

Wanuskewin Key Messages

UNESCO World Heritage designation:

- Wanuskewin is a 6,400 year old gathering place
- Every single nation indigenous to the Northern Plains was present here
- No other location in the world contains the combination of heritage resources that are found here – we have bison jumps, habitation sites, tipi rings and the Northern-most Medicine Wheel in the Great Plains
- Wanuskewin is the longest-running archaeological research project in Canadian history
- We are aiming for designation in 2022; however, it is a complicated international process and there could be delays

Bison:

- Wanuskewin is preparing for the return of the bison
- We are hoping to welcome them back to their ancestral home within the year
- Wanuskewin is working with the Parks Canada system and the animals will come from Grasslands or Elk Island
- The first animals to return will be six female calves. The herd will eventually grow to 50 animals over the next decade.

Han Wi:

- Han Wi Moon Dinner is an immersive culinary experience that connects you to the land and stories of Wanuskewin
- Han Wi means “moon” in the Dakota language
- This transformative experience includes a guided walk through the valley, curated meal prepared by Wanuskewin’s Executive Chef Kirk Borhardt with guest Chef Jenni Shrenk with foods foraged from Opimihaw Valley, and stories told by Dakota Storyteller Curtis Standing

Construction:

- This is an ambitious renewal that we expect to have completed in 2020
- Infrastructure rejuvenation is being done in phases, and we will reveal improvements to the public as each section is finished
- Wanuskewin will remain open throughout construction and is doing our best to ensure a smooth transition
- Visitors are encouraged to call ahead if they have questions or concerns about access
- We are offering robust public programming throughout the summer and we encourage people to visit.

Guide to the Indigenous cultural sharing and learning activities as part of the Global Water Futures 2nd Annual Open Science Meeting
May 15, 2019



Welcome and Introduction to Wanuskewin Heritage Park

Upon arrival at Wanuskewin, GWF annual science meeting participants will be served lunch - shaved bison Bannock sandwiches – and welcomed with greetings and an introduction to the cultural, historical, and spiritual significance of the site.

Wanuskewin Brief

If you had been standing on the banks of Opimihaw Valley ten thousand years ago, you would have watched a mile high sheet of ice and snow receding towards the horizon - the Wisconsinan glaciation. A braided river system shaped the landscape, and when the South Saskatchewan River dug deeper in its trench, it left a narrow Opimihaw Creek flowing through a wide valley. This valley has been continuously occupied from the moment it became available for human habitation, and was by nearly every cultural group Indigenous to the Northern Plains region. This is Wanuskewin, a 6,400 year-old gathering place on the edge of Saskatoon, in Treaty 6 Territory and the traditional homeland of the Métis. Today, contemporary Indigenous nations affirm the significance of Wanuskewin for its archaeological record, living history, and recognition as a sacred place.

Darlene Brander

Darlene Brander's career has included progressively responsible positions with not-for-profit organizations, gaming institutions, municipal governments and First Nations organizations. She is now the Chief Executive Officer of Wanuskewin Heritage Park, an internationally acclaimed northern plains Indigenous interpretive site that is home to more than 6,400 years of history. A Band Member of the Red Earth Cree First Nation, Darlene holds a Bachelor of Education Degree from the University of Saskatchewan as well as a Chartered Professional in Human Resources designation. An active community member, Brander sits on several boards including, Chair of the Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners, the Canadian Association of Police Governance, and serves on the Board of the Nutrien Wonderhub, a children's discovery museum in Saskatoon.



Candace Wasacase-Lafferty

Candace Wasacase-Lafferty, is a citizen of the Kahkewistahaw First Nation, and the Senior Director, Indigenous Engagement at the University of Saskatchewan. Her role provides oversight and leadership of the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre. This Centre is designed to be a place of ceremony, student success, reconciliation and cross campus and community engagement. Ms. Wasacase-Lafferty is also the Chair of the Board of Wanuskewin Heritage Park, which works to advance understanding and appreciation of the Northern Plains Indigenous peoples.



Elder Roland Duquette

Elder Roland Duquette is very much an independent community Elder, doing talks and requested ceremonies for many service groups, organizations, Wanuskewin, and the University of Saskatchewan. In 2005 he walked 975 miles as part of the Saskatchewan Walk for Health, and this memorable journey is featured in the book *Walk the Talk* by Cliff Shockey. Roland is originally from Mistawasis, but currently lives in Saskatoon.

