

Greenstone Gold Mines

A stylized background illustration of a canoe. The canoe is light blue with a yellow sun on the left and a grey paddle on the right. Inside the canoe, there are three colorful teepees (red, yellow, and red) with black outlines. The canoe is on a purple base with silhouettes of a caribou, a moose, and a fish. The entire illustration is framed by a grey outline of a canoe.

Indigenous Peoples Community Awareness Training

Exploring our Relationship and Responsibilities with Local Communities

Ginoogaming First Nation

Community Profile

GINOOGAMING FIRST NATION

What do our members want people to know about Ginoogaming First Nation?

"We aren't just stereotypes. We are beautiful, resilient, intelligent people. We stand up for what we believe is right."

-Ginoogaming First Nation member



- **Our land is our identity.**
- We are good, we are kind.
- We come together for each other in times of need.
- We have undergone numerous hardships that have made us stronger.
- We have strong family connections.
- We are a community working hard to heal.
- We have an immense respect for our culture as well as our land and recognize how beautiful it is.

History

- Our people and families claims heritage of this immediate Long Lake Area, but also associated with the traditional seasonal migration routes northward. Our Anishnawbe (Indigenous) people were never sedentary; **we were always a migratory people.**
- Ginoogaming First Nation has never ceded, surrendered, or in any way relinquished Title or Rights to its Aboriginal and Treaty Lands, and **continues to hold title, exercise rights and jurisdiction and assert interest over its aboriginal and Treaty Lands**
- Our natural laws supersede colonial policies.
- We are connected to the north through several **river systems with historic family connections to the Hudson Bay Coast**, as the waterways historically connected our communities similar to how the highways and roadways do today.
- We are also connected to the south through a close connection to McKay Lake, which drains into the Pic River and empties into Lake Superior, with **historic family connections on the Lake Superior** with seasonal migration routes southward.



Long Lake, 1912



Pow Wow 1980s

Ginoogaming First Nation is located on the shores of Long Lake within the Kenogamisis Watershed



Our Traditional Territory

- The people of Ginoogaming First Nation have used the land since **time immemorial** and have a vast traditional territory covering an area of **107,565 square km**, connected through values identified within the watersheds.
- In our traditional territory, every river, lake, stream, creek and pond have names in the Anishnawbe language.
- The cultural heritage resources found within the traditional territory represent the essence of culture for GFN.
- **According to knowledge and oral history provided by our ancestors, our people have been here long before European contact, and in this area long before the European “discovery” of the major rivers and lakes in this region.**
- We will continue to utilize and protect our traditional territory according to our inherent rights, natural laws, and culturally appropriate governance structures.
- The major watershed in our area is that of the Kenogamisis River.

Our Traditional Territory



1:4,250,000

Disclaimer: Map is for discussion purposes only. Four Rivers Inc. and Matawa First Nations Management make no guarantees on the accuracy of the information displayed and are not responsible for any decisions made on the basis of this data.

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About Ginoogaming First Nation

- **Ginoogaming First Nation (GFN)**, formerly known as Long Lake Reserve #77, is a small Anishnawbe (Ojibway) First Nation located in Northern Ontario, **approximately 40 km east of Geraldton, Ontario, on the northern shore of Long Lake**, immediately south of Long Lake #58 First Nation and the community of Longlac.
- **GFN has approximately 980 registered band members with about 200 members living on-reserve.**
- **Community programs and resources** include Band Administration, Aboriginal Head Start, APS police services, Health Centre, Training Centre, Operations and Maintenance.
- **Community cultural areas/sites** include the Pow Wow grounds, Healing Camp, Turtle Monument and Wiisinin Zaagi'igan.
- **GFN is Governed by a Chief and five councilors**, which manage a variety of departments including economic development, education, housing, lands and resources, emergency management, human resources, and family services etc.



About Ginoogaming First Nation

- GFN is within the **boundaries** of the 1905 James Bay Treaty No. 9 and was officially created through signing an adhesion to this Treaty on August 9, 1906.
- **The Peoples of our Nation inhabited the area long before this Treaty** came into effect, occupying the lands and waters since time immemorial.
- **GFN is a member of:**
 - Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nations in Northern Ontario; and
 - Matawa First Nations Management, a tribal council providing advisory services and programs to nine member First Nations.
- Our members, with respect to their ancestral family traditional territories, have **maintained their inherent authority to take care of the land the rivers that flow through it**. We have a **spiritual connection** with the land and waters, by way of the natural laws that were given to use since time immemorial.

