



NURTURING THE LAND – WAHNAPITAE FIRST NATION

Presentation to the
Agricultural Round Table
– UOI

January 12, 2022

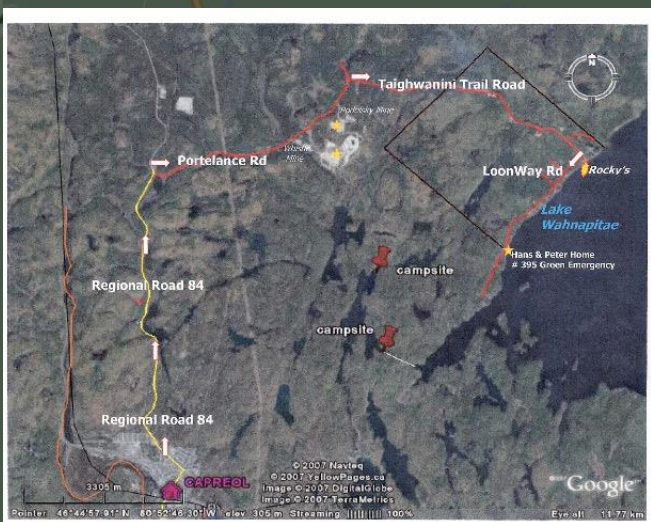
Fawn Pettifer

FAWN
PETTIFER –
WHO I AM



WHERE IS WAHNAPITAE FIRST NATION ON THE MAP

Wahnapiatae First Nation



Outline

History of Harm Done to our Lands

Nurturing the Land Project

4 years of Observation

Lessons Learned



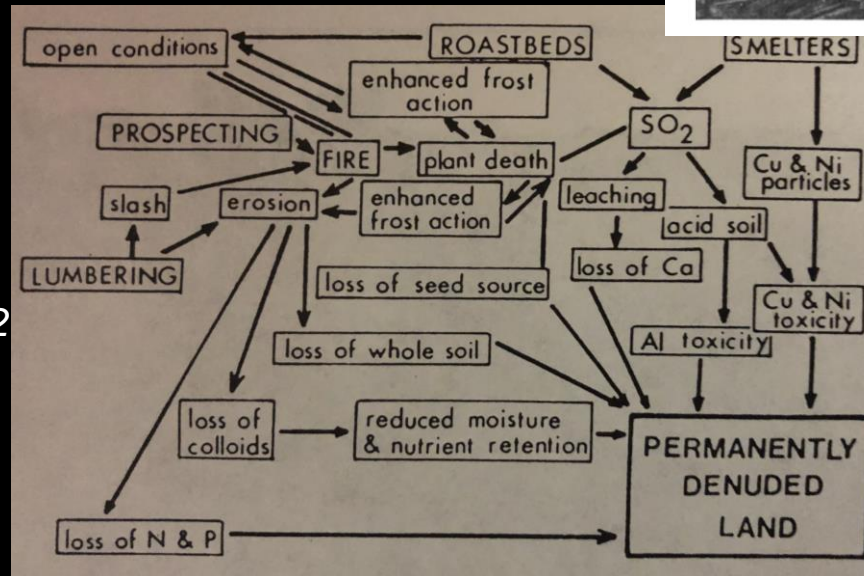
HISTORY OF HARM DONE TO THE LANDSCAPE FIRES AND LOGGING

- *Region opened up to lumbering in 1872*
- *Chicago fire exerts demands on Sudbury forests for lumber to rebuild (1879)*
- *Railroad diverted to the north of Bimitimigamasing Lake (Ramsey Lake) 1883*
- *First Roast Yard and Smelter 1888*

HISTORY OF HARM DONE TO LANDSCAPE - MINING

- Usage of Roast Beds – 1888 – 1929
- Usage of Smoke Stacks – 1929 – 1972
- Sudbury currently has 9 operating mines, 2 mills, 2 smelters and a nickel refinery (New Age Metals, September 10, 2021)

O'Donnell Roast Yard



History of the Harm Done to the Landscape

Effects on Climate – **Aerial Spraying, Insect Infestation**

1951-1980 (GUNN, 1995)

- Mean Temperature

Av. Temp in January: -12.3°C

Av. Temp. in July: 19.8 °C

Total precipitation average is 860 mm/yr

Total snowfall average is 250 cm

In 1965 – Reported Spruce BudWorm Infestation

NOW

- Temperatures are warming, precipitations increasing, milder winters due to global climate warming.
 - Foliage on trees look unhealthy, burnt
 - Sun displays a strange orange colour
 - Burn more easily when outdoors for too long
 - Many dead spruce in surrounding forest
 - Blue Algae growing in Lake Wahnapiatae
 - Strong winds – Wind Storms
 - Irregular Thunderstorms
-

GROWING HEALTHY FOOD PROJECT

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/
WATCH?APP=DESKTOP&V=V8_
5_PUWP2E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=v8_5_puwp2e)



Year One – Summer of 2014

BEFORE



AFTER



Observations

- When cultivating the foundation of the garden a bear came and danced happily in the garden and stayed around for hours and days at a time
- Birds, medicines and insects not noticed around the property before had become apart of the ecosystem
- There was a shortage of rainfall in the summer and I had to water the garden
- No support from leadership
- Ceremony was included only at the start of the project
- Held a workshop on property (20% of Community's population attended)
- Vegetation flourished and was much more larger and tastier than store-bought produce.
- I developed a relationship with the plants and other beings present
- Through the relationship I nurtured with the plants I realized that I needed to commit to my healing journey.



Year Two – Summer of 2015

- After a year of course work in a master's in Environmental Studies, I returned home to do a summer placement with Glencore in Falconbridge, ON (on the other side of Wahnapiatae Lake)
- The Bear came back and brought her cub. They lingered for weeks.
- Attended a two week Field Ethnobotany course under the tutelage of Robin Kimmerer in the Adirondacks in upstate New York, USA
- A moose came to the property
- I planted berry shrubs and witch hazel
- Designed and planted medicine garden
- I decided to allow the garden to grow without my aid
- No ceremony was conducted
- Focussed on Healing Methods for myself



OBSERVATIONS

- The vegetables didn't thrive
- Sunflowers flourished and attracted eight Bluejays in the Fall (male, female looking for new territory)
- Apple tree bore fruit
- Summer was hot and there was a time when we didn't receive rain for weeks at a time
- I noticed various bees and birds throughout the seasons

Year Three – Summer of 2016

BEFORE

- Attended Indigenous Farming Conference in Minnesota, US : March 2016
- Planted indigenous seeds
- Trip to Arizona – Attended a ceremonial conference in May 2016
- No ceremony on property
- Regular practice of giving tobacco and nurturing seeds and plants



OBSERVATIONS



- VEGETABLES WERE HUGE AND ABUNDANT
- WEATHER WAS COOPERATIVE
- BLUE GREEN ALGAE PRESENCE CONFIRMED IN LAKE WAHNAPITAE



Year Three – Summer of 2017

- Took on a job with the Band Office as Child and Youth Coordinator
- Implemented a 8 week 4 full day Summer Camp Program
- Deer came and stayed around the property for weeks
- No ceremony

OBSERVATION S



LESSONS LEARNED

We share a symbiotic relationship with Mother Earth

We need to heal ourselves first before we can heal others including Mother Earth

We have the power to effect change independently from Indigenous and non-Indigenous governance

Even a small change can make a difference

