Stories from Gabeshiwin: Sharing culture & connections

By Dylan Jennings & Paula Maday
Staff Writers

Gabeshiwin has been a popular word in Ojibwe Country in recent years. Cultural camps hosted by tribes and other organizations have been a huge success and major contributor to revitalization of language and traditional harvesting practices. Camps throughout the Ceded Territories have been providing communities the opportunity to both learn and speak Ojibwemowin, and to relearn traditional practices such as net mending, basketry, and archery.

Red Cliff Tribal elder Marvin Defoe chuckled as he began to talk about camps in Red Cliff and the surrounding area. “Our ancestors probably would have found it ridiculous that we have to do these camps in order to practice some of these traditions. But considering everything we have been through, it’s a huge benefit to our communities to teach and relearn our way of life through these gatherings.”

Defoe is right. There is a deep and ironic history to consider. The 1800s are commonly characterized as a treaty era, in which tribes and the U.S. government continually entered into binding agreements. Simultaneously, however, the U.S. government outlawed many Native American ceremonies and religious practices. By entering into the treaties, the United States acknowledged the inherently sovereign status of the tribes, yet denied them their first amendment right of free exercise of religion. Arguably, some of the first spiritual ceremonies practiced in the United States, somehow became illegal.

The American Indian Religious Freedom Act didn’t become law until 1978. It was passed to help protect and preserve the very way of life that had been threatened for so long. (See Sharing culture, page 23)

Survival of young walleye in Mille Lacs Lake

By GLIFWC Inland Fisheries Section

The number of adult walleye in a population depends heavily on the production and survival of young walleye (fish younger than two years of age). Survival from egg deposition to age-1 is approximately 0.01%, with mortality occurring at multiple life stages. For example, a proportion of eggs might not be fertilized during spawning, eggs might not hatch, or age-0 fish (fish less than one year old) might die from starvation, competition, or predation.

Environmental conditions can also dictate survival of these early life stages, with water temperature likely being the most important factor. Given the number of factors that can influence the survival of young walleye, it comes as no surprise that survival to age-1 can vary considerably from year-to-year.

Every fall since 1999, GLIFWC, Fond du Lac Tribe, and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources have conducted electrofishing surveys of age-0 and age-1 walleye on Mille Lacs Lake (Photo 1). During these surveys, biologists count and measure both age groups of fish (Photo 2). From these data, we are able to calculate the number of fish in each age group per mile of shoreline sampled each fall, and the relative survival of young walleye over time.

To calculate relative survival, we divide the number of age-1 walleye by the number of age-0 walleye captured the previous year. These calculations result in a wide range of values, where a value closer to 1.0 represents greater survival of a year class. By analyzing these data, we hope to gain some insight into why the current adult walleye biomass (~890,000 pounds) is less than 50% of the biomass in 1999 (over 2.4 million pounds; see Mazina’igan Summer 2017 p. 4 for details). Relative survival of age-0 walleye to age-1 has gone through a boom and bust cycle from 1999 to 2015. In 2003, (see Survival, page 15)
In final calculation DePerry finds retirement

After a 31-year career as a central figure at GLIFWC, Gerry DePerry has followed a paper trail leading straight into retirement. “It’s been a good ride for me,” said a smiling DePerry at his retirement celebration at Red Cliff’s Legendary Waters Convention Center. The US Air Force veteran launched his GLIFWC career in 1986 serving as a bookkeeper. Three years later he assumed the deputy administrator position and went on to oversee development of GLIFWC’s accounting and fiscal management functions.

Through leadership and transparency, DePerry helped ensure GLIFWC funds were properly used to implement treaty rights, and to protect natural resources in the Ceded Territory. At ceremonies and tribal meetings, he carried the GLIFWC pipe for many years, starting gatherings off in a good way.

“I think very highly of the Commission and its member tribes,” said DePerry, a Red Cliff member. “Over the years I’ve developed a lot of friendships with the tribal chairs. Some are here today and some have walked on. But we’re all carrying the torch for that next generation.”

Officers from GLIFWC member bands presented a wide variety of gifts to DePerry at the May 23 gathering, and an intertribal drum group played an honor song. A notable speaker and joker, he kept his comments brief and from the heart on this occasion.

“I want to say chi miigwech to all the staff that’s here today and my family,” said DePerry, pointing out his wife Sue, and son Bill, along with a number of brothers and sisters in attendance at his feast.

—CO Rasmussen

On the cover

An omashkooz bull in the 1836 Ceded Territory. See pages 12-13 for Ceded Territory elk status and efforts to reintroduce omashkoozoo6* to eastern Minnesota. (Michigan DNR photo)

*Omashkoozoo is plural for elk.

“Lifting Nets” Premiere

On May 22, GLIFWC premiered the second short video in the Ogichidaa Storyteller series. “Lifting Nets: Gurnoe Decision” debuted at Legendary Waters to an audience of about 100 community members, young and old, who turned out to see how Red Cliff and Bad River members initiated the 1972 treaty rights case that affirmed their tribes’ fishing rights in Lake Superior.

After the film screening, a few Ogichidaag took the stage to share both emotional and humorous memories from that time. Ron DePerry, the only surviving member involved in Gurnoe v. Wisconsin, was among them.

“Lifting Nets: Gurnoe Decision” is available for viewing on GLIFWC’s YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/glifwc. Next in the lineup for the Ogichidaa Storyteller series is a video that will highlight the treaty rights case Jondreau v. State of Michigan. Filming for that video began in June.

“Lifting Nets: Gurnoe Decision” was funded in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Humanities Council, with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

At 25, Partners in Fishing a model for fishery management

By Charlie Otto Rasmussen, Staff Writer

While springtime boat landing protests were in the rearview mirror by early 1993, skepticism over the sustainability of Ojibwe spearfishing lingered for a vocal segment of Wisconsin sportmen. The unease further permeated relationships between natural resource managers after a period of contentious negotiations between state and tribal officials.

“There were some raw emotions at that time, but we had work to do, a fishery to manage,” said Robert Jackson, former Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) biologist. He was also chairman of the recently formed Joint Assessment Steering Committee (JASC)—an interagency collection of biologists organized to administer a definitive examination of northern Wisconsin’s walleye population.

Just before the open-water fishing season got underway, inspiration struck on a visit to Dick Rose’s home; Jackson and the Discover Wisconsin television producer hatched a plan to defuse tensions by bringing together representatives from the state, Ojibwe tribes, and federal government for an informal day of walleye fishing. To round-out the gathering—they hired fishing guides, another group uncertain whether co-managing a fishery would be successful.

Partnerships arise from protest sites

After the inaugural fishing event near St. Germain—an area of racially-charged protests against Ojibwe spearers only a few years earlier—Partners in Fishing became a fixture of interagency relations and additional guides were brought in as the annual gathering grew. Lac du Flambeau, St. Croix, Lac Courte Oreilles, and Red Cliff communities all served as hosts in the first years.

“There’s something about sitting in a boat, fishing with a person, spending time getting to know each other,” said Dave Clausen, Department of Natural Resources Board member from 2006-2013. “When you have issues to work out [between the State and Tribes], it’s really valuable to know someone on a personal level.”

(see Partners, page 15)
Ceded Territory

news briefs

Spring harvest totals from 1837 Minnesota territory

The 2017 spring treaty harvest season on Mille Lacs Lake ran from April 1 to May 11. Tribal members mostly targeted walleye with spears during the early part of the season, followed by limited gill-netting for a total of 13,938 pounds from a 19,200 pound allocation. Just over 5,200 pounds remain for dagwaagin fishing. Also, a total of 2,835 pounds of the 50,000 pound northern pike allocation was harvested mostly through gill-netting. As the walleye moved away from shore during the end of their spawning period, tribal harvesters began targeting yellow perch with gill nets on Mille Lacs Lake, harvesting a total of 794 pounds of the 101,714 pound yellow perch allocation.

Treaty fisheries also sought harvest opportunity on other lakes including, Chisago Lake, Green Lake, South Long Lake, Platte Lake, Knife Lake, and Pokegama Lake. Total walleye and northern pike harvest for all these lakes combined was around 930 pounds of walleye and 720 pounds of northern pike. Eight tribal fisherman attended the consultation. The Service is also available to consult with individual tribes by telephone. To schedule a consultation or request more information, please contact the Service’s Office of Law Enforcement at (301) 236-7540.

Eagle possession rules under review

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is engaging in government-to-government consultation with federally recognized tribes on potential changes to the National Eagle Repository and the manner in which bald and golden eagle parts are distributed from the repository.

Get with Ojibwe speakers at language immersion camp

Ojibwemotaadidaa Omaa Gidakiinemaang with Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College are pleased to announce the seventh annual Ojibwe Immersion Academy Weekend Cohort to be held over the upcoming school year at the Cloquet Forestry Center in Cloquet, MN.

The Ojibwe Immersion Academy Weekend Cohort is a rare opportunity for language-learners who are interested in a complete immersion experience to study one-on-one and in small groups with Ojibwe elders and faculty speakers. Participants meet one weekend a month for 6 months beginning November 2017 and ending April 2018. For more information please visit ojibwemotaadidaa.weebly.com or email ojibwemotaadidaa@gmail.com. All applications are due by noon on September 13, 2017.

Ogaawag for elders, veterans

GLIFWC officers joined Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) fisherman Jim Tate on a reservation-wide distribution of walleyes spearred from local lakes last spring. For elders no longer able to harvest fish, the gift of five packages of filleted, frozen ogaawag on Memorial Day weekend was well appreciated.

“We’re very thankful,” said elder Beverly Smith who received armful of ogaawag from Tate.

Inspired by a young LCO spearer who gave away his entire harvest the previous spring, Tate and Officer Mike Popovich hatched a plan to place fish donation boxes at active boat landings during the 2017 spring spearing season. LCO spearers responded with a contribution of 166 walleyes. Popovich and area GLIFWC monitoring teams, and a big miigwech to all the tribal harvesters for their patience while their fish were being counted, weighed, and measured.

A cloudy manoomin forecast

This is the time of year I get antsy. For months I have been responding to inquiries about what the manoomin season will be like with: “ask me in the middle of August; by then I should know something. Those call-backs are going to start any day now, and it turns out I still have very little to report.

We all know how rainy this spring and summer have been. It’s an obvious connection, but we may not think about how cloudy it has been as well. To me this is a problem. There is no better way to survey a couple of hundred rice waters quickly and accurately than from the air—If the skies are cloudy. What a weather report calls “mostly sunny” is often 25% or more cloud cover, and the shadows and lighting impacts of those clouds on the rice beds can disrupt my ability to differentiate manoomin from other vegetation.

I won’t necessarily a quick learner (and I have hundreds of lousy pictures to prove it) but over the years I’ve learned when its best to stay on the ground and hope for a better time. Most years, it comes. A few years we never got to a particular area, or couldn’t until harvesting was already underway. The latter situation still gives us important information, even if it isn’t available early enough to be beneficial to pickers. But it’s starting to look like 2017 could be the first year with significant gaps in our aerial surveys of rice waters. It’s a first I would like to avoid.

We have been running some ground surveys, and have been in discussion with folks around rice range, and we can tell you this: All that rain did manoomin no favors—at least for this year. The crop generally appears to be below average, but as always, some locations buck the trend. Conditions may generally be better as you move west. High water levels and fairly cool summer temps also have us thinking that the season may be a bit later than average—or at least more prolonged than usual. Many beds also appear thin—though it’s worth remembering that thin beds can sometimes still produce a lot of seed.