Governance

- We have been utilizing our natural laws for thousands of years under our ancestral family systems. Our governance structure includes ceremonial protocols with decision-making processes that are rooted in family and community.
- We have a **Chief and five Councillors**, with a 2-year election cycle (election usually late August).
- We have several protocols in place to that guide us and make informed decisions
- **Heritage Protocol**
 - A right to determine the manner by which our culture, heritage and spiritual traditions are identified, preserved, protected and interpreted.
 - Cultural knowledge holders are recognized within the community; they may be Elders, experienced Land Users or Cultural Practitioners
- **Consultation and Accommodation Protocol**
 - Provides guidance on how external parties should work with our community and outlines what our processes are for addressing projects affecting lands, waters, plants and animals within our Traditional Territory.
 - It can help navigate specific issues related to past, present and future resource development projects to help determine impacts and mitigation measures (if required).
- **Nanagjiitoong Nibi (Water Protection Declaration)**
 - Our members, with respect to their ancestral family traditional territories, have maintained their inherent authority to take care of the land and the waters that flow through it. We have a spiritual connection with the land and waters, by way of natural laws that were given to us since time immemorial
 - **“we declare our duty as the First Peoples of this territory – the original stewards and keepers of the land – that we will defend and ensure protection, sustenance, and purity of our waters for the survival of our people, future generations, and for all life. By our inherent authority and responsibility, we will make decisions related to our waters.”**

Chief and Council Members 2021-2023



How can you work with us?

- See us as *partnership* rather than an obligation
- Treat us with respect and kindness, have an open mind and be accepting
- Respecting the seasons of sustenance, including traditional leave from work during times of harvest (e.g. Spring Goose Hunt)
- Work to build trust; right now there is a lack of trust
- Be understanding
- Seek knowledge of our history, our culture and our traditions as we are open to sharing with you and will to understand you
- Reconciliation at all levels – we want to be able to walk into a place and know that we will not be mistreated
- Respect who we are as people, our tradition and our culture
- Be welcoming





What do we want people to understand?

- **We are all different and practice our traditions differently, we are a diverse culture that offers a lot of love.**
- Culture is unique to each individual.
- We are working to get back to our culture and traditions.
- **Understand where we came from.** Our history, the effects of colonialism, residential schools, the 60s scoop and the impacts of multigenerational trauma.
- We are living an integrated life (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) that requires adapting and overcoming for everyone.
- **We have a desire for people to better understand us.**
- How racism and prejudices affects us and that it keeps us segregated.
- **Our contributions to the world and what the land means to us.**
- The isolation we live and feel.
- Not all First Nation communities are exactly the same.

What we are proud of?

- Our membership – there are lots of amazing hunters and fishers, what our people know from history and teaching our traditions.
- Our laughter.
- We are working to teach our children the language.
- We are trying to heal and grow.
- Our Youth and their accomplishments.
- Our location - Long Lake is a significant location, at the height of land (Ogadajiwing), a meeting place of long ago.
- The importance of oral history and what the stories teach us.
- We are fostering good relationships with our community and other communities.
- Ability to reconcile.



