and tools because we have to look into - we have to get better research into what's happening and the research can help us identify the depth of the problems and from that we can develop actions that will help to change the attitude and increase the level of responsibilities individually and as communities.”*

SUMMARY OF OUR  
QUILT AND QUILT  
MESSAGES



At the conclusion of each interview, knowledge holders were asked to share a key idea or a message about climate change for the youth of FWFN. These messages were visualized on a single square of fabric by an artist in the community and then woven together to create a quilt that represents FWFN band and community members perspective on climate change. It conveys both symbols and messages to grandchildren and what climate change means in FWFN. Just as a picture is worth a thousand words, the quilt has captured the essence of resiliency and hope. The title of the quilt is "Embraced by Father Sky" as the color blue borders alongside other reflections of the four traditional colors of the medicine wheel. The quilt is bound together with messages to our grandchildren entwined with the recognition of resiliency that each individual brought forward in their wisdom.

The final quilt includes the message shared from all 22 knowledge holders that participated in the interviews, the community research lead, and the academic research lead. Additionally, the FWFN emblem is also included at the center of the quilt. An image of the final quilt is shown overleaf. Each message that was shared and visualized on an individual quilt square is briefly described on page 37.

# *“Embraced by Father Sky”*



Note: The descriptions are ordered from left to right, and top to bottom (as one would read on a page)