If you need to fill your pantry, you will want to do some local scouting, and you may want to look at a couple of more waters than you usually do. Places that are higher in the watershed, or which were able to maintain favorable water levels when the rains hit, will generally be better beds.

We also suggest you continue to follow the links to manoomin information at www.glifwc.org: we will be working to post whatever abundance information we can gather as quickly as we can. If you have some information you would care to share, we would love to hear from you. Just call 715-682-6619, and ask for Lisa or Peter.

And regardless of how your rice time unfolds, enjoy your days in the Great Spirit’s garden—even if they are cloudy.

—P. David
The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reported in June that the state’s gray wolf population increased to a record high 925–952 animals in winter 2016. This estimate represents a 6% increase from winter 2015.

What is the significance of this increase? Let’s look at some of the cultural, congressional, and demographic history of ma’iingan in order to better understand this population change.

Cultural bonds between Ma’iingan and the Ojibwe

For the Ojibwe people, ma’iingan, the wolf, holds great significance. This significance goes all the way back to the Wolf Creation Story.

As told by Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) spiritual leader Eddie Benton-Banai in the book The Mishomis Book (1988), Original Man was sent to earth by the Creator and given the task of naming all the plants and animals. As he completed this task, he noticed that each animal and given the task of naming all the plants and animals. (1988), Original Man was sent to earth by the Creator and given the task of naming all the plants and animals. As he completed this task, he noticed that each animal and plant had a name. He asked his father, the Creator, why this was so. The Creator replied, “All living things that come into being have a name. It is the name that gives the thing its identity and significance.”

In response to this question, the Creator sent Original Man a brother, ma’iingan. The two traveled the world and grew very close. When their travels concluded, the Great Spirit told them they each had to embark down separate paths. Yet, despite this separation, they were told that “What shall happen to one of you shall also happen to the other.” Each of you will face your own challenges and opportunities.

As Gary Ferguson, co-author of The Wolf: Returning the Wild to Yellowstone wrote, “They have no knowledge of man, yet they understand man.”

Wolf ESA status update

The Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia determined on August 1 that the Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2011 delisting of wolves did not comply with the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This means that wolves are still listed under the ESA for the time being.

The court states: “The central dispute in this case is whether the Endangered Species Act permits the Service to carve out of an already-listed species a ‘distinct population segment’ for the purpose of delisting that segment and withdrawing it from the Act’s aegis. We hold that the Act permits such a designation, but only when the Service first makes the proper findings.” The Court of Appeals then goes on to find that the Service did not comply with the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This means that the wolf population remained at or above 80 for three years. Recovery efforts focused on education, habitat protection, legal protection, and paid compensation for problem wolves.

The wolf population grew throughout the 1990s and the DNR completed a new management plan in 1990. The management plan set a delisting goal of 250 wolves in late winter outside of Indian reservations, and a management goal of 350 wolves outside of Indian reservations. In 1999, wolves were reclassified from state threatened status with 205 wolves in the state. In 2004 wolves were removed from the state threatened species list and were reclassified as a protected wild animal with 373 wolves in the state (WDNR, Grey Wolf Factsheet, 2016).

Ma’iingan today

After years of delisting efforts, a new federal delisting process began on May 5, 2011 and wolves were officially delisted on January 27, 2012. The population count in winter 2011 was about 782–842 wolves in the state. A federal court decision relisted the gray wolf as endangered in December 2014.

With two years passed since the state’s last legal hunting and trapping season for wolves, David says that the wolf population increase in 2016–2017 was expected. It should be noted, however, that the population did not increase in every wolf zone in the state.

Zone 2, which covers northeastern Wisconsin including Vilas, Florence, Oneida, Forest, and Marinette County, saw a decrease in their wolf population from an estimated 243–252 in winter 2015 to 206–214 in winter 2016. Zone 4, which is adjacent to Zone 2 on the southern and eastern sides, also saw a decrease from 52 to an estimated 37–40 over the year. The cause of this is unknown.

Overall, one could draw a parallel between the strength of wolf numbers growing throughout the state and the strength of Ojibwe voices growing in response to various environmental concerns faced throughout our communities. It is comforting to know that in our Anishinaabe purpose to help take care of Mother Earth, our brother and protector, ma’iingan runs beside us.

By Paula Maday, Staff Writer

Researcher work to manage whitetails, harvest as CWD looms

By Travis Bartnick

GLIFWC Wildlife Biologist

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) continues to spread throughout the western Great Lakes region, and threatens the future of deer hunting in the Ceded Territories.

Thus far, in the Ceded Territories, there has only been one confirmed CWD-positive deer in the wild population of white-tailed deer, but private deer farms and hunting preserves have produced a considerable number of CWD-infected deer within or near the ceded lands.

The potential risk to human health is always a concern when talking about CWD. Rural populations, including tribal communities that rely on deer meat as an important source of protein in their diets, are expected to be hit hardest by the CWD problem.

Studies indicate that as CWD spreads, more and more people are coming in contact with, and/or consuming CWD-infected meat. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people should avoid eating meat from any deer or elk that looks sick or that tests positive for CWD.

Recently, an ongoing research study has presented evidence that CWD can be transmitted to macaques, which are a species of primates that are genetically similar to humans. Although there has been no evidence to date that CWD has been transmitted to humans, this macaque study should give caution to all who consume deer and elk meat.

In 2016, the Voigt Intertribal Task Force established an intertribal CWD working group. This working group, composed of intertribal representatives and wildlife biologists, was established to discuss culturally appropriate and biologically sound methods to prevent the spread of CWD.

CWD is caused by mis-shaped prion proteins called “prions.” The prions which cause CWD are typically concentrated in the brain, spinal column, spleen, and lymph nodes of infected deer.

Long-distance transport of CWD-infected deer and improper disposal of infected tissues are the primary causes of the spread of CWD. Many states have regulations and decontamination procedures in place to prevent the spread of CWD.

One of the main goals of the intertribal CWD working group is to develop guidelines and regulations for tribal members to protect human health and prevent the spread of CWD across Indian country. Information related to carcass transport regulations will be distributed with deer hunting permits at tribal registration stations and posted on GLIFWC’s website and Facebook page.

Additional resources for deer hunters

The University of Wisconsin–Madison, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and others have developed documents that provide deer hunters with recommendations for reducing the spread of CWD, including subjects related to carcass transport, handling of carcasses, disposing of carcasses, and decontaminating equipment used (see CWD page 18).
A traditional legend about the wiigwaasi-mitig (paper birch tree) told by the late Niso-asin (Sean Fehrlander) emphasizes how useful and important wiigwaasi-mitig has been, and is still, to the Anishinaabe:

A long time ago, an old hunter and gatherer asked the birch tree to watch over camp while he went to check his traps. The birch tree agreed and promised to stay awake to watch the camp. Eventually the birch tree began to grow tired and fell asleep. As the birch tree slept, the trickster coyote came and stole most of the food and left a mess behind. The old hunter and gatherer came back and let the birch tree know how upset he was. The birch tree apologized and promised to do a better job next time in staying awake and taking care of camp. A few days later the hunter and gatherer again went out to check his traps. He then came back to find the same thing had happened. He became furious and let out his anger by using pine branches to hit the birch tree. The old man told the birch tree that he would always have the black marks from the pine branches as a reminder of the broken promises. As a result, wiigwaasi-mitig keeps his promise of continuing to help the Anishinaabe people by serving as a source to make things such as canoes, containers, food, medicine, nourishment, and more.

Climate change has the potential to impact this highly utilized and valued resource. What makes it so vulnerable? Several known insects, diseases, and other factors affect the tree (including the birch borer mentioned by TEK interviewees). Other disturbances include the birch leafminer, the forest tent caterpillar, the gypsy moth, and canker rot.

Inclusive effort yields wiigwaasi-jiimaan

Under the direction of master builder Marvin DeFoe of Red Cliff, a broad range of kids and adults helped construct a wiigwaasi-jiimaan, or birch bark canoe, in New Odanah. In early July, Bad River members led DeFoe deep into the reservation to better understand native culture. Through funding by the Bad River Tribe, DeFoe shared his knowledge with community members, GLIFWC staff and interns, and statewide educators visiting the reservation to better understand native culture.

Western science supports these reports by tribal members. Studies and vulnerability assessments by the United States Forest Service (USFS) found that the wiigwaasi-mitig is moderately to highly vulnerable to climate change. By the end of the century, wiigwaasi-mitig are expected to have a large decrease in suitable habitat and more than a 50-percent decrease in biomass (total weight of all wiigwaasi-mitig) in northern Wisconsin and western Upper Michigan.

A recent study by GLIFWC and the Forest Service (“Paper Birch [Wiigwaas] of the Lake States, 1980-2010”) showed wiigwaasi-mitigoog already are suffering and additionally found the number of wiigwaasi-mitigoog declined by 49% from 1980-2010 in the forest land in the Ceded Territories.

However, fire does help it regenerate, and prescribed fire could be a way to manage for increased wiigwaasi-mitigoog. These trees are able to grow in a variety of soil conditions and can produce and distribute seeds well. Various forest (see Wiigwaasi-mitig, page 6)
Massive midge hatch greets researchers
Biologists survey young walleye abundance

By Ben Michaels, GLIFWC Fisheries Biologist

Last June, GLIFWC and Fond du Lac electrofishing crews shocked most of Mille Lacs Lake’s 78-mile shoreline in an effort to measure the relative abundance of age-1 walleye.

This survey is no slight task. Electrofishing crews worked long hours into the night often times battling adverse weather conditions such as rain and wind, but this year crews were bugged by something a little smaller—insects.

This year’s midge hatch on Mille Lacs Lake was the largest that electrofishing crews have ever experienced on the lake. Lights on the front of the boats attracted huge numbers of these insects as they swarmed and landed on every surface, including the crew members. In some instances the midges formed a layer so thick on the boat decks that they had to be shoveled out of the boat and into the water.

Moreover, dense swarms of midges hampered visibility, making it difficult for dip netters at the front of the boat to see clearly into the water. An abundance of these insects may be an indicator of suboptimal water quality, warranting further investigation to assess whether that is the case. Despite the onslaught of the midge, GLIFWC and Fond du Lac personnel were able to complete their work without any major hitches.

Biologists are compiling results of the spring electrofishing survey, which has been conducted from 2000–2007 and 2013–2017, to help give researchers a glimpse into the future of the Mille Lacs adult walleye population. Specifically, the survey provides information on how well age-0 walleye are surviving over their first spawning season.

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Recently the 2013 year class was detected in a relatively large quantity during the 2014 survey. Since then 2014, 2015, and 2016 year classes have been below average in the survey, indicating that those year classes will likely contribute less to the walleye spawning stock abundance as they mature throughout the next few years.

It’s no secret that the adult walleye population in the lake is at historically low levels, but what remains unclear is the cause of their population decline. Biologists speculate that invasive species such as Eurasian watermilfoil, spiny waterflea, and zebra mussels may be adversely affecting the lower food web (see Mazina’igan Summer 2017).

For example, cladocerans, which are a food source for young small-sized fish, have been decreasing in abundance since the zebra mussel and spiny waterflea were first detected in Mille Lacs Lake. Ecosystem changes such as this could explain below-average recruitment and why young walleye disappear before making it to their first spawning season.

GLIFWC and Band biologists intend to continue this survey in future years to gain more insight into Mille Lacs Lake walleye population dynamics.