Education

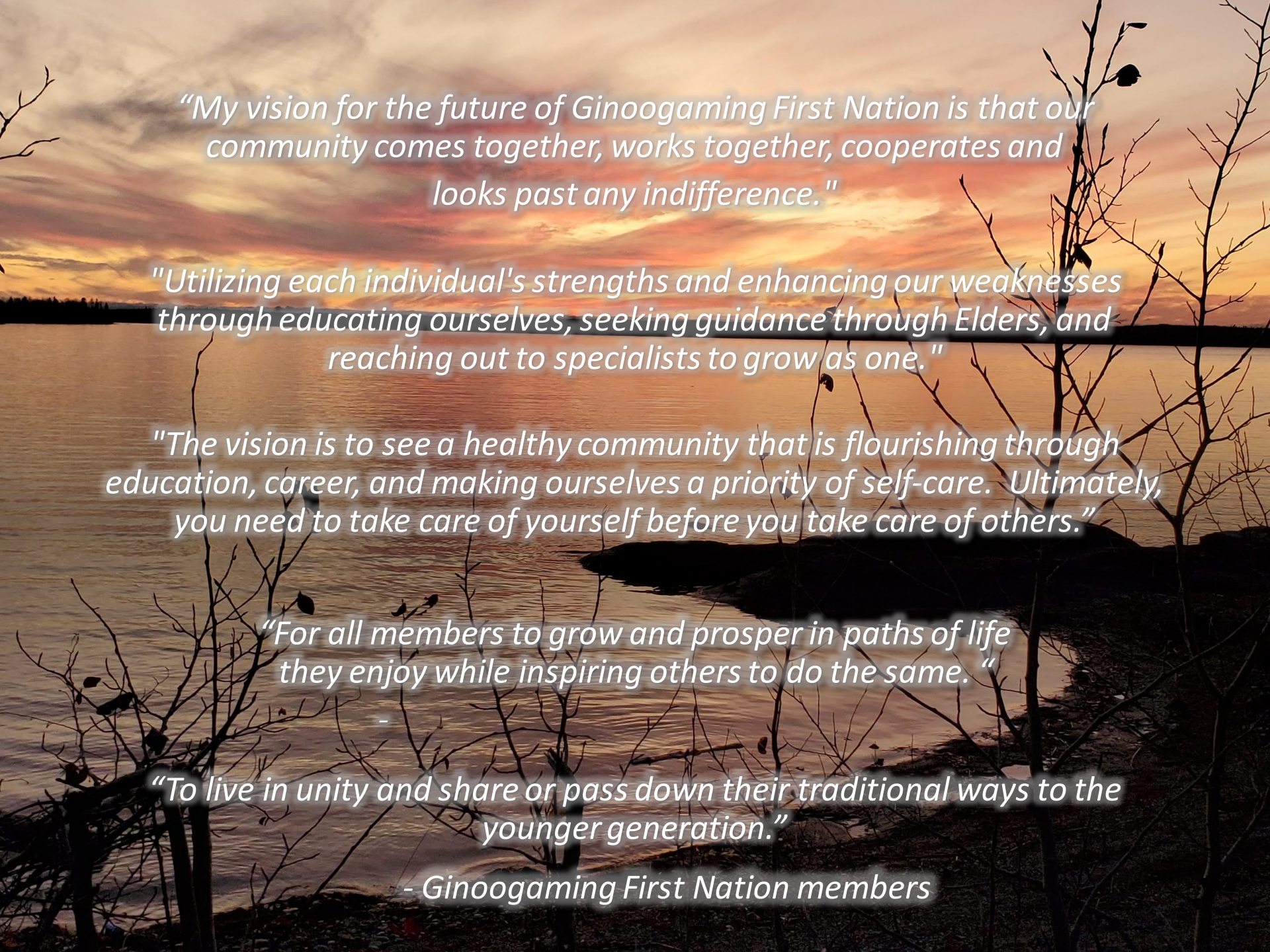
- Education is important and valued within our community.
- All community members, especially youth, are encouraged to seek and continue their education. Youth attend elementary and high school in neighbouring communities, including Longlac and Geraldton.
- The Seven Generation Teachings are extremely important. **We teach that what we do today will have an effect seven generations from now.**





What is our vision?

- **To be self-sustaining**
- **Long-term employment**
- **Sense of unity**
- **Community safety**
- **Education**
- **Economic development, improved infrastructure, more housing**
- **Healthier, stronger, healing community**
- **Working within our own laws, customs, education and governance structure**
- **Healing in general and healing through traditional teachings**
- **Language revitalization**
- **Youth engagement, fostering the Elder/Youth Connection**
- **Prosperous and vibrant community**
- **Clean and sober**



"My vision for the future of Ginoogaming First Nation is that our community comes together, works together, cooperates and looks past any indifference."

"Utilizing each individual's strengths and enhancing our weaknesses through educating ourselves, seeking guidance through Elders, and reaching out to specialists to grow as one."

"The vision is to see a healthy community that is flourishing through education, career, and making ourselves a priority of self-care. Ultimately, you need to take care of yourself before you take care of others."

"For all members to grow and prosper in paths of life they enjoy while inspiring others to do the same."

"To live in unity and share or pass down their traditional ways to the younger generation."

- Ginoogaming First Nation members

Impacts of Industry

- Historic log drives have greatly impacted the waterways and waterbodies within our Traditional Territory.
- Many dams have changed the flow of the waters, greatly impacting the fish that swim in the waters and causing confusion for people who fish.
- Significant forestry activity within our Traditional Territory has displaced animals, affected harvesting of medicinal plants, and impacted hunters and trappers.
- Mineral exploration and mining have permanently changed certain areas, and have caused significant adverse environmental impacts in the area.
- We see an imbalance in the sacred circle from industrial activities and their adverse environmental impacts.



