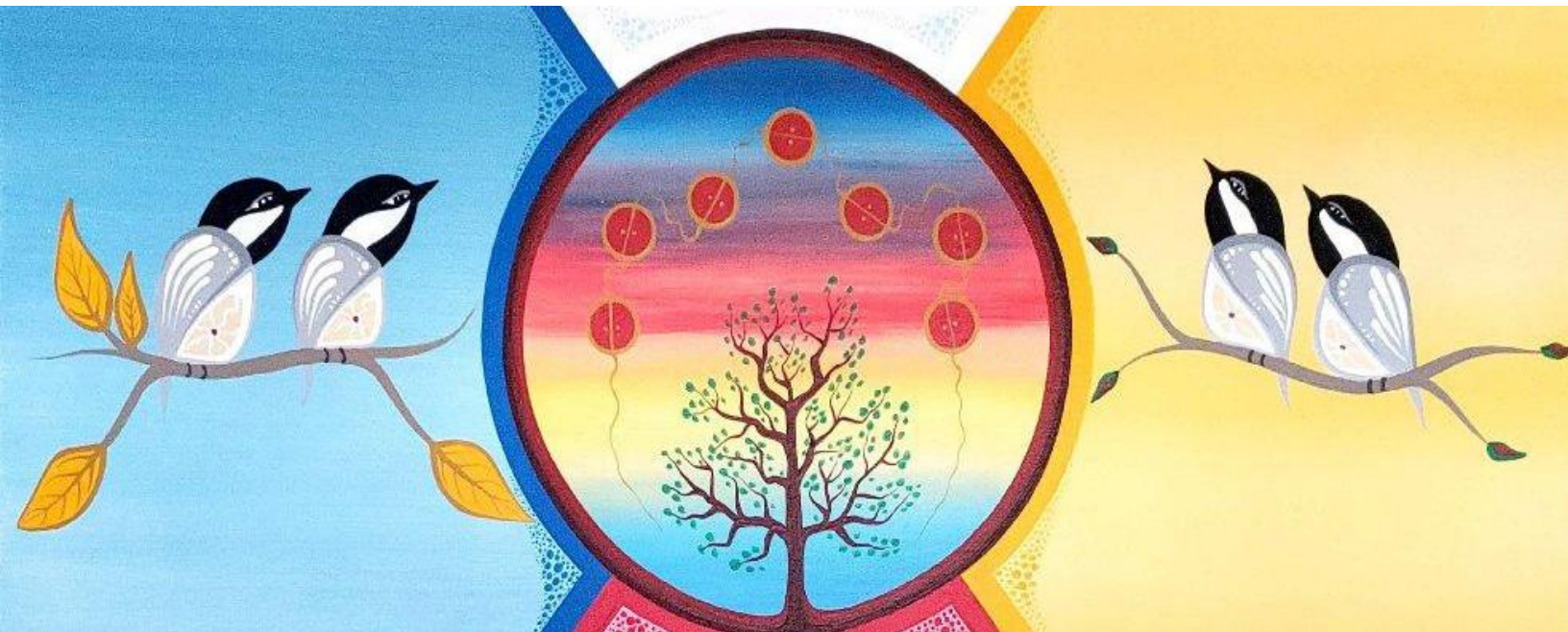


INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROJECT

YORK UNIVERSITY - OSGOODE HALL LAW SCHOOL - FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES



RESPECTING THE CARETAKERS OF THE LAND

Over many centuries, Indigenous nations have co-existed on lands which now contain York University. These relationships, both among nations and the lands and waters that support them, continue to have importance to this day. As such, this project will acknowledge and respect the ancestors and current caretakers of these territories: The Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, the Anishinaabek Nation; the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Huron-Wendat and the Metis Nation.

