



Omushkego Wahkohtowin: A Path Forward



Preamble: A Declaration of Responsibility

We, the Omushkego people, stand upon the lands and waters of our ancestors. We acknowledge our inherent responsibility as caretakers of this sacred territory. We inherit a legacy of deep connection to the land and a profound understanding of its intricate balance. We have witnessed the disruption of our homelands, the threats to our way of life, and the imbalance that threatens all life. We therefore pledge to reclaim our role, to assert our rights, and to forge a path forward based on the wisdom of our elders, the strength of our unity, and the power of Wahkohtowin (relationships).

Our Core Beliefs:

Wahkohtowin as Our Guiding Light: We embrace Wahkohtowin, recognizing that everything is interconnected and interdependent. We commit to fostering harmonious relationships between all living beings and the natural world.

Indigenous Sovereignty and Leadership: We are the rightful stewards of our homelands. We will exercise our inherent rights to self-determination, ensuring that all decisions regarding our lands and waters are rooted in Omushkego laws, values and knowledge.

The Sacredness of Land and Water: We understand that the land and water are not merely resources; they are the foundations of our culture, our spirituality, and our very existence. We pledge to protect them for present and future generations.

The Power of Unity: We recognize that our strength lies in our unity. By working collaboratively among our Nations, and with our partners, we can achieve our shared vision of a thriving and resilient future.

Intergenerational Responsibility: We understand that the choices we make today will have profound impacts on our children and their children. We pledge to act with foresight, ensuring that the legacy we leave behind is one of stewardship and balance.

Our Commitment:

Protect and Conserve: We will establish a network of protected and conserved traditional territories to safeguard our ecological and cultural heritage. We will expand our guardianship over these lands and waters.

Restore Ecosystem Health: We will use both our traditional knowledge and Western science to heal damaged ecosystems and address the root causes of environmental degradation.

Strengthen Governance: We will build strong, Indigenous-led governance structures that uphold our laws, our rights and enhance our capacity to manage our homelands.

Cultivate Economic Sustainability: We will develop a diverse and sustainable economy rooted in our values, creating opportunities that support our well-being and resilience, while honouring our traditions.

Nurture Cultural Revitalization: We will prioritize the transmission of our culture, language, and traditions from Elders to youth. We will ensure that our cultural heritage remains a vital part of our lives.

Promote Community Well-being: We will prioritize the health and well-being of our communities through initiatives that strengthen food security, access to healing and wellness programs, and build capacity for self-determination.

Foster Partnerships: We will engage in partnerships founded on respect, mutual understanding and collaborative processes. We will encourage our allies to recognize and support our rights and our vision.

Lead with Courage and Vision: We will be courageous in facing the challenges ahead. We will remain steadfast in our commitment to this vision, guiding us toward a better future for our people and the world.

Our Call to Action:

This declaration is a call to action. It is a commitment to work diligently toward the vision of Wahkohtowin. We invite all who share our commitment to join us in this vital endeavour.

Together, we will:

- Embrace our responsibility as caretakers of our lands and waters.
- Honour the wisdom of our ancestors and learn from their teachings.
- Act with courage, conviction, and a deep love for our homelands.
- Build a future where our communities, our culture, and our ecosystems thrive in balance.
- Show the world the power of Wahkohtowin, a vision of interconnectedness and sustainability, for all who call this earth home.

This declaration serves as a reminder of the task ahead. It aims to capture the spirit of the Omushkego Wahkohtowin Conservation Plan, and to provide inspiration for action and advocacy.