What's Happening in the Saskatchewan River Delta

The Saskatchewan River Delta is the largest inland freshwater delta in North America, with an area of about 10,000 km², and it provides vitally important habitat and spawning areas for fish, mammals, migratory birds and other wildlife. It once teemed with wildlife, however, the Delta is a very sensitive environment and in recent decades it has been undergoing dramatic change and decline in the wildlife populations. Gary and Karen Carriere, from Cumberland House, Saskatchewan, will explain the changes they have witnessed here over time and how this has affected their traditional way of life. “The Delta has sustained and fed our People for years, and now the animals are in jeopardy”, said Gary, who has been a fisher and trapper here throughout his life. “I feel that I must speak for the Delta and be its voice, and share the story of what's happening here”, he said.

Gary and Karen, along with their daughter, Bianca Carriere, and family friend Clara Cook, will share their experience with the group and will prepare samples of some of the local food that the Delta provides, including Walleye, a traditional food for the Cree People in the Delta. Participants will be able to try these foods and experience a taste of these staples that have sustained local Indigenous Peoples and their culture for many generations.



Gary Carriere

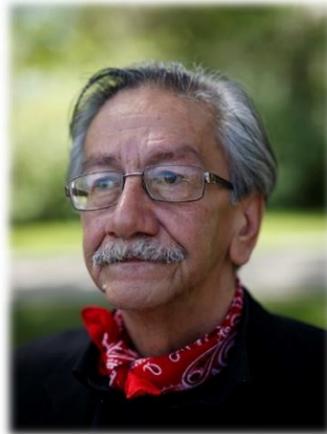
Gary Carrier grew up on the land and water of the Saskatchewan River. He operates a hunting and fishing lodge called Mystik Lodge within the Delta near Cumberland House. He has brought hundreds, if not thousands of people into the Delta to experience this incredible place, that most people even in Saskatchewan had never heard about. His passion for the Delta has led to documentary films, Canadian and National Geographic Articles that have been seen by hundreds of thousands of people. He has been supporting scientific investigations in the delta for over 35 years, documenting the changes to flows, sedimentation, and impacts to animals upon which Swampy Cree culture depends. In 2015, he gave a keynote presentation to the University of Saskatchewan Senior Leadership Forum; he received a standing ovation and there was not a dry eye among the University's leadership. In 2016, he traveled with the Delta Display, connecting people in the Saskatchewan, Peace and Slave River Deltas to decision makers in Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories. He is a living example of what is possible through collaborative efforts toward reconciliation. “If the animals are healthy the people will be healthy”.

Past, Present and Future Buffalo Consciousness on the Northern Great Plains

“Since time immemorial, hundreds of generations of the first peoples of the FIRST NATIONS of North America have come and gone since before and after the melting of the glaciers that covered North America. For all those generations BUFFALO has been our relative. BUFFALO is part of us and WE are part of BUFFALO culturally, materially, and spiritually. Our on-going relationship is so close and so embodied in us that Buffalo is the essence of our holistic eco-cultural life-ways.” – THE BUFFALO: A TREATY OF COOPERATION, RENEWAL AND RESTORATION



Articles of the Buffalo Treaty are provided as a separate document, and here Anthony Johnston will share stories and describe the importance of Buffalo to the culture and traditional life of the North Plains Indigenous Peoples.

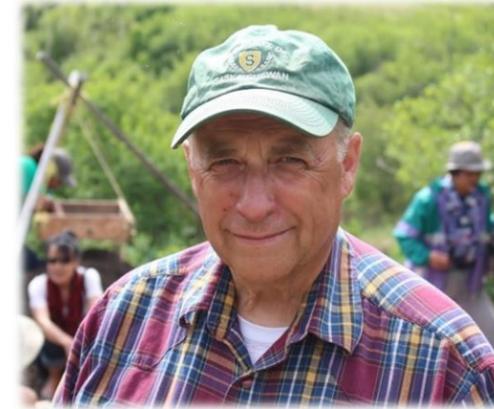


Anthony Blair Dreaver Johnston

Anthony Blair Dreaver Johnston, a member of Mistawasis Nêhiyawak, is the great-great-great grandson of Chief Mistawasis, who was the first Chief to sign Treaty No. 6 in 1876. He has a BA in History from the University of Manitoba and worked for the Province of Manitoba and the Federal Government in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. He currently works on special projects for Mistawasis Nêhiyawak, and serves as Indigenous Mentor to the School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS) at the University of Saskatchewan. In 2016-17 he worked to complete a Memorandum of Understanding between the First Nation and SENS.