Language

- We recognize the importance of our Ojibway and Cree language to maintain our culture and traditions.
- Some loss of culture and tradition in GFN stems from the loss of our primary language.
- It is important to nurture our language speakers and encourage them to teach and pass along what they know.
- It is very important that we continue to use our language especially out on the land, to describe our traditions, spirituality to foster a better understanding for all community members.
- We are committed to language revitalization within our community.



Elders

- Our Elders and Knowledge Holders are an invaluable resource of information as they pass along our history through oral tradition.
- It is vital that we foster a connection between our Elders and our Youth to ensure that our traditions are kept alive and passed along for future generations.
- With the goal of knowledge preservation, we are actively working with our Elders to document their knowledge through audio/video by recording stories and mark on maps the sacred places and areas of the past and present.
 - It is our goal to have a living database that continues to expand with the knowledge we gather.



Mrs. Mary Ann Hebert, 1972



Youth

- Youth are key to the longevity of our culture and to keep it thriving for generations to come.
- Social media can provide positive motivation/influence for our youth to do more or to see a different outlook.
- A youth council has several benefits:
 - Learn how to work with people.
 - Build strong and lasting friendships.
 - Develop greater self-esteem and self-confidence.
 - Develop communication and organizational skills.
 - Gain self-worth and inner-strength to battle negative peer pressure
 - Develop winning attitudes and learn how to take responsibility for their actions.
 - Contribute to making a difference in the community.
- Our future looks bright as community involvement is at an all-time high. Youth are seeking more and more positive influences.

Healing

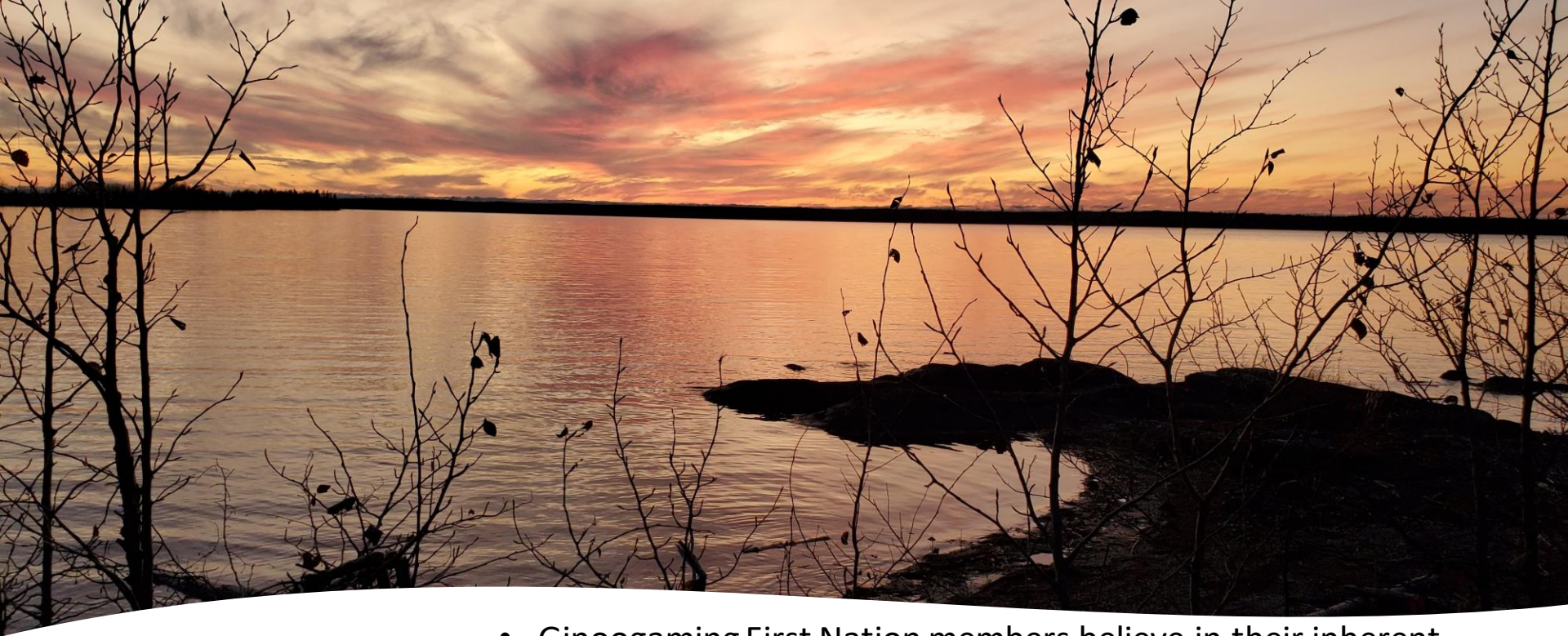
- Spirituality helps with any healing process.
- The on-going protection of our waterways by the community will allow us to maintain, restore, and rebuild our relationship to the lands and waters within our traditional territory.
- The Making Ground River system begins at the Ginoogaming First Nation community and flows south through the immediate traditional territory, emptying into the Kenogamisis River system. This area is significant for many reasons, both cultural and spiritual, and has a wealth of biodiversity. It is here that we have built a Healing Camp to pass on our traditional knowledge, located within the Wiisinin Zaagi'igan area.