Contact Ben Michaels at smichaels@glifwc.org with questions or comments.

Wiigwaasi-mitig
(continued from page 5)

management techniques, such as soil scarification, can improve regeneration and create the best possible growth environment for wiigwaasi-mitig. These practices should be increasingly used in any strategies to protect wiigwaasi-mitig in the Ceded Territories.

We encourage GLIFWC member tribes and others to continue to educate each other on the importance of wiigwaasi-mitig and consider action to protect it. For example, some Tribes (including Lac Courte Oreilles, Bad River, and Red Cliff) have banned or limited the on-reservation commercial harvest of birch poles. This action can allow the wiigwaasi-mitig to rest and regenerate. As climate change becomes more of a threat, similar measures can be taken to ensure the continuation of the gift, wiigwaasi-mitig.

Authors’ note: Special recognition and appreciation goes to the late Niso-asin (Sean Fahrlander) as well as his family, friends, and other loved ones. Niso-asin, known for his many talents and passions, including sharing the best traditional Ojibwe legends, passed away at age 49 on March 16. A few staff members at GLIFWC were extremely fortunate to spend time with him including when he shared knowledge and traditional legends such as that of the wiigwaasi-mitig.

Ganawendan Ginibiiminaan
(Protect Our Waters)

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) can have negative impacts to treaty resources including spawning and fish habitats. Remember when out on the waters to take the precautions to prevent their spread. Watch for invasives hitching rides on plant fragments, mud or debris!

Stop Aquatic Invasives

- REMOVE any mud or debris, plants and animals from your boat, trailer and equipment
- DRAIN all water from boat, fishing boxes and equipment ensuring it does not drain back into the waterbody
- CLEAN or DRY boat, trailer and all equipment that came into contact with water including nets, buoys, anchors, ropes and lines, etc.*

* Note: 1837 Treaty Conservation Code for Minnesota Ceded Territory has additional requirements for “infested waters” (including Mille Lacs).

Don’t forget to check these spots for hitchhikers.

Inland Fisheries Biologist Mark Laehring shows off a handful of midges. (B. Michaels photo)
Wiigwaas: A Status Report

By Alex Wrobel, GLIFWC Forest Ecologist

According to traditional stories, wiigwaas (paper birch bark) was an early gift to man to create a wiigwaas-jiimaan (birch bark canoe) and explore the world. Since then the Ojibwe have discovered numerous uses for wiigwaasaatig (paper birch tree), including medicine, wiigwaasi-makakoog (birch bark baskets and small crafts all the way to wiigwaasimagoomoog (birch bark lodges)). The wiigwaasaatig is fundamental to the Ojibwe identity. So it should come as no surprise the Anishinaabe are in-tune to changes that occur on the landscape and impact the wiigwaasaatig. As original forest managers, the Ojibwe managed in favor of the wiigwaasaatig. Tribes would intentionally burn drier locations to promote birch, berries and other disturbance-dependent species. When the time came to gather wiigwaas, harvesting was done in a respectful manner, did not kill the tree and therefore did not harm the overall resource. This is a common misconception among non-traditional harvesters that harvesting the bark harms the tree.

There is something happening, however, to wiigwaasaatig (paper birch trees pl.) in the Ceded Territories as harvesters are reporting less “canoe-sized” birch as well as less birch overall across the landscape. In recent years, similar observations have been reported within different agencies that manage resources in the Ceded Territories. Interestingly, these shared viewpoints have created a unique intersection between Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and Western Science that is helping researchers better understand the current status of wiigwaasaatig and the changing dynamics of the resource for generations to come.

Inventory and population trends

In 2010, the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program found that the Ceded Territories contain 29% of all wiigwaasaatigoog in the United States. Within the upper Great Lakes States (MN, WI, & MI) alone, the Ceded Territories contain 29% of all wiigwaasaatigoog in the United States. Within the upper Great Lakes States (MN, WI, & MI) alone, the Ceded Territories contain 65.9% of all paper birch trees ≥5 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) and 66.2 percent of the large (≥11 inches dbh) trees (Fig 1). This report is unique in that it was the first time the U.S. Forest Service reported based on US State boundary lines and summarize the forest resources therein. These bulletins are generally published as an overview of the forests. This information tells us that wiigwaasaatigoog are still present on the landscape and in higher proportions than other places in the country, but it doesn’t spell much. The future of wiigwaasaatig is a concern to tribal harvesters. From 2004 through 2006 a cooperative effort between GLIFWC and the USDA Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA) combined TEK and Western science in a mutual effort to further inventory the wiigwaasaatig resource in the Ceded Territories. This project involved tribal gatherers to “document TEK on desired bark characteristics for traditional uses and translate this into an inventory field guide.”

This guide was then provided to the FIA program which incorporated the methods into its preexisting manual and trained inventory crews in the implementation of the TEK protocol. This partnership resulted in an article published in the Journal of Forestry titled “Using Traditional Ecological Knowledge as a Basis for Targeted Forest Inventories: Paper Birch (Betula papyrifera) in the US Great Lakes Region.”

It is still a generally new concept to incorporate both Traditional Ecological Knowledge with Western science in modern scientific research. This cooperative project helps demonstrate how these approaches can be complementary and provides a model for future targeted inventory efforts where other traditionally important species are concerned. In addition, it provides results that correspond to what tribal harvesters are seeing on the landscape: wiigwaas supply has declined.

GLIFWC further partnered with Northern Research Station in two subsequent reports. The first general technical report published in April 2015, “Paper Birch (Wiigwaas) of the Lake States, 1980-2010,” detailed wiigwaasaatig data collected by the FIA program on forested lands in the Great Lakes region. The results from the 30-year timeframe showed “the number of birch trees has decreased by 49% and total bark supply has decreased by 45.5% on forest land in the Ceded Territories since 1980.”

The second is a Resource Bulletin titled: “Forest Resources within the Lake States Ceded Territories 1980-2013.” These bulletins are generally published based on US State boundary lines and summarize the forest resources therein. This report is unique in that it was the first time the U.S. Forest Service reported data collected over the 34 years were summarized for all forest resources in the Ceded Territories, however, in regards to wiigwaasaatig the results show “there are now about half as many paper birch trees (5 inches diameter and greater) on timberland as there were in 1980.”

Cassandra Kurtz, a primary author with the Northern Research Station said: “I think it is interesting to see the decline in birch three inches diameter and greater while the other species show an increase in that class. We are seeing an increase in forestland in the region, an increase in the number of trees, yet a reduction in birch, with many factors playing in. Another key finding is that areas covered by smaller diameter wiigwaasaatig stands (which can be expected to grow into large diameter stands and provide a future resource) has decreased by 75% over the same period (1980-2013).”

In the most recent revision of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources’s silvicultural handbook, researchers found (using Forest Inventory data) that from 1983 to 2012 there has been a large decrease in the number of acres of paper birch trees age 0-to-59 year age classes (Fig 2).

What does this all mean?

In simple terms, wiigwaasaatig and quality wiigwaas are declining across the Ceded Territories and research focus has now shifted toward “why is this declining?” and “what can be done?”

Many factors are contributing to the decline of birch, but near the top of this list is “changes to forest management practices.” In order to promote stands of wiigwaasaatig, the seeds generally require exposed mineral soils with high light levels and good drainage. Colleen Matula, a forest ecologist with the Wisconsin DNR, said: “The reasons for the decline is forest health; challenges in managing birch stands (as they require further steps such as scarification or fire); cover type conversion to aspen, red maple or other species.”

(see Wiigwaas, page 22)
Summertime surveys on Lake Superior, tributaries

By Ben Michaels, GLIFWC Fisheries Biologist

It’s been another busy and productive summer field season for GLIFWC’s Great Lakes Section personnel as they complete their annual fisheries assessments. All through the summer, interns Jalyn LaBine, Patrick LaGrew, and Jacob Rodmaker have gained valuable experience by participating in a variety of fisheries field work including: trapping sea lamprey on the Bad River, deploying gill nets to catch siscowet lake trout, and beach seining to catch juvenile whitefish on Lake Superior.

The Bad River Natural Resources Department (BRNRD) began an assessment for siscowet lake trout with their new research vessel “Mnawaanimid” (good breeze). Siscowet lake trout were targeted off the western shores of the Keweenaw Peninsula near Eagle Harbor, Michigan. This continues an assessment initiated by GLIFWC in 1996 at the request of GLIFWC’s Lakes Committee.

GLIFWC intern Jalyn LaBine (left) holds one end of a beach seine in place as another GLIFWC intern, Patrick LaGrew, moves the net through the water in an effort to collect juvenile lake whitefish. The purpose of this survey is to attain an index of relative abundance of juvenile lake whitefish from various locations around Michigan’s Keweenaw Peninsula. (B. Michaels photo)

GLIFWC interns Jacob Rodmaker and Patrick LaGrew extract siscowet from a gill net as Jalyn LaBine operates the gill net lifter while fisheries technician Mike Plucinski steers the boat. The intent of the siscowet lake trout survey is to document relative abundance and diet of siscowet lake trout by setting gill nets at varying depths on the eastern side of the Keweenaw Peninsula and collecting data such as length, weight, sex, and stomach samples from captured fish. (B. Michaels photo)

GLIFWC fisheries internships provide experience on the water and in the laboratory. After collecting a load of lake whitefish (adikamegwag) stomachs from cooperating commercial fishermen, Great Lakes Division interns work in the lab, documenting whitefish meals that include macroinvertebrates, small fish, and European fingernail clams. Photo: Interns Jalyn LaBine (foreground) and Patrick LaGrew examine the contents of lake whitefish stomachs. (COR)

Through a cooperative effort by a collection Lake Superior stakeholders, kits are now available to mark lost fishing nets. GLIFWC wardens joined the Apostle Islands Sport Fishermen’s Association, Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Sea Grant and others to help design a kit that includes a floating marker and hook-and-line assembly to identify the location of ghost nets. The kits are available at many South Shore bait shops. For more information see www.glifwc.org/ghostnet.html or call 715.685.2114.

Ghost net packs available for anglers

Jacob Rodmaker (left) and Patrick LaGrew check to see whether any lamprey were captured in the trap. During their spawning run, sea lampreys are extracted from traps on the Bad River each day and are counted, measured, and sexed. A subsample of the invasive lampreys is fin-clipped and released back into the river for the purpose of obtaining an estimate of the adult population in the river. (J. LaBine photo)
Great lakes, treaty resources enhanced under GLRI

By Jennifer Ballinger, GLIFWC Outreach Specialist

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) was first funded in 2010. Its purpose is to provide additional support to federal, state, and tribal agencies and other entities to accelerate efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes. After an initial infusion of $475 million in 2010, it has consistently been funded at approximately $300 million.

The GLRI also allowed unprecedented coordination among federal, state, and tribal agencies and other entities, allowing for more efficient work addressing Areas of Concern (AOCs), invasive species, contaminants, nearshore health and nonpoint pollution, and habitat/wildlife protection and restoration.

The additional resources and coordination provided by the GLRI has allowed for expedited Great Lakes restoration. For example, 31 Areas of Concern (AOCs) were designated in the early 1970s in the Great Lakes basin. In 2010 when GLRI began, only one AOC had been delisted, Oswego River (NY) in 2006. Since 2010, three additional AOCs have been delisted, White Lake (Michigan) 2014, Deer Lake (Mich.) 2014, and Presque Isle Bay (Pennsylvania) 2013.