Archeological activities and historical significance of Wanuskewin

Wanuskewin Heritage Park is home to Canada’s longest continuously running archaeological research project with archaeological excavations taking place in the Opimihaw Creek Valley since 1982. Nineteen pre-contact sites were discovered by Dr. Ernie Walker dating as far back as 6400 years and chronicle the presence of nearly every group native to the Northern Plains since that time within the Opimihaw Creek Valley. A wide variety of sites including camping areas, bison jumps, tipi rings, and the northernmost medicine wheel on the Plains makes the valley a unique place. These sites are excavated under the direction of Dr. Walker with the University of Saskatchewan’s Archaeology and Anthropology Department since their discovery. Wolf Willow is the ninth site to be excavated and is where current excavations are taking place. Wolf Willow is a pre-contact campsite in the bottom of the valley dating back 4400 years, occupied most recently 500 some years ago. Come and explore what an archaeology site looks like in the midst of an excavation with Dr. Walker and his associates, and learn about the long history of the people and the land on which we live today.



Dr. Ernie Walker

Ernie Walker, an archeologist and anthropologist, was instrumental in the establishment of Wanuskewin Heritage Park. Born in Saskatoon and educated at the Universities of Saskatchewan and Texas, he has pursued a two-pronged career in prehistoric research and forensic science. Walker’s research has focused on North American prehistory in the northern plains and American southwest.

Co-operation with First Nations Elders and authorities, who have named him Miyo Peyasew (Red Thunderbird) and an Honorary Chief characterize Walker’s archeological work in Saskatchewan. Walker began excavations at Wanuskewin, 5 km north of Saskatoon, in 1982 and was a major force behind the establishment of the area as a park in 1992. He is also noted specifically for his knowledge of Aboriginal prehistoric burial grounds and of human reaction to climate change over the millennia.

Walker is frequently consulted by police agencies for forensic investigation of human skeletal remains involved in homicides or suspicious deaths. He is a Supernumerary Special Constable with the RCMP, and a Saskatchewan coroner. A Distinguished Professor at the University of Saskatchewan, Walker is a recipient of the Saskatchewan Order of Merit (2001) and a Member of the Order of Canada.

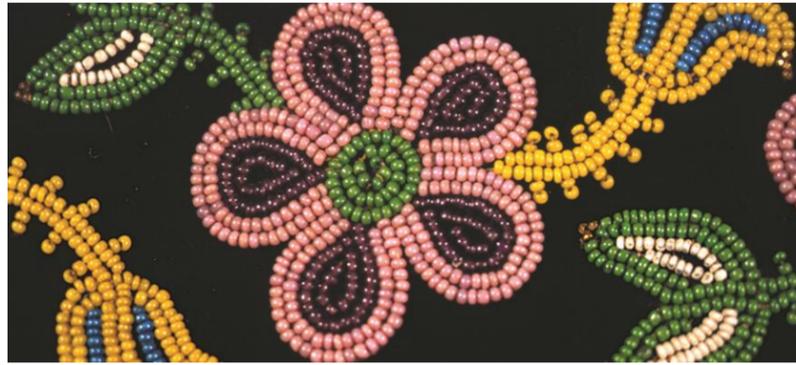
Powwow Demonstrations

The Powwow is a celebration of First Nations culture and dancing occurring in both Canada and the United States. At powwows you will see many different styles of dance, all to the beat of the drum. The drum, within First Nations culture, is alternatively referred to as the “heartbeat of Mother Earth”, and it possess a power to uplift all those who can hear its sound. As it reminds each and everyone of us of the heartbeat of our own mothers and the time we spent in the womb. The dancers are taught to make movements in time with the drumbeat while demonstrating their own unique style of dance. For this powwow presentation, we will see four different types of dance being demonstrated; the Men’s Chicken by TJ Warren, Ladies Traditional by Kimowan Ahenakew, Ladies Jingle from Randi-Lynn Nanehmahoo-Candline, Ladies Traditional Fancy by Brianna Turner, as well as a Hoop Dance by Lawrence Roy Jr., all to the beat of the drum from Kalyn and Elmer Tootosis. Each dance style at powwows tells its own story, emphasizing the contemporary and historical ideologies and cultures of First Nations people on the Northern Plains.



Arts, Crafts and Connections

Designing with beads took off during the trade era with Europeans and has remained a preferred technique of craft and design with First Nations artists. You can often tell what region or cultural group an artist is from based on their style of beadwork. Often families pass down their patterns from generation to generation.