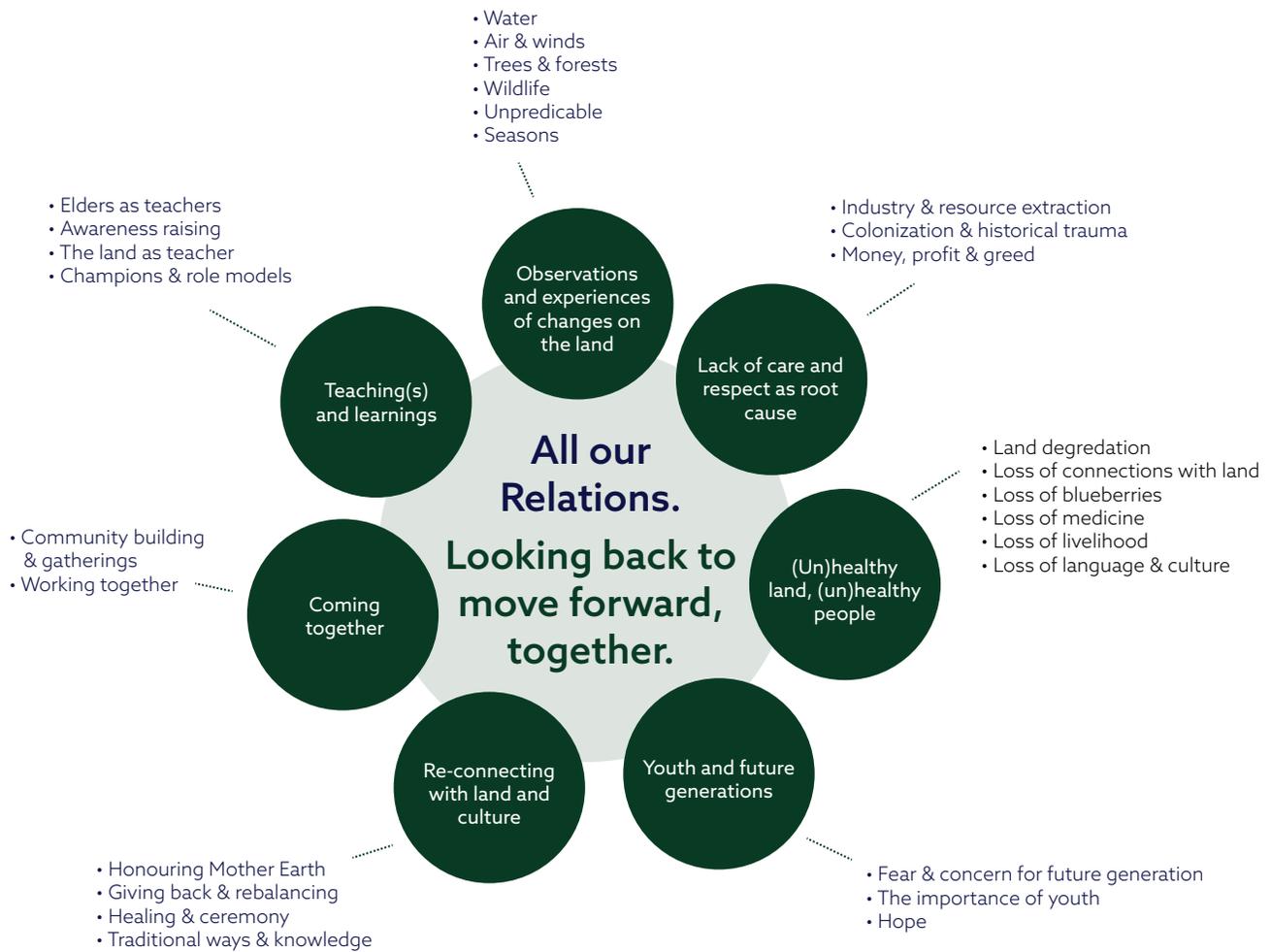
1. **Balance:** depicts one of the 7 sacred teachings – Sabe (sasquatch) or honesty. Humanity needs to learn how to walk in balance living on Mother Earth. Sabe is the one who also keeps an eye on Mother Earth.
2. **Awareness:** create awareness among each other that we each have a responsibility to care for the earth. We must educate and create greater awareness.
3. **Strive for Independence** – be independent and care for Mother earth by doing what you can such as recycling as an example.
4. **Learn Traditional Ways:** connect with Elders in a circle that represents family as in the medicine wheel and gather around holding hands under Father Sky.
5. **Take from the land, give back to the Land:** Whether that be hunting or fishing offer tobacco and give thanks to Creator for the abundance of life. Even if you take a branch from the tree, or a fish from the water, give back and offer thanks.
6. **Heal yourself – Heal the Land:** When one cares for oneself this can extend to caring for caring for land with a focus on healing.
7. **Be Strong:** stay strong in your being – connect with family and traditional teachings.
8. **Fix It:** Do what we can as individuals, organizations and companies to fix the damage that we have created.
9. **Respect your Elders:** honour and respect your elders the wisdom keepers.
10. **Caring:** Care for Mother Earth and draw someone who is watering flowers to show how to care. It is up to each of us to do what we can to show we care.
11. **Embrace your Home:** Using the infinity symbol to reflect it's an ongoing process to embrace your family and your home
12. **Healing Together:** The way forward is together. By coming together, learning together, working together in response to climate change we can heal ourselves, the land, and Mother Earth.
13. **Hope:** I think hope to reflect Sleeping Giant as a reflection and to not give up.
14. **Respect Earth Water Place:** It's always about respect. Respect Mother Earth. Don't throw garbage all over the place. Pick up your garbage. You treat Mother Earth with respect. With the water, don't throw your pop cans and trash in the lakes - learn about climate change so that you can help – I don't know if you're eliminate it, but you know, so that you can help to preserve – preserve for future generations, our land, our Mother Earth, our waters, our lakes for future generations. Learn all you can about climate change. Be the one to make change, you know? Educate yourself, and if you see somebody throwing garbage and spitting and leaving garbage all over, speak up to them and don't be afraid to do that awareness it's part of our responsibility as Elders to create awareness of taking care of Mother Earth.
15. **Reborn – Rebirth the Earth:** Look forward to each day as a message of being reborn so that things can grow.
16. **Love:** one of the 7 Sacred Teachings, Eagle with a message of love. Love yourself, love one another and love for Mother Earth
17. **Prophecy:** In using the symbol of a teepee to illustrate history of our people and to reflect on the teachings of our history to help us in present day.
18. **FWFN emblem:** The FWFN emblem is represented on the quilt as it represents the community as a whole and is an inclusive gesture and the trademark of our great nation.
19. **Hopefulness:** the symbol of a mother and child and father that represents family, holding the hand of the child and giving them a good life.
20. **Protect Mother Earth:** the earth wrapped with arms protecting her from harm. Protect her as you protect your own as Mother earth cares for us everyday.
21. **Respect your Mother:** use the tree of life to illustrate the gift of Mother Earth rooted from the land.
22. **Prosper:** use our Mt. McKay as a reflection of where we live as a family and work hard and prosper, illustrate children standing on the mountain with water as its sacred in everything we do.
23. **Plant good seed - Minobimahdizewin Living the good life** - good life, good living. which is seeds, which refers to the children, plant good seeds and those children represent those seeds sprouting in a good way, healthy ways. So that's the kind of image that comes to mind. I'm taking that right from our children, our obviously good life, good living ... that one is more broad, you know, it speaks to a bigger picture. And even, like yes it's incorporated into the medicine wheel but there's something more to it for me specifically, right. So good living and good life, I always, whenever I hear that and I see that a birch tree comes to my mind, do you know what I mean. So and then oftentimes whenever I start to picture a birch tree I'll picture a cedar tree and then some sage and then some sweetgrass and I picture all those things together in a good balanced way. Living good life means good living, you know.
24. **Grandmothers and Grandfathers are Watching:** Grandmothers and grandfathers are always present – they watch over you and your loved ones as an Elder advises, "Grandmothers and Grandfathers got your back". Honor and respect this safe in the knowledge that this is truth.
25. **Learn from the Elders:** We can't let the fox watch the henhouse – If they don't start now our next generation will suffer really bad.