Increased coordination has also enabled activities geared towards ongoing restoration and protection of the Great Lakes, including current work by GLIFWC, Fond du Lac, and other agencies to delist the St. Louis River AOC (Minnesota/Wisconsin).

Capacity funding through the GLRI has helped provide tribes and intertribal agencies the resources for both involvement in restoration and protection management decisions; provide sound science necessary for land development proposal analyses; and forge interjurisdictional relationships vital to protecting traditional resources throughout the Great Lakes basin.

Safety training focuses on Great Lakes emergencies

By Bill Mattes, GLIFWC Great Lakes Section Leader

Red Cliff, Wis.—On a cool and blustery day in July, eleven fishy folks gathered on the shores of Gichigami to undergo instruction on how to prepare a vessel and its crew for emergencies on the water. Instructors Ron Kinnunen and Titus Seilheimer from the respective Michigan Sea Grant and Wisconsin Sea Grant programs were on hand to educate, demonstrate and oversee the use of safety gear and certify participants as U.S. Coast Guard Fishing Vessel Drill Conductors through the AMSEA training program (Alaska Marine Safety and Education Association).

Throughout the day, participants were shown real-life incidences, and trained on the importance of both being individually prepared and having a fully prepared crew to respond to on-water emergencies.

This was the fourth in a series of free training sessions for tribal fishermen set up with the support of the Michigan and Wisconsin Sea Grant programs along with GLIFWC.

During the ten-hour long course participants donned cold water survival suits (in under one-minute), put out fires, made proper Mayday calls, deployed an emergency raft, and followed abandon ship procedures. In total, seven tribal commercial fishermen and four tribal personnel trained to beat the odds when an on-water emergency arises. For more see www.amsea.org.

Hollow Rock, a unique natural arch formation along Lake Superior on the Grand Portage reservation. (J. Ballinger photo)

Tribes have been instrumental in the implementation of the GLRI, with over 30 tribes and intertribal agencies located in the Great Lakes region. Their reservations and Ceded Territories cover extensive portions of the basin.

GLRI funded projects related to habitat and wildlife restoration and protection and preservation and enhancement of the environment in which tribal members exercise their treaty-reserved hunting, fishing, and gathering rights.

GLRI capacity funding has also allowed increased participation in intergovernmental initiatives while providing the unique tribal perspective in management activities. For example, between 2010 and 2014, tribes restored and enhanced over 124,000 acres of wetlands, prairie grasslands, and upland habitat as well as an additional 15,000 acres of manoomin (wild rice) beds.

GLRI has been an important asset to GLIFWC and its member tribes. Continued funding is essential to tribes’ restoration and protection efforts for the natural resources essential for the Anishinaabe bimadiziwin (lifeway). Anishinaabe culture depends on continuing and enhancing subsistence harvesting practices.

There are many threats to these resources, such as pollution, climate change, and invasive species. The GLRI enhanced the tribes’ commitment to work with other managers in the Ceded Territories to protect and restore natural resources and habitats, and will continue to do so.

GLIFWC’s GLRI funded activities:

- Increased capacity with additional staff and participation in Great Lakes initiatives such as Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Annex Subcommittee, Great Lakes Executive Committee, Great Lakes Advisory Board
- Tracking Contaminants in Fish
- Safe Fish Consumption Advice
- Manoomin Restoration & Protection

Lake Superior Day

Every summer around the third Sunday in July, people around Gichigami celebrate Lake Superior Day. On the south shore of the big lake, the Bad River Tribe’s Natural Resources Department hosted their annual Lake Superior Day event on July 14. With a host of displays and activities, the department helped raise community awareness about the threats facing the Lake Superior ecosystem. Photo: John Prohaska, Brownfields Specialist for the Bad River Natural Resources Department explains environmental issues associated with pipelines to a young tribal member. (C. Rasmussen photo)
GLIFWC partners with regional forestry organization

Focus on tribal needs in climate change planning

By Kim Stone, Climate Change Program Coordinator

At its May 2017 meeting, the GLIFWC Board of Commissioners granted approval for GLIFWC to become a formal partner with the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (NIACS). NIACS is a regional collaborative effort between the University of Minnesota where he will conduct research to assess the feasibility of reintroducing elk to northeastern Minnesota.

The beginnings of a partnership

The seeds of partnership were sown during the 2015 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) meeting between tribal representatives and Forest Service personnel. One tribal representative, noting GLIFWC’s absence from the list of NIACS’ official partners, suggested that a truly collaborative approach should involve tribal input.

A partnership between GLIFWC and NIACS will promote a more holistic approach to bring the bobcat population back into the population goal range of 2,000-3,000 bobcats in the coming years.

Despite GLIFWC opposition, the bobcat harvest quota is set to double in Wisconsin this coming season. The Furbearer Advisory Committee recommended increasing the bobcat quota from 375 last season to 750 in 2017-18. This includes a more-than-doubling of the harvest quota in the northern zone, from 225 to 550 bobcats.

The Committee includes biologists from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), GLIFWC, US Forest Service, a member of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, and user groups, including the Wisconsin Trappers Association and the Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association.

The harvest quota increase, thought to be unprecedented by the Committee, was in response to a population estimate of 3,504 bobcats in Wisconsin, which is over the population goal of 2,000-3,000 bobcats that was set a decade or more ago.

Representatives from the user groups that were present also reported frequently seeing evidence of bobcats while hunting and trapping, leading them to believe that there were more bobcats than the WDNR estimates. The higher quotas are projected to bring the population estimate back into the population goal range of 2,000-3,000 bobcats in the coming years.

The decision to double the quota was not unanimous. GLIFWC stressed that WDNR bobcat monitoring data did not show population increases. Snow-tracking surveys, for example, did not show rising bobcat numbers, but instead revealed a 50% decline over the last 10-15 years. In addition, the success rate for bobcat trappers in the northwoods has declined by about 50% since 2010.

GLIFWC suggested that a slow increase in the bobcat quota would be better than doubling it, as population estimates and user group observations disagree with survey data and trapper success rates, making it difficult to know how bobcats are doing. Nevertheless, the Committee recommended a doubling of the bobcat harvest quota, which has been approved by the WDNR Wildlife Policy Team, and also has developed an online course in Forest Adaptation Planning and Practices.

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Getting started and looking to future collaboration

While the nuts and bolts of the NIACS/GLIFWC partnership are still developing, GLIFWC has been involved since May in an effort with other tribal/intertribal groups to create a “Tribal Adaptation Menu” with NIACS. The goal is to incorporate traditional values, traditional management techniques, and consideration of cultural and historic sites into actionable climate change strategies. While work on this project is ongoing, participants including GLIFWC hope it can be used with the current NIACS adaptation workbooks to assist tribes in climate change planning.

Its exact format is yet to be determined, but the product will be designed to supplement existing NIACS products and help MIACS more effectively reach out to and include tribal communities in its mission. The final product may also serve to assist and educate organizations who have not worked with tribes or wish to learn more about the process.

For further information on GLIFWC’s “Climate Change Program, go to http://glifwc.org/ClimateChange/ or contact Kim Stone, Climate Change Program Coordinator at kstone@glifwc.org. For additional information on NIACS and the work it does, go to www.glifwc.org/Mazinaigan/Winter2016/index.html/page=3.

Bobcat harvest quotas spike in WI

By Nicholas McCann, for Mazina’igan

Despite GLIFWC opposition, the bobcat harvest quota is set to double in Wisconsin this coming season. The Furbearer Advisory Committee recommended increasing the bobcat quota from 375 last season to 750 in 2017-18. This includes a more-than-doubling of the harvest quota in the northern zone, from 225 to 550 bobcats.

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In the discussion that ensued, other tribal representatives spoke of the importance of listening to Elders’ wisdom with regard to the environment and the need for that knowledge to be a part of NIACS’ work in climate change.

From this meeting emerged the beginnings of a partnership. Discussions in the following months between GLIFWC and NIACS considered how the partnership would take shape and how the work and mission of each organization could best serve the other. GLIFWC requested several modifications to NIACS’ charter to be more inclusive and reflective of tribal values and needs, and NIACS was fully receptive to these changes.

Whether a dramatic increase in harvest is a good course of action is open for debate. It may be that there are better ways to “skin this cat.” A subcommittee is being formed to identify more ways to get a better handle on how many bobcats are out there. The subcommittee, which will include WDNR Biologists, a GLIFWC Biologist, a researcher from the University of Wisconsin, and a user group representative, meets in late summer to discuss options.

Minutes from the Furbearer Advisory Committee meeting, including a description of the bobcat quota-setting discussion, can be found at: http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Wildlife/habitat/committees/furbearer.html.

Wildlife Biologist Nicholas McCann recently moved from GLIFWC to the University of Minnesota where he will conduct research to assess the feasibility of reintroducing elk to northeastern Minnesota.
GLIFWC officers prepare communities for manoominike, recreational canoeing

By Charlie Otto Rasmussen, Editor

For beginning canoeists, a universal rule declares that one should never attempt stand-up in the long, tippy boat. It makes sense in most situations. But at GLIFWC’s innovative Canoomin program, participants must both stand and propel in the narrow boats with a push pole to complete the course.

“Our class gives people all the skills they need to harvest manoomin for the first time,” said instructor Lauren Tuori, a GLIFWC conservation officer. Manoomin— the Ojibwemowin word for wild rice, a nutritious and culturally vital grain that grows in shallow waters throughout large sections of the Ceded Territory. The Commission developed Canoomin—a mashup of canoe + manoomin—to encourage more tribal members to harvest wild rice and to help develop basic canoeing proficiency. At the core of program: safety.

Tuori and additional GLIFWC training officers including Heather Bliss, Adam McGeeshick, and Steven Amuler stress the “Four Ws” to Canoomin students: wind, weather, water & waves. Before launching on a recreational trip or off to a wild rice bed, canoeists must consider this safety checklist and calculate where safety issues might arise.

“There’s a lot that can happen whether canoeing out to reach the wild rice, or right there in the bed,” Tuori said. “Water and air temperatures are generally cooler during the harvest season and hypothermia is a concern in the event someone goes overboard.”

Students learn how to reenter a canoe—even in deep water—and conduct rescues using a push pole, paddle and rope. PFDs, or personal flotation devices, are a must for anyone going out on the water.

Now in its third year, Canoomin courses are available on-demand. This year GLIFWC certified students at Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Sokaogon Mole Lake, and a third course is available at Fond du Lac near Cloquet, Minnesota.

Each summer GLIFWC Officer Lauren Tuori offers Adult CPR, First Aid and AED Defibrillator training to staff and interns. The coursework, which includes both original certifications and refresher courses, is part of an effort to increase emergency preparedness across the Commission no matter where staff is located. “It’s important for both field staff and people working in the office to have this basic knowledge,” Tuori said. “Medical emergencies can occur at any time.” Photo from left: Tuori oversees a first aid bandaging exercise with Dawn White and Travis Bartnick. (C. Rasmussen photo)

GLIFWC youth attend NYCALC 2017

NYCALC’s mission is to develop future conservation leaders with the skills, knowledge, and tools to address environmental change and conservation challenges to better serve their schools and home communities. GLIFWC is proud of the youth that attended and we can’t wait to see how they put their learning into action! (H. Bliss photo)

Ready for the Upper Michigan treaty deer hunt

A new crop of hunters from Keweenaw Bay Indian Community is ready for the fall season following a three-day course in Baraga, Mich.