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***The Indigenous Environmental Justice Project
proudly presents The IEJ Summer 2020 Newsletter***

Special Thanks to all who Contributed:
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faculty of
environmental
studies



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada



WELCOME

Welcome to the Indigenous Environmental Justice (IEJ) Project's Summer 2020 Newsletter! Although COVID-19 has meant that the Project could not run any in-person events this summer, we have focused on hosting conversations and sharing content about Indigenous environmental justice and history online. Read on for more information about the IEJ Symposium 2019 podcast series, the Wet'suwet'en Awareness podcast series, Indigenous History Month and the Indigenous History Month speaker series, the IEJ Annotated Bibliography, YorkSpace, events of the summer, the IEJ Youth Webpage, and upcoming events. Follow the IEJ project on social media for more updates:



[IEJ Website](#)



[Facebook](#)



[Twitter](#)



[Instagram](#)

Any questions?

Email: theIEJproject@gmail.com

Social Media statistics from April 1-August 31

Twitter followers: 891

Facebook followers: 711

Instagram followers: 112

Total online following: 1,714

Total # of posts: 243

IEJ Symposium 2019 Podcast Series Release

This podcast series was recorded at the Indigenous Environmental Justice Symposium 2019, hosted by the Indigenous Environmental Justice (IEJ) Project on November 23rd, 2019 at York University. This Symposium highlighted IEJ researchers and their recent findings, while also offering a space to discuss appropriate methods of conducting research involving Indigenous peoples.

Special thanks to Dali Carmichael and Niibwin Mukwa for their contributions to this podcast. Listen to the podcasts on our website: <https://iej.project.info.yorku.ca/iej-symposium-2019/>

This #IEJSymposium2019 Podcast series consists of:

“Episode 1 – Food Sovereignty, Climate Change and Indigenous Environmental Justice,” featuring Max Corne-Klein, recent Master of Environmental Studies (MES) graduate from York University. This episode provides a brief overview of Max’s MES research, which focused on creating a podcast to highlight an IEJ analysis as a necessary prerequisite for Indigenous food sovereignty and climate action.



“Episode 2 – Anishinaabe & Climate Change,” featuring Jayce Chiblow, Anishinaabe, recent Master of Environmental Studies graduate from York University. This episode features Jayce’s MES research on climate change and climate action in her community of Garden River First Nation, Ontario, with a focus on the utilization of land-based learning.

“Episode 3 – Impacts of Climate Change on Whitefish River First Nation,” featuring Mahisha Sritharan, Master of Environmental Studies (MES) graduate from York University. This episode features Mahisha’s MES research on climate justice, and explores the impacts of climate change in Whitefish River First Nation, Ontario.

“Episode 4 – The Significance of Water: A Critical Reflection,” featuring Nasreen Hussain, Master of Environmental Studies (MES) graduate from York University. This episode focuses on Nasreen’s MES research on human relationships to water, and features part of a video she created.



“Episode 5 – Free, Prior & Informed Decision-Making About Proposed Development on Indigenous Territories in Northern Ontario,” featuring Courtney Arseneau, PhD graduate in Community Psychology from Wilfred Laurier. This episode highlights Courtney’s PhD research around Free, Prior & Informed Consent, and her experience in Matawa First Nation.



“Episode 6 – Indigenous Environmental Justice: Community Perspectives and Practices from the Research,” featuring

Nicole Latiluppe, Assistant Professor in the department of Human Geography and Physical and Environmental Sciences at the University of Toronto. This episode provides insights into Nicole’s work for the IEJ project, and outlines the importance of language, decolonization, and fostering Indigenous ways of knowing and being.



“Episode 7 – Where did our canoes go?” features our keynote speaker of the event, Sylvia Plain, Aamjiwnaang First Nation, founder of the Great Lakes Canoe Journey. This episode features Sylvia putting research into motion, reflecting on her experiences on her research journey, and offering her inspirations and experiences with the Great Lakes Canoe Journey.

go?” features our keynote speaker of the event, Sylvia Plain, Aamjiwnaang First Nation, founder of the Great Lakes Canoe Journey. This episode features Sylvia putting research into motion, reflecting on her experiences on her research journey, and offering her inspirations and experiences with the Great Lakes Canoe Journey.