4

# KEY THEMES FROM COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

4

Working together, the community project lead and academic research lead reviewed all responses closely and carefully to identify a set of key themes across all of the knowledge holders and across all of the responses. We identified 7 key themes depicted in the visual below, around the ring of the circle. At the center of this circle, we have emphasized two key ideas that link these seven themes together: *"All our relations"* and *"looking back to move forward, together."*

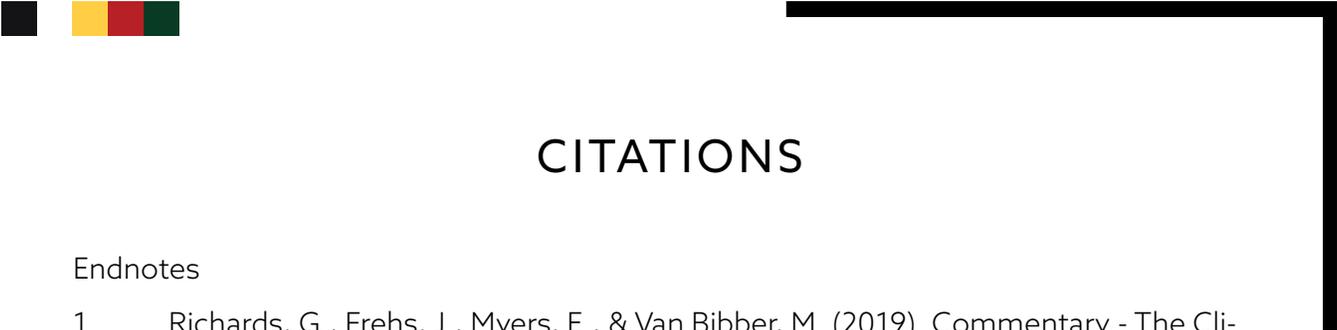


# REFLECTIONS & NEXT STEPS

It was both an honor and a gift to be part of the *Climate Change & Health in Fort William First Nation* project. We have learned many things from the community members, Elders, and youth that shared their wisdom throughout the project. A key learning is that we must respect and care for one another, our Elders, our youth, and Mother Earth if we are to protect and promote health in a changing climate. We have also learned the importance of bringing Elders and youth in our community together, to foster intergenerational relationships and to build resilience to climate change. There is great wisdom in the stories and teachings that we have heard throughout this project. Elder stories are the essence of Anishinaabe strength and identity and are sacred of past lives; these stories can teach us how to adapt to climate change. Indigenous peoples have shown resilience in spite of the great loss of language and culture and the ongoing impacts of residential schools and settler colonialism. Even though language and teachings were lost, it is time to reclaim these teachings. Our Elders can also inspire our youth to become stewards of our land and water and to become our future leaders. We need to find ways to bring our Elders and youth together so that stories and traditional teachings can be imparted again, as they once were, in sharing circles or family circles.

Our next step is to find ways to bring together our Elders and youth as leaders in our quest to respect Mother Earth and to build resilience to climate change. Our Elders hold the wisdom of the past and exemplify resiliency, while our youth are key to the future. Together, our Elders and youth can work towards a future of climate change resilience in Fort William First Nation.

***WE MUST TAKE  
OUR NEXT STEPS  
TOGETHER.***



## CITATIONS

### Endnotes

- 1 Richards, G., Frehs, J., Myers, E., & Van Bibber, M. (2019). Commentary - The Climate Change and Health Adaptation Program: Indigenous Climate Leaders' Championing Adaptation Efforts. *Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention in Canada*, 39(4), 127-130. <https://doi.org/10.24095/hpcdp.39.4.03>
  - 2 Bartlett, C., Marshall, M., & Marshall, A. (2012). Two-Eyed Seeing and other lessons learned within a co-learning journey of bringing together indigenous and main-stream knowledges and ways of knowing. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*, 2(4), 331-340. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13412-012-0086-8>
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