Fifteen boys and girls, aged 10-17, completed the hunter safety education program through instruction by GLIFWC wardens including Steven Amслer, Matt Kniskern, Gale Smith and Dan North.

The late August program featured two days in the classroom and a day at the range where students fired shotguns and rifles at stationary targets.

Following successful completion of a written test, each student received a hunter safety certificate. The KBIC treaty waawaashkeshi (deer) hunting season in the 1842 Ceded Territory opens September 1 and runs till the end of the year.
Elk recovery in Wisconsin continues after 22 years

By Travis Bartnick, GLIFWC Wildlife Biologist

Omashkooz (elk) were once native to Wisconsin. However, as European settlers continued their westward expansion exploiting natural resources, elk were eventually extirpated from Wisconsin by the late 1800s. A reintroduction effort was attempted in northern Wisconsin in the 1930s, but the elk did not survive.

In 1995, 25 elk were trapped in Lower Michigan and then released in the Clam Lake area of Ashland County as part of an elk reintroduction feasibility study. The Clam Lake herd has continued to grow steadily over the years, with the exception of a couple of especially cold, snowy winters.

With the success of the Clam Lake elk restoration in northern Wisconsin, a second elk restoration site was proposed in the Jackson County area near Black River Falls, Wisconsin. The state of Wisconsin came to an agreement with the state of Kentucky to undertake a multi-year project, relocating up to 150 elk from Kentucky to Wisconsin over a 3–5 year period.

In 2015 and 2016, 73 elk that were trapped in Kentucky were released in the Black River area. Many of the elk are fitted with GPS tracking collars. Some of these collars can provide nearly real-time locations of the elk as they settle-in to their new range. Biologists are currently monitoring the movements of the Black River elk herd to determine whether they will stay within the elk management range or venture into new areas. There is a concern that some adventurous elk could become a problem for private landowners and those in the agriculture business. Time will tell whether this new elk herd will be a part of Wisconsin’s wildlife success stories.

Earlier this year, tribal members held a pipe and drum ceremony upon the arrival of 28 elk that were trapped in Kentucky and transported north to the Clam Lake herd. The elk were then held in a 7-acre pen near Winter for several months while biologists performed health tests and allowed the pregnant cow elk to give birth. After passing rigorous health examinations, the elk were eventually released into the existing population in mid-July of 2017.

The addition of the Kentucky elk to the Clam Lake herd should result in a more productive and more genetically diverse population. With a couple of years remaining in the agreement with Kentucky, Wisconsin is planning to continue to translocate elk to the two elk restoration areas within Wisconsin. The overall goal is to establish a healthy, self-sustaining herd that will allow for an annual hunt.

Many partners have been involved in the elk restoration efforts over the years, including GLIFWC. GLIFWC staff have participated in conducting elk restoration feasibility studies, reviewing various research proposals, health testing of translocated elk, purchasing feed for elk while they are held in quarantine pens, and contributing to future management and planning as a member of the elk advisory committee.

Wisconsin’s tribes have contributed over $1.7 million in gaming funds to Wisconsin’s elk reintroduction program since the State of Wisconsin’s 2001–2002 fiscal year.
In 2013 the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa’s Resource Management Division first proposed the idea of whether or not it would be feasible to restore elk to the Ceded Territories in eastern Minnesota. The next two years were spent researching elk and elk restorations and discussing the idea with the Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee along with other agencies and conservation organizations. This led to a 2015 partnership with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the University of Minnesota to submit an application for funding to Minnesota’s Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund. The application was to study the feasibility of restoring elk to portions of southern St. Louis, Carlton and northern Pine Counties in eastern Minnesota. The application was supported by Pine, Carlton and St. Louis Counties, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, The Izaak Walton League, Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, and a number of other conservation organizations. In 2016 the Minnesota Legislature approved the application, and the funding, and it was signed into law by the Governor.

The feasibility study, led by the University of Minnesota, has two parts. The first part is to determine if enough suitable habitat is available for elk, and the second part is to determine the level of public support for wild elk roaming across the landscape again. After consultations with county and tribal foresters and DNR Wildlife staff, three areas in the 1854 and 1837 Ceded Territories were selected for further study.

By Mike Schrage, For Mazina’igan

These areas were picked based on the relative lack of agriculture, abundant forests and abundant public lands. In June 2017, a field crew from the University began assessing the amount of potential elk forage in the three study areas. A survey of the opinions of landowners and the general public is planned for late summer 2017. The habitat assessments will continue with GIS mapping of forest cover types and other land uses. The data from the habitat assessment and public opinion surveys will be published in a final feasibility report in June 2019. Conducting the feasibility study is only the first step in what may easily be a 10-year long process. If the initial studies find that abundant good elk habitat remains on the landscape and there is strong public support for restoring elk to the area, a number of other steps need to be completed before elk could ever be released back into the wild.

The first step is convincing tribal, state, and local political leadership to support returning elk to the landscape. Funding has to be raised for what may be a $3–5 million project and a plan has to be written for how elk will be managed once they are here. A source herd or herds of disease free elk has to be located and created by another tribe.

With an abundant wolf and black bear population, a larger number of elk will need to be brought in initially if they are to produce enough calves to overcome predation and other sources of mortality. While the goal is to someday have a thriving and huntable population of elk restored to the 1854 or 1837 Ceded Territories of Minnesota, this may take years to accomplish. It’s a process to be undertaken not for us, but for our children and grandchildren. (Schrage is a wildlife biologist for the Fond du Lac Band.)
The St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers are major features within the Ojibwe Ceded Territory, and during the 18th Century, it served as a shared territory and boundary area between Ojibwe and Dakota communities. By the 17th Century, Ojibwe communities claimed the St. Croix watershed, living a good life from the animals, plants and medicines flourishing in the area.

Four Ojibwe communities own lands within the St. Croix watershed: the St. Croix Chippewa Indians, the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. Several communities enjoy treaty reserved rights within the St. Croix Watershed, which begins in the 1842 Ceded Territory and extends through the 1837 Ceded Territory.

The St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers originate as fast running streams eventually emptying into the Mississippi River at Prescott, Wisconsin, as a wide, meandering river. The Namekagon supports two major communities of manoomin, or wild rice, at the Pacawawaung and Phipps Flowages.

The rivers’ pristine water quality supports a myriad of aquatic species: walleye, pike, sturgeon and bass, along with forty species of mussels, including five endangered mussel species. Most portions of the river continue to be valued by paddlers who enjoy the fast flowing water and scenic landscapes.

In 1968, Congress enacted the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to enable the National Park Service authority to protect certain rivers. Within the 1968 legislation, Senators Walter Mondale and Gaylord Nelson, sponsored the St. Croix River and its tributary, the Namekagon. Shortly thereafter, the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (Riverway), a unit of the National Park System, began acquiring lands bordering the rivers and securing scenic easement protection over private lands, restricting development on the rivers’ shoreline for over 200 miles. Its purpose includes preserving, protecting and enhancing the values of the river for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

In order to better protect the river from potential spills, the Riverway obtained funding to partner with the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA) to develop a spill response plan for the St. Croix Riverway. UMRBA has significant experience in this area. For the past ten years, it has been developing spill response plans for portions of the Mississippi River. The plans developed by UMRBA have been used following several spills to speed response time and limit the potential size of the spill.

In contrast to a remediation plan, which is developed after a spill has happened, spill response plans can be developed in advance of a spill event to speed response time. Mark Ellis, Project Coordinator for UMRBA, explained the benefit of having spill response plans in place before a major spill event, “It significantly speeds up response time. The command team is already in place, so instead of wasting hours setting up a command structure, responders can start decontamination efforts immediately.” For spills into rivers, timing is critical. A chemical spilled into a river will travel downstream until it reaches a barrier. With a spill response plan in place, responders can more quickly deploy barriers, saving hours of time and miles of river.

Developing spill response plans involves compiling site-specific data about geography, sensitive areas, access points and transportation networks. It also involves bringing communities together to build relationships and determine the expertise and capabilities of various responding agencies. Ellis explained that the Environmental Protection Agency was interested in funding a spill response plan for the Mississippi River because it serves as the boundary between states. Without coordination by a group like UMRBA, there is no natural connection between various state agencies normally involved in spill response.

During a recent spill event on Wisconsin side of the Mississippi River across from Iowa, where a spill response plan was deployed, fishery managers from both states were able to more effectively coordinate the response, quickly deciding that one state agency should manage the fishery habitat near the spill and with the other natural resources department caring for the downstream habitat.

An important aspect of UMRBA’s spill response plans is the inclusion of data on sensitive areas. These sensitive areas include habitat for threatened or endangered species, historic and cultural sites, designated areas (i.e. trout streams and natural areas) and features like water intakes. In a spill response situation, responders’ number one priority is protecting human health. Accordingly, significant efforts are made to immediately divert spillage away from drinking water intakes. Response plans do not always include detailed information about the habitat of sensitive species or historic and cultural sites. Keeping this information confidential is often important to maintaining the integrity of those sites. Response plans do indicate the location of these types of sites with contact information to the trustee of that site, who can provide advice on how to prevent damage to those areas.

According to Ellis, the development of the St. Croix Riverway spill response plan has presented unique challenges. The upper reaches of the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers are fairly remote. In this “canoe” area, the rivers move fast and are too narrow to deploy motorboats. Effectively responding in the remote areas made to immediately divert spillage away from drinking water intakes. Response plans do not always include detailed information about the habitat of sensitive species or historic and cultural sites. Keeping this information confidential is often important to maintaining the integrity of those sites. Response plans do indicate the location of these types of sites with contact information to the trustee of that site, who can provide advice on how to prevent damage to those areas.

The Riverway and UMRBA are reaching out to Tribes and tribal agencies in the development of the plan. They met with the Voigt Intertribal Task Force at its July meeting and will include information provided by the Tribes in the spill response plan. When UMRBA completes its spill response plan for the St. Croix watershed, it will contain a wealth of information for local and regional responders, (see Spill response page 18).
Survival of young walleye in Mille Lacs Lake

(continued from page 1)

2008, and 2013, there was high relative survival of age-0 walleye to age-1, which suggests that a peak in survival may be occurring every five years (Figure 1). Similarly, low relative survival was observed every 3-4 years over this period. The most striking trends have occurred in the last few years. The charted valley in 2010, 2011, and 2012 was the lowest relative survival compared to valleys in previous years. Similarly, the peak in relative survival in 2013 was the lowest relative to peaks observed in previous years. This low relative survival has translated to lower relative abundance of age-1 walleye in 2010 to 2016 compared to previous years (Figure 2).

Collectively, this means both survival and abundance of young walleye has decreased in recent years, which can have negative consequences on the adult population of walleye in Mille Lacs Lake. Biological (e.g., predation) and environmental (e.g., water temperature and clarity) factors are both likely playing a role in the variability in survival and abundance of young walleye in Mille Lacs Lake. One or more of these factors changed recently, resulting in lower relative abundance and survival of young walleye. While the exact mechanism remains a mystery, we have identified a possible cyclical pattern in survival of age-0 walleye to age-1, with a peak occurring every five years. If this pattern repeats itself, we could potentially see another influx of young walleye sometime within the next 2-3 years.

However, if biological and environmental conditions continue to change, then the influx of young walleye might be smaller relative to previous years. In either case, conservative management strategies should remain in place to encourage the establishment of another strong year class of walleye and improve the chances that adult walleye stocks will increase in Mille Lacs Lake.