Wet'suwet'en Awareness Podcast Series Release

This podcast series was recorded at the IEJ Project's panel event on Wet'suwet'en awareness held at York University on February 10, 2020. This event, featuring York University students and Indigenous youth, highlighted ongoing tensions between the Wet'suwet'en land defenders and the Canadian State.

Special thanks to Dali Carmichael and Niibwin Mukwa for their contributions to this podcast. Listen to the podcasts on our website:

<https://iej.project.info.yorku.ca/wetsuweten-awareness-event/>

This #WetsuwetenSolidarity podcast series consists of:

“Episode 1 – The Recurring Experience with the Canadian State,” featuring the IEJ's Principal Investigator, Dr. Deborah McGregor, Anishinaabe. This episode provides a historical context for longstanding issues regarding Indigenous relationships with the Canadian State.

“Episode 2 – Leadership Teachings, Injustice and Colonial Power,” featuring Hillary McGregor, Anishinaabe, Standing Bear Youth Leadership Program Coordinator with Indigenous Sport and Wellness Ontario. This episode highlights Hillary's reflections on leadership roles as well as the nature of reconciliation and its current status in Canada.



“Episode 3 – Changes in Perception on Relationships, Land and Love,” featuring Jayce Chiblow, Anishinaabe, IEJ Research Assistant. This episode features the importance of healthy waters and relations for future generations, and discusses resources developed by Wet’suwet’en people. For more information, see: <https://unistoten.camp/supportertoolkit/>

“Episode 4 – Ally and Support Work in Direct Action,” featuring Alie Hermanutz, PhD Candidate at York University Department of Politics & VP Community Relations, YUGSA. This episode speaks to efforts from allies and supporters of solidarity with the Wet’suwet’en people.

“Episode 5 – Meaningful but Appropriate Engagement,” featuring Monica Shafik, IEJ Research Assistant & Communications Lead. This episode speaks to respectfully and appropriately addressing this subject through the utilization of media resources, while being mindful of centering the voices of the land defenders.



MONTH OF JUNE: INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

BY EMILIA KHALIL

For thirty days, during the month of June, the IEJ Project celebrated Indigenous History Month by sharing multiple speaker series events and posts about Indigenous people's history, culture and language online, to connect our community with information about Indigenous people and the importance of celebrating Indigenous History Month. The IEJ project decided to promote four themes (one per week throughout June) related to Indigenous people and Indigenous environmental justice, and to highlight important facts and resources within these themes each week.

The four themes were Mother Earth, Indigenous Youth, Indigenous History, and Indigenous Languages. We asked viewers to engage with our content each week. For example, during Mother Earth week, we hosted a contest, asking viewers to send in photographs of the environment, and the winner had their photograph featured on our social media platforms. During History week, we shared the Canadian government's top 10 Indigenous history makers and asked viewers to share other Indigenous history makers that should be recognized for their work.