Cree beadwork – Florals Dakota

Birch Bark Biting

Birchbark biting is literally what it sounds like – biting birch. It is an art form that involves biting designs into a thin strip of birch bark. The birch bark biting design is done by folding the bark into different sections and then using the eye tooth to create designs. The best analogy for this is when you fold a piece of paper and cut away at it with scissors to create a paper snowflake. Once birch bark bitings are complete they should be put in the window. Once light shines through the thin birch bark the designs can be most appreciated. It is almost like looking at stain glass. “Nature’s stain glass”



Dakota beadwork – Geometric



Elder Linklater (left) with Saskatoon Mayor Charlie Clark and Florence Highway

Elder Evelyn Linklater

Elder Evelyn Linklater’s early years were spent in Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan, and on the trap-line with her grandparents. They always spoke Cree together. She was taken away from that beautiful life to Residential School in her younger years, but still has profound memories of that time with her grandparents and has kept her Cree language alive. Elder Evelyn Linklater is a spiritual, Wisdom-filled, family orientated leader and Elder. She is a Certified Nurse’s Aide, a Kookum (grandmother), and a Chapan (great grandmother). A member of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, she often travels with her life-long friend, Elder Florence Highway. Their mothers were well respected Elders and also life-long best friends on the trap-line and in the community. They provide blanket teaching seminars and were invited across Canada to provide their special Nithowisweewalk (knee dough wheeze we walk) wisdom, humor, and kindness in presenting diabetes education.



Elder Florence Highway (right) with Evelyn Linklater at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Elder Florence Highway

Elder Florence Highway is a Cree Artist. Her beaded work, “Treaties Forever” hangs in the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, where in 2006 there was a special ceremony to recognize the special relationship between First Nations and government of Saskatchewan. This recognition of the significance of the Treaties was made by acceptance of the gifts made by Elder Highway, and moved by then Premier, Lorne Calvert. Elder Florence Highway is a trailblazing woman and a fighter! The pain and anguish of Residential School eventually lead her to the path of social work and she has twenty-seven years of experience in that field. Elder Florence Highway and Elder Evelyn Linklater are both Elders for the Saskatoon Urban Centre with the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre and provided support to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and currently sit on the Aboriginal Elders’ Advisory Group for the Saskatoon City Police and contributed to “From Truth to Reconciliation, The Way Forward, Participant Guide”.

Smudging

The burning of various medicine plants to make a smudge or cleansing smoke is used by the majority of Native North American peoples. It is a ritual cleansing. As the smoke rises, our prayers rise to the Spirit World where the Grandfathers and our Creator reside. Negative energy, feelings, and emotions are lifted away. It is also used for healing of mind, body and spirit, as well as balancing energies. Our Elders teach us that all ceremonies must be entered into or begun with good intent. So many of us use the smudge as a symbolic or ritual cleansing of mind, body, spirit and emotion. The smell of the burning medicines stimulates our brains to produce beta-endorphins, which are part of the normal healing process of our bodies. Smudging may also be used to cleanse, purify and bless the part of our Mother, the Earth which we utilize in seeking after the spiritual. For example: around the area used for sweatlodge or powwow. It may also be used to purify or bless special objects or totems, such as jewelry, rattles, clothing or other ceremonial objects. It is a customary to cleanse, (brush or wash the smoke) over our eyes, ears, mouth, hands, heart and body. Some people choose to brush it over their backs, to 'lighten their troubles'. It is customary to use matches to light the medicines, when available.

Sage: Is seen as a women's medicine, and offers strength, wisdom, and clarity of purpose. It is used to symbolize the life-giving power of women.

Cedar: Is used for purification and to attract positive energy, feelings, emotions and for balance. Cedar tea has been used as a healing medicine. It's high vitamin C content was essential to the prevention of scurvy, in a time when fruits and vegetables were unavailable during the long winter months. It was one of the first gifts of natural healing shared with the European peoples upon their arrival to Turtle Island (North America).

Sweetgrass: It is a ritual cleansing. The smoke rises, as our prayers rise above us to our Creator, the Grandfathers, and the Spirit World. Sweetgrass was one of the four original "medicine plants" given by the Creator to the first peoples.

Tobacco: Traditional tobacco is a medicine, which can be used in a prescribed way to promote physical, spiritual, emotional, and community well-being. It may be used as an offering to the Creator or to another person, place, or being. A gift of traditional tobacco is a sign of respect and may be offered when asking for help, guidance, or protection. Traditional tobacco is sometimes used directly for healing in traditional medicine. It may be burned in a fire or smoked in a pipe, yet the smoke is generally not inhaled.