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(continued from page 2)

Under the JASC, a team of biologists and technicians share responsibility for conducting walleye assessments on Ceded Territory lakes. Upper level fisheries managers review population data and establish safe harvest levels for state and tribal fishers.

The event’s success at strengthening the work of the JASC drew the attention of officials in the US Department of the Interior, leading to the 2009 Partners in Conservation Award. Representatives from BIA, GLIFWC, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and US Fish & Wildlife Service shared the prestigious award for helping reduce social unrest related to treaty fishing and bolstering walleye stocks in the Wisconsin Ceded Territory.

At the recent 25th Partners in Fishing celebration held at Lac du Flambeau June 7, Jackson singled out another group of collaborators that form an important link between fisheries managers and Ceded Territory communities. They also know where the fish hang out.

This event could not happen without the guides,” he said. “All 26 guides here today helped make this a success.”

Teamwork and the football hook

Beginning in 1999, Partners in Fishing planners enhanced the event with help from professional football players who came aboard to reinforce the power of teamwork—whether on a stadium field or in an agency office. Champions of Super Bowls I and II, Green Bay Packers legends Jerry Kramer and Fuzzy Thurston made a memorable visit to the 2004 Partners gathering at Lac Courte Oreilles.

“One of the reasons my team, Fuzzy’s team, was an exceptional football team wasn’t really the people; we weren’t great athletes, but we were able to subjugate our needs, wishes, and wants for the benefit of the team. For benefit of every-one,” said Kramer, addressing the group near the Chippewa Flowage shoreline. “And the DNR and the Indian Nations are coming together, and you can have an incredibly powerful impact if you can become a team and do what is best for the area.”

While the Partners roster includes 20 different Packers players—both active and retired—William Henderson and Gilbert Brown emerged as regulars, forming bonds with fisheries managers from all the agencies represented. The respective offense and defense standouts earned a championship in Super Bowl XXXI.

For more on the work of the JASC and walleye population surveys in the Wisconsin Ceded Territory see www.glifwc.org/publications/pdf/Casting_Light.pdf
Sioux Chef travels to Ojibwe country

By: Dylan Bizhikiins Jennings, Staff Writer

Odanah, Wis.—Chef Sean Sherman isn’t your average chef. Many chefs spend years mastering the culinary arts of communities far away. Some focus on Italian cuisine, others focus on exceptional Asian dishes.

Chef Sean Sherman simply wanted to cook with the foods of his ancestors. Sean grew up on the Ogallala Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota. For him, a big part of understanding his identity has been through food. He’s spent many years returning the intricacies of indigenous food systems and the many uses of plants and wild game.

“To truly understand these resources is to know the many uses. Some plants are not only foods, but can be used medicinally or used as natural dye,” Sherman said.

On June 29 the Sioux Chef team arrived in Odanah country, Bad River, situated on the shores of Gichigami (Lake Superior), has been home to Anishinaabe for many generations. Like many tribal communities, the majority of the reservation is undeveloped, making it a prime location for foraging. Youth and community members took the woods and waterways in search of culinary supplies. Bad River Natural Resource Department staff, community members, and the Sioux Chef team took turns helping youth to identify wild plants and their uses. The group harvested cattails, grape leaves, ginger, cedar, rose petals, berries and a few other tasty plants.

“I had never known that we could eat some of these plants that we see every day,” said Bad River youth Tim Oja.

Identifying and harvesting are some of the first steps in the process of healthy eating, and cooking is the third. With so many processed foods in the system these days, many cooks have forgotten how to prepare certain harvestable foods in a manner that is both tasty and healthy. Many of the health disparities seen across Native American communities can be attributed to diet and the negative effects of processed foods. Chef Sherman said that fry bread has become the face of the tribal culinary experience and it’s shocking. Fry bread, created with government issued commodities, is typically cooked in a pool of grease and is by no means traditional or healthy.

Youth and community members took to the kitchen and began to clean, cook and prepare a delicious lunch, with only foods harvested within the reservation boundaries. The crew also began to prep the corn—(see Sioux Chef, page 19)

Waagaagin learning through my GLIFWC internship

By Jordan Tabobondung

GLIFWC Planning & Development Intern

Growing up, I remember my grandparents, mother and aunts talking about how we used to harvest and eat waagaagin, the Anishnaabemowin word for fiddlehead ferns. They said to me that we didn’t harvest or eat them so much anymore. Few people knew what to look for to determine whether they were the correct species of fern, or if they were ready for harvest.

Earlier this year, GLIFWC Planning and Development’s Traditional Foods Program began working with a researcher at the Metropolitan University College in Denmark. During the last part of May and early part of June, I followed along with GLIFWC staff and collected samples of bracken fern fiddleheads for a trial study.

“The study will provide preliminary information on the levels of a naturally occurring, but potentially harmful, chemical in local bracken fern stands,” said Owen Maroney, GLIFWC community dietitian. “Bracken fern is found on every continent with the exception of Antarctica. The fiddleheads, or young, deeply arched shoots, are a traditional Anishinaabe food. These young fiddleheads are frequently consumed in Asian diets in places like Japan and China.”

Guided by GLIFWC staff, I learned the identifying features of the fiddleheads that were ideal for collection in this study—those possessing a deep “U” curve of the fronds during the fiddlehead stage. This included collecting fiddleheads growing in a variety of sun exposure (full sun, partial shade, and fully shaded) within the same GPS coordinate. We gathered samples at the stage of growth and tenderness recommended by community elders during the Mino Wiisinidaa! project from 2011-2014. After locating the ideal samples, we cut the fiddleheads just above the...
GLIFWC Interns get hands-on experience

By Amanda Plucinski
GLIFWC PIO Intern

Odanah, Wis.—This year, LaTisha Coffin became the new intern coordinator following Jim St. Arnold’s retirement. As intern coordinator Coffin oversaw recruitment and hiring of eleven undergraduate students and one graduate student for GLIFWC internships.

Every summer GLIFWC internships encourage Native youth to enter careers in various fields. Throughout the internship GLIFWC offers students hands-on experience and networking opportunities. The internship is ten weeks beginning in late June and ending in early August. One of the things that the internship prides itself on is its ability to show the interns Anishinaabe culture and values by letting them participate in different ceremonies.

Students are placed in a variety of divisions, including Biological Services (Great Lakes Fisheries, Inland Fisheries, Wild Rice), Public Information Office, Planning and Development, Intergovernmental Affairs, Law Enforcement, and Climate Change.

Biological Services Division

Great Lakes Fisheries

Mole Lake tribal member Jaryn LaBine is in her fourth year as a Great Lakes Fisheries intern. This fall she will be entering her fifth year at University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point majoring in Biology and minoring in Psychology. Jaryn’s favorite part of the internship has been netting for siscowet lake trout on Lake Superior.

This summer Jaryn has also assisted on sea lamprey collecting, stomach sampling, and juvenile sturgeon assessments. Her future plans after finishing school are to move west and work on the coast. Jaryn has already been contacted by two different people on the west coast through her intern video on GLIFWC’s Facebook page regarding future endeavors.

This is Patrick LaGrew’s first summer as a GLIFWC intern. He is a Red Cliff tribal member who attends Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College in Hayward. He is double majoring in Land Management and Water Management. Patrick says his favorite part about his internship is the connections he is making with his coworkers while learning new methods of fish and water management. This summer Patrick also worked on aging otoliths, collecting stomach samples, and lamprey control. His future goal is to work for GLIFWC in the Biological Services Division.

Great Lakes Fisheries’ other intern is Northland College student Jacob Rodmaker. In the fall Jacob will be a senior majoring in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology. Mary said that she chose GLIFWC because of its mission to conserve treaty rights throughout the Ceded Territories and that’s what she wants to do with her studies.

Mary Sellars, first time GLIFWC intern, also worked as a wild rice intern. Mary also monitored wild rice beds and did surveys throughout the Ceded Territory. She will be a junior majoring in Wildlife Biology and minoring in Geographic Information Systems.

Mary's future career plans are to continue with her schooling until she receives a graduate degree in Wildlife Biology. Mary said that she chose GLIFWC because of its mission to conserve treaty rights throughout the Ceded Territories and that’s what she wants to do with her studies.

Climate Change

This year’s climate change intern is Shannon Soulier, a Red Cliff tribal member. This fall she will be a freshman at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. This summer she worked in the field and on the different phenophases. Shannon has worked on Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) interviews of tribal elders. She says, “It’s interesting to listen to what these elders are saying compared to what is being found in our studies.” She hopes that her internship with GLIFWC will give her an idea of what she wants to major in.

Division of Intergovernmental Affairs

Kristen Thannum, a Bad River tribal member, has worked in the Division of Intergovernmental Affairs for the past three summers. She recently graduated from Chippewa Valley Technical College with a Paralegal Degree. As an intern, she was involved in many different cultural activities as an enforcement intern Rashawn has been involved in many different cultural activities such as being a camp counselor at Camp Onji-Aking.

Shawn said that his favorite part was going on ride-alongs with the officers and seeing what it means to be a game warden. He is hoping that this internship with GLIFWC will help with his future employment due to the hands-on experience that he has had.

This is Mole Lake tribal member, Megan Mihlako’s first summer as a GLIFWC intern. In the fall, Megan will be a sophomore at Vermilion Community College in Ely, Minnesota majoring in Wildlife/Wildland Law Enforcement. This summer she has been involved in many different cultural activities as an enforcement intern such as the Healing Circle (see GLIFWC interns, page 22)
A new exhibit at the Duluth Children’s Museum focuses on bringing Ojibwe language and culture into the museum in an interactive way. Manoomin occupies the back part of the second floor of the museum. The main attraction is a wiigiwaam structure that houses a motion game called Manoominike. The game responds to movement, guiding children through various motions associated with harvesting and processing manoomin (wild rice). These motions include knocking, roasting, jigging, and winnowing.

At the start of each step, a word to describe the motion appears on screen and is said aloud in Ojibwemowin. Next, an on-screen figure begins the motion, which the children have to follow. The motion must be continued for quite some time before that step is considered complete, mimicking the hard work and time it takes to harvest and process wild rice. Once all steps are completed, a final move-ment has the children raise their arms to the sky in thanks to their ancestors, who are represented via the northern lights.

During my family’s time in the wiigiwaam, a museum guide was present to explain the different steps in manoominike, while my 5-year old did the work. This was extremely helpful, as I’m not sure a child who just stumbled into the wiigiwaam would understand exactly what they were doing or why, unless they or a parent read the introductory text panel. I did try to jump in at one point so my son and I could do the motions together, but unfortunately the motion sensors are positioned to react to smaller beings.

Traditional harvesting is often done together by families and passed down through generations, so it would have been nice to be able to also practice it together this way interactively. Instead, my husband and I sat on benches lining the inner perimeter of the wiigiwaam to watch my son’s progress through the game.

Outside the wiigiwaam, a canoe with life jackets, a push pole and knockers sits to one side. The canoe is surrounded by photographs of growing wild rice stalks to create a feeling of padding through rice beds as you sit in the canoe. This free play area was very appealing to children.

To the other side, a faux birch-bark pedestal with two iPads offers museum-goers the opportunity to play a free app called Milan (“find it” in Ojibwemowin). The app features a matching game in which children match objects related to wild rice harvesting. The objects’ names are written and pronounced aloud in Ojibwemowin. The app can also be downloaded from the App Store to play at home on any tablet or smartphone.