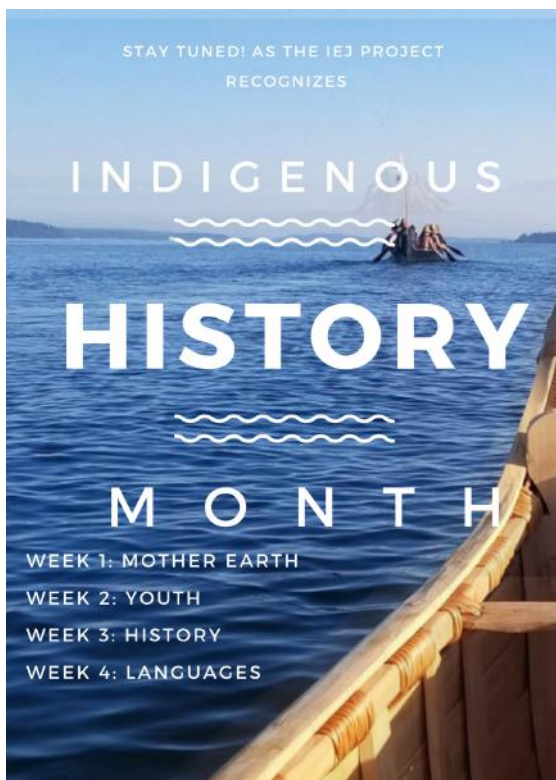
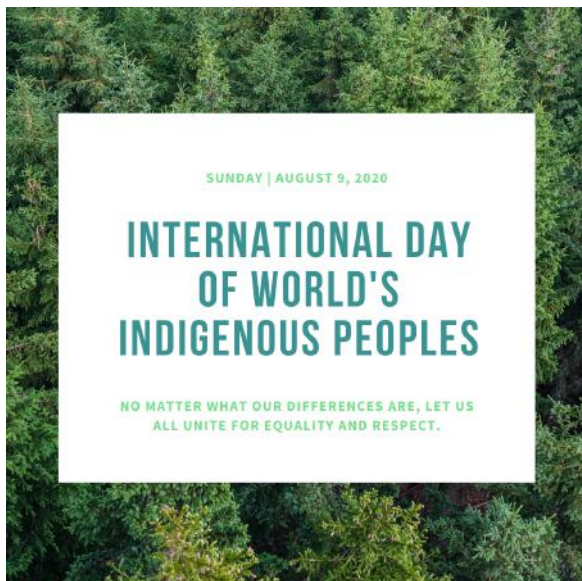
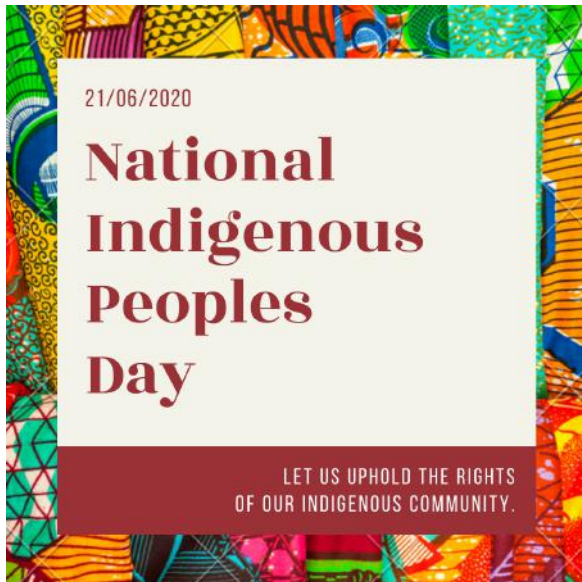


Photo Contest winner

We also asked questions of ourselves and our viewers, including what Indigenous history means to them, how to ensure the sustainability of Mother Earth, and why is National Indigenous Peoples Day not a statutory holiday?

Alongside our online posts, we also hosted four fascinating speaker events online, on the IEJ Project YouTube channel. We featured conversations with four Indigenous scholars and knowledge holders about their work and experiences. Read more about each speaker event below!



By sharing news articles, journal articles, music, art, and achievements of Indigenous people, we sought to bring people together to celebrate and honour Indigenous heritage, knowledge, experience, and strength in what is now Canada. Thank you to our incredible online community for joining in!

To watch the speaker series events online, and learn more about the IEJ Project, visit the IEJ Project's website:

<https://iejproject.info.yorku.ca/national-indigenous-history-month/>.

In July and August, in the lead up to celebrating International Indigenous Peoples day on August 9, 2020, the IEJ Project worked to elevate the content we shared in June, and reach out to more Indigenous communities and organizations. We aim to spread awareness and connect people with resources to combat environmental injustice and protect Indigenous rights.

INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH SPEAKER SERIES

BY ETHAN PERSAUD-QUIROZ

To celebrate Indigenous History Month, we hosted a speaker series with four Indigenous scholars and knowledge holders about their work and experience, called “In Conversation”. The four speakers were Joseph Pitawanakwat, Jon Johnson, Sylvia Plain, and Alan Corbiere. We streamed each conversation online on our IEJ YouTube channel. Professor Deborah McGregor, Indigenous Environmental Justice Canada Research Chair, hosted all four conversations, and we opened up to questions from viewers at the end of each conversation.