Connection to the Land and Waters

- We are connected to the land both spiritually and culturally, ceremonies, sacred fire, exploring, etc.
- We have used the land since time immemorial and operate ancestral family traplines throughout our Traditional Territory.
- We hunt, trap, fish, and gather on the lands and waters.
- We pick medicinal plants along waterways.
- We have traditional campsites. (Tazhiikaaywinin).
- We have local knowledge of culturally significant species, such as Lake Sturgeon, especially where they live and how they travel.
- We have many concerns about pollution and its effect on the health of the medicinal plants (weekee, berries, cedar, sweetgrass, Labrador tea etc.) and the animals that eat them.





Environmental Stewardship

- Ginoogaming First Nation members believe in their inherent responsibility to protect the land and waters that flow through it and are vocal in advocating for environmental protection from developments that may impact.
- Minido-Minising (Great Island) on Jackfish Bay (Long Lake) is where the Height of Land (Gwiitadge-wi-ning) is and where the water on the lake changes direction to flow southward. Ginoogaming First Nation People therefore sit on the peak of the land and are responsible for the protection of the watersheds and waterways in both northward and southward directions.
- We are striving to build an Environmental Guardians program to help protect the land and advocate for the environment. Our program is community driven and aims to bring all members together.

Seasons of Sustenance

- The livelihood of the people of Ginoogaming First Nation stems from an intimate knowledge, the seasons of sustenance that brings birds, plants, fish and animals as part of a yearly cycle.
- This knowledge and use of the land and resources has been passed down and taught through generations.
- Understanding the seasons is critical to the people of Ginoogaming First Nation which was based on survival.





*Ginoogaming First Nation members
came together in June 2022 to discuss our community & culture.*

*These are the words of youth Dallas Fisher,
on why Culture and Tradition are important.*



What has impacted and is currently impacting our culture?

- Outside influences from government and industry
- Multigenerational trauma
- Racism / misunderstandings / stereotypes / misconceptions
- Loss of language
- Environmental impacts
- A lack of education on Indigenous People, culture, traditions, history and issues for people outside of the community and non-Indigenous people
- Lack of communication between Youth and Elders
- Drugs and alcohol, depression, unemployment.
- **How can we overcome these issues?**
 - Being out on the land and using our language
 - Coexisting in society / relationship building with *everyone*
 - Spirituality
 - Ceremony
 - Improved education
 - Improved communication



Our Values

- Spirituality, ceremony and healing. For Example, Pow Wow as a time of Ceremony and Celebration.
- Being out on the land and respecting the water that flows through it. Practicing our traditions like hunting, trapping, gathering medicines, fishing, preparing traditional foods etc.
- Community togetherness, celebration, youth engagement and our humour.
- Preserving and passing along traditions and history, our Elders and the seven grandfather teachings
- Our language and worldview. Our language is part of our identity, its where we get our strength.
- **Live each day with loyalty, spirituality, humility, compassion, kindness and integrity.**

How our Culture has Evolved/Changed?

- Youth are reconnecting with traditional teachings (such as drumming and dancing).
- Impacts of industry have changed things (access to land, abundance of plants and animals, water quality etc.).
- The culture changes as we lose Elders.
- Loss of language = loss of culture
- More people are beginning to stand up for Indigenous People and our rights.





Our Future

- Build positive relationships for the future, especially with neighbouring communities, industry and mining proponents.
- Strong environmental monitoring programming and positions to carry forward our inherent responsibility to protect the land and the waters that flow through it.
- Create business opportunities.
- Continue discussions surrounding the rehabilitation of impacted sites within our traditional territory.
- Language revitalization and fostering a connection between our Elders and Youth.
- Protecting the lands and waters for our future generations.
- Emphasizing and prioritizing teaching values to the youth by taking them out to paddle these waters.



GINOOGAMING FIRST NATION