Manoomin is on exhibit now at the Duluth Children’s Museum, located at 115 S 29th Ave West in Duluth, Minnesota. (P. Maday photo)
Bilingual education blooms at immersion schools

By Dylan Jennings, Staff Writer

Boocho da-ganawendamang gidinawewininaan, mii gaan-miinoozwiziyang anishinaabewiyang. There was a time not long ago, when the vast majority of people living in this region would understand these words when spoken. Nowadays, a small fraction of the population understands or speaks Ojibwemowin.

Boarding schools, forced assimilation and organized religion are commonly blamed for the depletion of first language speakers throughout the country and more locally, Ojibwe Country.

Many tribal communities have worked to incorporate Ojibwemowin classes within their respective schools and districts. Others have taken a more direct route and established immersion schools on-reservation, which promote the usage of only Ojibwemowin in the classroom.

Waadookodaading Ojibwe Immersion School located on the Lac Courte Oreilles reservation is an excellent example of a thriving immersion school.

In a small public school in Duluth, Minnesota, they set out to prove that the average school district can do a lot to help revitalize a very significant way of life. Misaabekong Ojibwe Immersion Program was established just a few years ago and operates out of the Lowell Elementary School in Duluth, MN. With the exception of Art, Music, and Physical Education, all subjects are taught by qualified instructors in the language.

Citing research that highlights the positive outcomes of bilingualism, the school and its administration are also approaching Spanish in the same context.

Misaabekong Immersion school staff and students gather around local Ojibwe artist Jonathan Thunder, who created illustrations for their Ojibwe reading books. (Misaabekong Immersion School photo)

“Every child has the right to learn their own language, even if it’s not spoken much at home,” said Program Director William Howes.

According to research, the immersion experience actually enhances English language development (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000). With twice as many synapses in the brain, the average child is developmentally equipped to learn languages.

Edye Howes, the American Indian Education Coordinator reiterates, “This is definitely a family commitment. The families have to support the students in any way necessary and also stimulate the bilingualism concept even at home. The rewards and benefits are tremendous and definitely outweigh the extra work.”

The Misaabekong Immersion Program is still in its infancy, but the coordinators have great vision for the program, looking to expand beyond the grade levels already developed. In fact, many immersion schools throughout the region are operating in the same manner. As a class graduates and moves to the next grade, staff and curriculum developers are working diligently to develop the next stepping stones in curriculum.

Regarding state standards and testing, immersion schools and programs like Misaabekong work throughout the year to make certain that curriculum standards and state standards are met—no different than any other public school. The most important difference is that these particular schools are both saving and preserving a language tied to an old but thriving way of life.

Boocho da-ganawendamang gidinawewininaan, mii gaan-miinoozwiziyang anishinaabewiyang. Even though the Ojibwe language is very descriptive and somewhat difficult to translate into English, I’m sure the majority of folks can understand this:

“We have to take care of our language, it’s what was given to us as Anishinaabe.”

For a full citations and learning resources see www.psych.mcgill.ca/parpg/fac/genesee/fredadd.html.

Sioux Chef

(continued from page 16)

Sioux Chef team, on their journey to both educate and bring awareness back to the communities, has hopefully inspired both adults and youth in the area to make healthier food choices, and to learn Anishinaabe traditions. Anishinaabe were blessed with beautiful resources to live mino-bimaadizi and it’s time to revitalize one of the original forms of sovereignty, food sovereignty. For more information about the Sioux Chef, book signings or to preorder their brand new cookbook visit their website here: http://sioux-chef.com/.

Canada: recent survey tracks native language speakers

Following the 2016 population census, Canadian authorities learned that many First Nations people are using indigenous languages at home. While French and English are the only officially recognized languages, Canada is home to 634 First Nations that speak more than 50 distinct languages.

Cree is by far the most spoken native language with 83,985 Canadians, followed by 39,025 using Inuktitut. Ojibwemowin rounds out the top three with 21,800. A total of 228,770 said they speak a native language at home.

Census officials note that indigenous language use is highest among younger generations. It’s a trend that rings true for Jordan Tabobondung from Waasking First Nation near Parry Sound, Ontario.

“There’s been a general push in native communities to learn their languages,” said Tabobondung, a University of Winnipeg graduate student and 2017 GLIFWC intern. “I’m amazed at how well really young kids speak—right in the 4-13 year-old range.”

—CO Rasmussen

Nigig and friends are back!

The Nenda-gikenda-mang Ningo-biboonagak (We Seek to Learn through-out the Year) set of Dagwaagin (Fall) booklets are hot off the press and being distributed to GLIFWC’s tribal communities!

The Dagwaagin storybook continues to follow Nigig and friends as they explore traditional Anishinaabe cultural activities. Working together, the characters learn about playing lacrosse, harvesting manoomin (wild rice), and preparing food for the long winter.

Funded through a grant from ANA (Administration for Native Americans), the project aims to support Ojibwe language learning for children in grades K-5, promoting language and cultural literacy.

As with the previous sets, Dagwaagin provides a monolingual storybook, activity book, and a bilingual parent/teacher answer book. An added resource, the www.glifwc-inwe.com website offers interactive language activities and audio, as well as PDFs of the four seasonal sets of booklets to download and customize for dialect differences, making this resource even more beneficial across Anishinaabe-akíng.

Each of the 11 GLIFWC member tribes will receive 660 books: including 220 of the storybook, 220 of the workbook, and 220 of the parent/teacher edition.

Communities will distribute the sets as they see fit to ensure that they reach the appropriate audience.

Ojibwe language learners can always view and download the digital content via the www.glifwc-inwe.com website. For further information please contact Wesley Ballinger at wesley@glifwc.org.

Nenda-gikenda-mang Ningo-biboonagak —CO Rasmussen

Essential Ojibwemowin

Gekinoo’amag—Teacher

Sioux Chef

munity dinner for the following evening. Over 100 participants from the community crowded the elderly center for an amazing meal of cedar braised bison, manoomin (wild rice), and cranberries, honey and maple syrup.

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The elk, or omashkooz, is making a comeback

Did you know that elk used to live all across Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota? Because of overhunting and changes in land use in the 1800s, elk disappeared. More recently, elk are being brought back to the region with the help of tribes, states and conservation organizations. The elk, or omashkooz in the Ojibwe language, is a culturally important animal.

Elk babies are called calves. Calves are born in late May through early June. They are born with spots and have very little scent to camouflage them from predators. They spend their first few weeks hiding motionless while their mothers feed.

After a few weeks the calves and their mothers begin to group together in herds. By this time the young elk have grown stronger and have a better chance of outrunning predators. More elk in a herd equals more eyes to watch for danger and lets calves focus on nursing or finding the most nutritious food.

Often, a bunch of calves stick together in a nursery herd and follow a single cow. That cow acts like a babysitter, keeping her eyes and ears alert for danger. Different cows take turns babysitting so they all get a chance to eat. If a predator shows up, the babysitter will lead all the calves away in a group. That way they don’t scramble around confused looking for their mothers. Once the danger disappears, the herd settles down and the mothers will sniff out their calves.

Elk talk to each other in a lot of ways. Since they live in large groups, they must talk to each other more than many other animals. A newborn gives a high-pitched squeal, and its mother can recognize her calf by its voice. An elk bark is a warning of danger. Omashkooz talk to each other by making sounds such as chirps, mews and miscellaneous squeals. Bugling (loud hollering or a squealing whistle ending with grunt) is done by a bull advertising his fitness to cows, warning other bulls to stay away, or announcing his readiness to fight.

(Reprinted with permission from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.)

Fast Facts

- Elk calves weigh an average of 35 pounds at birth.
- Elk are members of the deer family.
- Moose are the largest members of the deer family, followed by elk, then caribou, then deer.
- Elk have antlers, not horns. Antlers are shed and regrown every year. Antlers are made of bone.
- A set of antlers can weigh up to 40 pounds.
- Elk replace all of their hair twice a year—once in the spring and once in the fall.
- Elk are herd-forming animals. Herds offer more security because there are so many eyes, ears and noses checking for danger.
- There were an estimated 10 million elk throughout North America before Europeans arrived. By 1907, there were less than 100,000. Today, about 1 million wild elk roam in 26 states and five Canadian provinces.
- Predators of elk are: black bears, wolves, coyotes and humans.

Omashkooz Word Search

- Antler
- Bark
- Bugling
- Bull
- Calves
- Elk
- Herd
- Omashkooz
- Predator

Color omashkooz.

Omashkooz (Wikipedia photo)
**Aaniin ezhiebawak agwajiin? What is happening outside?**


**Niizh—2 Circle the 10 underlined Ojibwe words in the letter maze. (Translations below)**

A. Dagaayaa, daga biininge warinaagowak.
B. Ingii miinahitigigisikogisog. Miiwin. Biminew!
C. Ikwegew giiyosewag baapiikangamiziwinibogisog thwart.
E. Waawaashkeshiwin, bimewak. Miiwin.
F. Baashtkiizin, akandoiniwin, akandowin. Miiwin.
G. Gaanakii iigaagiwin, oozaa, oozaa. Miiwin.

**Niwin—4 VTA Root Commands**

1. **gi-**
2. **ag**
3. **O-**
4. **aawaan**
5. **Nin-**
6. **aa**
7. **Ga-**
8. **aa**
9. **Odaa-**
10. **aan**

**VTA Grammer-Patterns**

First learn root verbs that are in command form. Respectfully say *Daga*—Please. Add Animate—Living nouns.

*Agim!*—Count him/her!

*Nindigimaa*—I count h/h (them).

*Gidigimaa*—You count h/h (pl).

*Odigimaa*—She counts h/h (pl).

*Nindigimaa*—We count h/h (pl).

*Gidigimaa*—We all count h/h (pl).

*Odigimaa*—You all count h/h (pl).

*Gidigimaa*—They count h/h (pl).

Gigi-agimaag ina nikag? You did count geese? 

Naazh! –naan– Go get h/h!

Waabam!—See h/h!

Bakwajibizh!—Remove/pick h/h off!

Giziibiigin!—Wash h/h by hand!

Bamenim!—Care for h/h!

Amo!  –amw–  —Eat him/her!

Zaagi’!—Love him/her!

Mikaw!—Find h/h!

**Niiswi—3**

**IKIDOWIN ODAMINOWIN**

(Word play)

**Down:**

1. You are hungry.
2. in the direction of
3. S/he counts him/her.
4. They are hunting.
5. Eat him/her!

**Across:**

1. to the north
2. It is cool weather.
3. please
4. seek, look for

**Niizh—1**

OJIBWEMOWIN (Ojibwe Language)

- Long vowels: AA, EE, II, OO
- Waabooz— as in father
- Miiwin— as in jay
- Aaniin— as in seen
- Mgo— as in moon

- Short Vowels: A, I, O
- Dash—as in about
- Gi— as in t'n

- A glottal stop is a voiceless nasal sound as in A'aw.
- Respectfully enlist an elder for help in pronunciation and dialect differences.

**Niswi—5**

**NIWAMWIN**

Bezhig—1

Double vowel system of writing Ojibwemowin.

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- *Gidigimaa*—We all count h/h (pl).

- *Odigimaa*—You all count h/h (pl).

- *Gidigimaa*—They count h/h (pl).


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First learn root verbs that are in command form. Respectfully say *Daga*—Please. Add Animate—Living nouns.

- *Agim!*—Count him/her!