If you missed the events, you can watch them online on our website, at: <https://iejproject.info.yorku.ca/national-indigenous-history-month/>.

You can watch more videos by the IEJ Project on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi7qtFRVTfTywMLFlzjAiwv>.



June was National Indigenous History Month. To acknowledge the importance of understanding Indigenous history, the IEJ project hosted a series of events to raise awareness about Indigenous culture, worldviews, knowledge and perspectives. IEJ's approach was to engage in conversations with people who work to revitalize Indigenous knowledge, language and history through their community based work or scholarship. We engaged in conversation with four speakers who shared their work. It is important to learn from Indigenous peoples, not just learn about Indigenous peoples. [Videos](#) are available on the IEJ website.

Miigwech to all the IEJ researchers for their contributions to make a successful National Indigenous History Month Speaker Series: Jayce Chiblow, Lauren King, Dali Carmichael, William Dandie, Jesse Abel, Kim Tran, Ethan Persaud-Quiroz, Emilia Khalil, David Bazargan



Joseph Pitawanakwat

Joseph Pitawanakwat is the owner of Creator's Garden, a small business focused on teaching people about plant-based medicines. Joseph concentrated his talk on his favourite plants and their naming stories. He attributes his knowledge of plant-based medicines to his mother and grandmother. Through hearing their stories, Joseph learned how plants have made a significant impact on Indigenous history. He explained that certain plants are effective at treating diseases that are now common within Indigenous communities. For example, willow tree extracts are the main ingredient in the most effective treatments for arthritis. Joseph also explained that through reviewing literature related to plant medicine, he has confirmed the knowledge passed down to him. The conversation ended with a Q&A session with an engaged and enthusiastic online audience.



Jon Johnson

Jon Johnson is an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto with a research focus on urban, land-based Indigenous knowledge in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Jon shared land-based stories of Indigenous presence in Toronto, and spoke about initiatives geared toward increasing awareness of Indigenous presence in the GTA. He began the conversation by discussing how Indigenous groups such as the Wendat, Seneca, Haudenoshonee, Mississaugas, and Anishinaabe occupied the post-global geographies of what is currently the GTA. By showcasing the earlier Indigenous geographies in Toronto, Jon demonstrated how Indigenous narratives are erased from this space. He also illustrated the power of Indigenous names, and how they help recreate past Indigenous geographies. Jon referenced the earlier Indigenous geographies of the GTA and explained how the contemporary main roads, highways, and green spaces of the GTA represent older, Indigenous trade routes and savannahs. Jon then discussed current initiatives in the GTA, such as Ogimaa Mikana and the Indigenous Land Stewardship Circle, that contribute to the conversation on reconciliation and empower Indigenous people to take leadership in and around the city. He ended the conversation by encouraging non-Indigenous people to take the time to understand the history of the land they occupy, so that they can share their knowledge with others, and engage in meaningful discussions about truth and reconciliation.

Sylvia Plain

Sylvia Plain is a member of Aamjiwnnang First Nation, a community ambassador, water walker, researcher, birch bark canoe building apprentice, and the founder of the Great Lakes Canoe Journey (GLCJ). Throughout this episode, she shared stories and photos from the GLCJ and discussed her experience creating opportunities for youth and other Indigenous groups. Sylvia used the GLCJ as part of her research to better understand how the Anishinaabek family takes care of the land, and to understand issues affecting her First Nation, such as pollution, on a more personal level. Sylvia explained that participating in West Coast canoe journeys, and paddling through the Great Lakes helped her better understand the importance of canoe building. She also emphasized that every community has an important skill to contribute to the renewal of Indigenous culture. Sylvia discussed the Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign, which seeks to renew, and honour treaties between Indigenous and settler groups in order to protect the earth. She shared her experience of paddling down the Hudson River and explained that treaties hold teachings that are still applicable today. The conversation concluded with questions and discussion about displacement of Indigenous from their lands, and Indigenous relationships with different bodies of water.