- *Nindigimaa*—I count h/h (them).

- *Gidigimaa*—You count h/h (pl).

- *Odigimaa*—She counts h/h (pl).

- *Nindigimaa*—We count h/h (pl).

- *Gidigimaa*—We all count h/h (pl).

- *Odigimaa*—You all count h/h (pl).

- *Gidigimaa*—They count h/h (pl).


**Niwin—4**

VTA Root Commands

1. **gi-**
2. **ag**
3. **O-**
4. **aawaan**
5. **Nin-**
6. **aa**
7. **Ga-**
8. **aa**
9. **Odaa-**
10. **aan**

**Translations:**

**Niizh—2**

A. Dagaayaa, daga biininge warinaagowak.
B. Ingii miinahitigigisikogisog. Miiwin. Biminew!
C. Ikwegew giiyosewag baapiikangamiziwinibogisog thwart.
E. Waawaashkeshiwin, bimewak. Miiwin.
F. Baashtkiizin, akandoiniwin, akandowin. Miiwin.
G. Gaanakii iigaagiwin, oozaa, oozaa. Miiwin.

**Niizh—3**

Down:

1. You are hungry.
2. in the direction of
3. S/he counts him/her.
4. They are hunting.
5. Eat him/her!

Across:

1. to the north
2. It is cool weather.
3. please
4. seek, look for

**Niisiw—4**

VTA Root Commands

1. **gi-**
2. **ag**
3. **O-**
4. **aawaan**
5. **Nin-**
6. **aa**
7. **Ga-**
8. **aa**
9. **Odaa-**
10. **aan**


**Mikwendaagoziwiwag ceremony**

Canoers prepare their boats for launch during the 2017 Mikwendaagoziwiwag Memorial ceremony. Over 400 people attended the ceremony, which included a four-mile paddle across Sandy Lake, a feast, and traditional Ojibwe observances in honor of the 1850 Ojibwe band members who suffered and died traveling to Sandy Lake, Minnesota to receive annuity distributions in 1850-51. Visitors came from as far as southern Wisconsin, California, even Puerto Rico to join tribal members and friends in remembering and reflecting on the sacrifices of Ojibwe ancestors. (P. Maday photo)

At its July meeting, the Voigt Intertribal Tribal Force (VITF) recognized John Gozdzialski on the occasion of his retirement from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Gozdzialski served the DNR since 1982, acting as the Northern Region’s Director since 2004. He worked closely with the VITF and its member Tribes on a variety of issues, and was instrumental in developing a consultation process to ensure tribal input when the State considers permits that have potential to impact manoomin in the Ceded Territory. Voigt representatives described Gozdzialski as acting with “integrity and honesty in his dealings with the Task Force, seeing to fully understand the Tribes’ perspectives and to generate effective, open dialogue on matters of mutual concern.” (PM photo)

**Wigwaas**

A load of confiscated birch poles.

(continued from page 7)

According to one forestry industry source: “One problem is that as birch trees age, they become a ‘risk tree’ from a timber perspective. A forester might ask: ‘will this 12-14” diameter birch tree decline in value if I don’t mark it for harvest now?’ Whereas a tribal member might say ‘this tree is growing nicely, I’ll come back in 5-10 years and check it out again.’ In general, birch trees within mixed stands are often marked for harvesting because they are usually seen as being at risk of losing their value.

In recent years, the market for wigwaasigaatog in the special forest products industry has skyrocketed. Used primarily for home and business décor, young size classes (≤ 35 inches) of birch are being targeted before they reach maturity. Birch saplings, twigs and even some larger trees are being harvested across the Ceded Territories.

Because this becomes a significant issue with widespread implications, a committee has formed, comprised of GLIFWC, the tribes, the WDNR, county foresters, the USFS, forest product businesses, foresters, researchers, to research the issue further and begin to help protect the already struggling small size classes of birch.

Given that wigwaasigaatog is already at a disadvantage (low recruitment, high harvest pressures), one would hope that the trees that do survive would grow into the larger diameter size classes. However, wigwaasigaatog is relatively short-lived when compared to other tree species. “Across most of their range, mature paper birch trees average 10-12 inches (23-30 cm) in trunk diameter (dbh) and 70 feet (21 m) in height. On the best sites occasional trees may reach 30 inches (75 cm) in diameter and 100 feet (30 m) in height” (Safford et al. 1990).

A changing climate provides additional pressures to wigwaaensig. Birch is considered a “high risk” species in various assessments meaning it is highly vulnerable to environmental stressors that come with a changing climate. Stressed trees also become more susceptible to disease and forest pest infestations. For example, the bronze birch borer, a beetle that targets already stressed or dying trees.

**What’s next?**

Within the Ceded Territories there is a need to research wigwaasigaatog regeneration, to identify locations with ideal environmental conditions to support wigwaasigaatog, and to implement harvest practices that facilitate birch regeneration. For example, it might be a good idea to target the clay plain around Lake Superior. A boreal forest, this landscape historically supported healthy wigwaasigaatog and may potentially be more resistant to a changing climate than other locations. If these “ideal locations” can be identified then we can work toward promoting large diameter birch on sites where they have a greater chance of survival.

Currently, GLIFWC has begun to learn more about what environmental conditions these “ideal locations” exhibit. In a project report titled: “Characterization of Sites Supporting Large Paper Birch in the 1836, 1837 and 1842 Ceded Territories,” GLIFWC Specialist Steve Garske collected TEK, potential canoe-birch locations and environmental characteristics to understand more about large birch growth conditions.

Project goals centered on learning more about the quantity, quality and distribution of wigwaasigaatog in the Ceded Territories and learning more about environmental conditions that are likely to support large, healthy trees. An example of the findings in this project include: “the largest birch trees in several of the sampled locations occurred on the edge of the woods and open areas such as road or power line corridors.”

Using this type of information we are continuing to work toward identifying more locations that contain the “ideal ecological characteristics” to support large diameter birch, managing the wigwaasigaatog that occur within these areas as well as offering silvicultural recommendations to preserve large “legacy birch trees.”

**Other Considerations:**

Under the best case scenario where we fully understand how to reduce limiting factors and manage for the most “desirable” birch, there are some questions worth considering: How many wigwaasigaatog should we manage for in the Ceded Territories?

As mentioned before, the Ojibwe have been described as the “first forest managers” because they understood ecological processes needed to regenerate the resources they harvested. This includes respectful harvest practices that didn’t compromise the resource as well as management techniques (such as fire) to help promote desired forest composition. Do we manage for pre-settlement amounts of wigwaasigaatog? Was this enough to fulfill the traditional needs of the Ojibwe?

12. Mladenoff, David J. Mladenoff with the Department of Forest Ecology and Management at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in a project titled: “Pre-European Settlement Vegetation of Wisconsin” found that pre-settlement data actually demonstrates that there was much less birch on the landscape, but that it existed in small patches when we consider a few different factors:

1. The climate was cooler.
2. The vegetation was more diverse.
3. The forests were small.

For more information or a list of referenced material, feel free to contact me at awmweb@glifwc.org.

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**GLIFWC interns**

(continued from page 17)

run and Camp Onji-Akiing. Megan said her favorite part about her internship is the hands-on experience that she has been given in this division. Her future goal is to become a game warden with GLIFWC.

**Planning and Development**

This year’s planning and development intern is Jordan Tabobondung, a graduate student at the University of Winnipeg. She is in the Masters of Development Practice: Indigenous Development program. She is a member of the Wasauksing Ojibwe ancestors. (P. Maday photo)

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**Public Information Office**

As for me, I am a Bad River tribal member, in my second year as public information office’s intern. This fall I will be a senior at the University of Wisconsin-Superior majoring in Elementary Education and minoring in early childhood. This summer I have been working on a lot of different things, writing articles, invoices, packing slips, and taking intern pictures. I had the pleasure of attending the Wisconsin American Indian Summer Institute in Crandon, WI during the first week of August. After finishing my schooling, I hope to come back home and teach in the elementary school. My favorite part about my internship has been helping Marvin Defoe build a canoe with Bad River youth.

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2. The vegetation was more diverse.
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For more information or a list of referenced material, feel free to contact me at awmweb@glifwc.org.
Mitiganabe on the run
Healing Circle connects eight Ojibwe communities

Annininindawenaangidong, mitiganabe nindzihinace. Greetings rela-
tives, my name is mitiganabe. Many of you that are more familiar with GLIFWC, know that I am one of the many sacred tools gifted to help Anishinaabeg. I am the tallest staff adorned with many miwigaajit (eagle feathers). Every miwigan has a beautiful story and meaning.

I am utilized by Anishinaabeg for many different purposes. Every year I attend the commission meetings, solstice feasts, Mikwendaagaawiziw ceremony and most recently, the Healing Circle Run. As it does every year, the Healing Circle Run kickoff ceremony began at Pipestone Creek on the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of the Chippewa Nation. The atimissingaana (pikes) were passed to acknowledge this journey and lives of spirit-
tuality. The first two days were made very easy as runners from Waawaawagoning (Lac du Flambeau) and Sokaogon (Mole Lake) picked up extra miles.

The community of Getegitiiganiing (Lac Vieux Desert) treated us to a won-
derful breakfast and the youth participants ran multiple miles through seemingly endless hills. For the first time in a long time, runners took me in hand and carried me to the very end. Despite my heaviness and inconvenient height, the runners raised me up proudly and eloquently.

Upon arriving to Miskwabekong (Red Cliff), we were anxious to meet new Red Cliff Tribal Leadership and to do ceremony right on Gichigami (Lake Superior). The following day would bring more anxiousness as we neared the community of Nagaajawaang (Fond du Lac). Nagaajawaang was very special this year as we participated in ceremony at the Minnesota Highway 23 site, which had been disturbed. Construction crews began refining a road and bridge on old burial sites, which left the Tribe in a vulner-
area.

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a area.

The day began with a celebration and offering to the Creator. Then, the community was able to offer prayers for the healing of the land. The ceremony ended with the laying of the sacred corn and the sharing of the feast.

Mitiganabe is the fourth in a series of spiritual gifts passed to GLIFWC around the turn of the century.

CO Rasmussen

Sharing culture & connections

(continued from page 1)

Today, communities are both pre-
serving and expanding the knowledge they have been blessed with. Bad River hosted a niibin gabeshiwin (summer camp) this past July which garnered needed to be done in this area to acknowledge our relatives that had been disturbed. It was truly beautiful to hear everyone acknowledge their ancestry and embed those places that had been made positively into the land.

The last leg of the relay always goes the fastest. We arrived at St. Croix and had a wonderful spaghetti dinner and the community youth drum sang some jammers. This truly a chance to participate in the heritage; it is a perfect place where good is given in time, someone else is having a ceremony and praying for you. We keep humanity in mind when our runners both run and participate in ceremony. I have an ability to evoke extreme emotion from those that hold onto me while we speak. I don’t allow people to speak from a script; I force them to speak from the heart. These ceremonies have a lot of healing power both physically and spiritually.

The 2017 Healing Circle Run has come and gone yet again. However we remember that everyday is a ceremony and a blessing. As a spiritual being, I love to remind people that we are always here for them. Use us, feast us, and never forget the pure love and good intentions we have for Anishinaabeg.

—Dylan Jennings

Sixty youth from the Ceded Territory and beyond gathered together to share culture and friendship during GLIFWC and the USFS’s Camp Onji-Aking July 17-21.
MAZINA'IGAN
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