Alan Corbiere

Dr. Alan Corbiere is Anishinaabe from M'Chigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin Island, and an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at York University. Dr Corbiere is a scholar of Indigenous history in Canada and the United States, and he specializes in Anishinaabe history and culture of the northern Great Lakes region in the 18th and 19th centuries. He is the author of multiple books and articles on Anishinaabe history and culture. He also created and implemented a language revitalization program at Lakeview Elementary School on his reserve. Throughout his talk, Dr. Corbiere highlighted the importance of learning from Indigenous people, rather than learning about Indigenous people. He emphasized that Indigenous history has been written from the colonial perspective of Indian agents, priests, and fur traders. There are very few historical documents written from the point of view of Indigenous Chiefs and Elders. Dr. Corbiere explained that he would like to see Indigenous history, told from an Indigenous perspective, included in federal, provincial, and Indigenous curriculums. Dr. Corbiere shared traditional stories and teachings he has learned throughout his research. He shared his findings on the connections between certain stories and specific geographies, and how we can use these stories to understand more about colonization, the dispossession of land, and Anishinaabek knowledge. Towards the end of the conversation, he answered questions regarding educational tools for teaching University students, and the challenges of reconstituting Anishinaabek history. Throughout this discussion, the audience expressed their gratitude for the work Dr. Corbiere was doing, and were appreciative that they could listen to traditional stories.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The IEJ project is proud to release the 2020 IEJ Annotated Bibliography! This Bibliography lists book chapters, articles, and reports that have been recently published on the topic of Indigenous environmental justice. We have provided a brief summary of each source. The sources are listed alphabetically by author last name. You can view the Annotated Bibliography on our website: <https://iejproject.info.yorku.ca/iej-annotated-bibliography-2020/>



YORK SPACE

The IEJ Project is on YorkSpace! YorkSpace is an open access repository platform that lets members of the York University community organize, showcase, and preserve their research online. This summer, the IEJ Project has partnered with York University Libraries to upload its research and community projects on to the repository. Academics, researchers, students, and supporters of the Project can now access IEJ reports, publications, and student work all in one place.

Using standards-based software, YorkSpace promotes content visibility on the web. Data from the repository is collected by global harvesters which increases the discovery of content. Anyone interested in Indigenous environmental justice and related topics will now be more easily connected with the Project's resources and projects.

Over the next number of months, the Project will be uploading more publications and student work. Stay updated by visiting IEJ on YorkSpace at <https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/handle/10315/37507>



CURRENT OPINION IN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

On April 2020, DeborahMcGregor, Steven Whitaker, and Mahisha Sritharan produced a report titled "Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability". [Read more.](#)

EVENTS OF THE SUMMER

EARTH DAY

FES Earth day virtual talk:

Deborah McGregor, alongside Jayce Chiblow and Ethan Persaud-Quiroz provided a virtual presentation on the IEJ project to potential incoming students for the Faculty of Environment and Urban Change's Earth Day event on April 22, 2020. Deborah, Jayce and Ethan offered insights to secondary school students on the importance of understanding Indigenous peoples and their perspectives in honouring Mother Earth.



Earth Day 2020: Towards a Green and Healthy Recovery:

Dr. Deborah McGregor presented in the Earth Day 2020: Towards a Green and Healthy Recovery webcast event hosted by ClimateFast on April 22, 2020. The event was attended by over 500 people online across Canada, the United States, and Europe.

DECOLONIZATION AND INDIGENIZATION PROGRAM (DIP), GEORGIAN COLLEGE

On May 31, 2020, Dr. Deborah McGregor delivered a virtual workshop to faculty in Georgian College's Center for Teaching and Learning and Centre for Indigenous services. The workshop was part of a faculty development program called Decolonization and Indigenization Program (DIP), which encouraged faculty members to decolonize and indigenize their programs and courses. Dr. McGregor's workshop, titled 'Decolonizing Pedagogies: Respecting Indigenous Peoples' focused on land based pedagogies, and learning directly from the land, waters, and natural world. Dr. McGregor emphasized the importance of incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems, by involving and respecting Elders, Grandmothers, and Grandfathers, knowledge keepers and holders, and practitioners.

CRP VIRTUAL CAMPFIRE SERIES: TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

On June 22, 2020, Professor Deborah McGregor and Professor Danika Littlechild delivered a presentation on the topic of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) as part of the Conversation Through Reconciliation Partnership's virtual campfire series. The session explored what TEK is, and why it is important to Indigenous people and others. Professors McGregor and Littlechild discussed challenges for ensuring respect for TEK in the fields of conservation and environmental sustainability, and where future opportunities for developing TEK can be found.

Watch the presentation [here](#)

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CANADA

On June 19, 2020, Professors Aimee Craft (University of Ottawa) and Deborah McGregor submitted a report on the Impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The report was a response to a call by the United Nations for inputs for the “report of the impact of COVID-19 on the rights of Indigenous Peoples.” The report was submitted to the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights.

The United Nations: The Special Rapporteur Report will highlight the impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous people. The impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous people needs to be further researched and documented in order to guide states’ responses to the crisis, and to ensure the crisis does not exacerbate or justify violations of Indigenous people’s rights. The report will be delivered to the 75th session of the UN General Assembly. [Find out more about the report.](#)

Special thanks to Jesse Abell & William Dandle who assisted with the research for this submission.



INDIGENOUS AND DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGIES PANEL/WORKSHOP

On August 20, 2020, Professor Deborah McGregor, along with Professors Robin Roff, Andrea Breen, and Jeji Varghese delivered an Indigenous and Decolonizing Methodologies workshop to 20 graduate students from across Canada as part of the virtual summer community engaged research intensive. The workshop focused on the complexity of consent and refusal in the research process. The summer intensive was co-delivered by the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership (see <https://conservation-reconciliation.ca/>) and Guelph University’s Community Engaged Scholarship Institute. The workshop introduced students to Indigenous methodologies and the importance of applying Indigenous methodologies in Indigenous research partnerships, and the multiple benefits and challenges of Indigenous research partnership. The workshop also informed students how to position themselves and their scholarly work within the different paradigms of Indigenous research, and how to obtain the tools to develop their own reflexive practice.

COMING SOON... IEJ - YOUTH WEBPAGE

Many educational institutions lack formal opportunities for Indigenous youth to engage in activities in their own communities, and these opportunities are even harder to carry out due to COVID-19 restrictions.

In response to the lack of formal opportunities for youth to engage in their communities, the IEJ project launched the “Aki-naagadendamowin Initiative.” The Initiative involved 3 youths from high school to post-secondary school, who engage in language, culture, and land-based activities to deepen their connection to their communities and the Earth.

The students learned their language, engaged in traditional activities, and engaged with the Earth itself through growing plants to support other life (pollinators). The students documented their connection to their culture, language, communities, and the Earth throughout the Initiative.



UPCOMING THIS FALL

Event: “There is Something in the Water”

Date: October 13th 2020 (4-6 p.m.).

Guest Speakers: Ingrid Waldron & Dorene Bernard



The Great Lakes Water Works/Water Allies Project (University of Toronto) directed by Dr. Bonnie McElhinny and the IEJ Project (York University) led by Dr. Deborah McGregor, welcome Dr. Ingrid Waldron and Dorene Bernard. Dr. Waldron is an associate professor from the Faculty of Health at Dalhousie University, and the author of “There Is Something in the Water,” which exposes environmental injustices carried out by the government of Nova Scotia against African Nova Scotians and Mi’kmaq communities, and which has been turned into a powerful documentary. Dorene Bernard is a Mi’kmaq grassroots Grandmother, residential school survivor, and water protector from Indian Brook First Nation, Nova Scotia. Bernard will share her community’s struggles to protect the waters.