



## Bonnechere River Watershed Project

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# Final Report

## Sustainability Network: 2011 Environment & Diversity Mini-Grant

### Why diversity is important to the BRWP

In keeping with its mission to inform and influence environmental stewardship and enhancement throughout the Bonnechere watershed, the Bonnechere River Watershed Project (BRWP) has been engaging with a diversity of local government, residents and stakeholders including the Algonquins of the Pikwakanagan First Nation and the Algonquin Cultural Centre Omàmiwininì Pimàdjowin at the head of Golden Lake on the Bonnechere River. Over the previous three years, Council members and staff had attended three BRWP consultation events and participated in a number of research interviews on environmental governance.

The purpose of Environment & Diversity mini grant was to enhance the engagement between the BRWP and the Algonquins of the Pikwakanagan First Nation community within the Bonnechere River watershed to help raise awareness of environmental issues of mutual interest and concern and to address environmental degradation. The desired outcome was to establish a relationship of mutual respect, trust and collaboration in relation to environmental awareness and stewardship, particularly now as we are challenged to develop adaptation strategies to deal with impending environmental effects of a changing climate. The Algonquins of Pikwakanagan are concerned about protecting water quality and the integrity of the few free flowing rivers and river reaches in Renfrew County and have demonstrated a willingness to engage with the BRWP. The funding enabled that to occur to a greater degree through support for local water quality monitoring, involvement of aboriginal performers of storytelling and dance, visual artists and environmental advisors and engagement with youth.

### Summary of Progress Achieved:

The specific objectives of the grant were:

- **Enhanced engagement** with the Algonquins of the Pikwakanagan First Nation at the outflow of Golden Lake on the Bonnechere River,
- **Environmental awareness building** including through the visual and performing arts,
- **Local water quality monitoring**,
- **Participation in the *Nature in Your Neighbourhood* initiative**, including a TVCogeco cablevision/YouTube series, and
- **Outreach to youth** through field excursions within the Bonnechere River watershed.

The summary of progress achieved for each objective is as follows:

- **Enhanced engagement**

As a partner in the grant, the Algonquin Cultural Centre Omàmiwininì Pimàdjowin (OP) provided a display at the BRWP public sharing event in April 2011 in Eganville, ON.

The OP also advertised in their newsletter for a commission from the grant budget for a visual art work to be displayed at the BRWP public sharing event in April and a watershed exhibition with the South of 60 Arts Centre in Barry's Bay in June, but was unsuccessful in finding someone. In lieu, the OP was able to organize an exhibition of artwork by a local native artist as part of the BRWP public sharing event. As a result, the art commission budget was re-allocated to the local water quality monitoring following a discussion with the SN grant officer.

Based on the recommendation of the OP, an Algonquin elder attended the BRWP public sharing event in April 2011 in Eganville, ON, to provide a welcome on behalf of the Algonquin First Nation, a smudging, a display and explanation of his "bundle", and a presentation on the history and importance of free-flowing rivers and reaches in our region, particularly for the conservation of the endangered American eel. The elder also attended a rendezvous in September organized by the BRWP with the Ottawa River Keeper at the confluence of the Bonnechere and Ottawa Rivers (more details below).

With grant funding, *Aboriginal Experiences* (a native dance troupe from Ottawa) was hired to perform the Water Woman story, a demonstration of Pow Wow dances and to lead a friendship dance with the 45 people in attendance at the evening portion of the BRWP public sharing event in April 2011 in Eganville, ON.

In early October, the BRWP chair attended a medicine wheel ceremony by an Algonquin elder and a book signing with the author of "The Ancestors are Arranging Things: A story on the Algonkin Trail" (2011 Borealis Press, Ottawa), with a portion of the book sales going to support the work of the OP.

- **Environmental awareness building**

With grant support, the BRWP was able to have a booth at the Pow Wow on the Pikwakanagan reserve in mid August with a focus on the RiverWatch 2010 report and engagement in the Nature in Your Neighbourhood initiative, a partnership between BRWP and the Ottawa River Institute.

As noted above, an Algonquin elder attended the BRWP public sharing event in April and a BRWP rendezvous in early September with the Ottawa River Keeper as her Great River Project expedition paddled past the confluence of the Ottawa and Bonnechere Rivers. There were about 25 people in attendance including the Mayor of the local township and the local newspaper (article attached). Activities included a blessing of the waters with sacred medicine, a smudging of the gathering, a drumming circle, a discussion of environmental issues and a shoreline lunch prepared by the local township community centre ladies auxiliary and sweet corn from a local farm.

In November, the chair as an environmental advisor for the BRWP presented on climate change at Pikwakanagan as part of a Nature in Your Neighbourhood series in partnership with the five municipal libraries and the Ottawa River Institute.

- **Local water quality monitoring**

With support from the grant, biweekly sampling of water quality in the Bonnechere River was conducted from June through October at the bridge crossing at the Pikwakanagan reserve on Golden Lake by the BRWP RiverWatch coordinator and a researcher from Carleton University in Ottawa. The results will be shared in early 2012.

A field trip was held in mid August on the Bonnechere River with the staff of the Pikwakanagan water department, the Pikwakanagan EarthWalkers (4 youths age 15-18 plus their coordinator), the Renfrew County Stewardship Rangers (4 youths aged 17 plus their Ontario Ministry of Nature Resources coordinator and her

manager), the Carleton University researcher and the BRWP RiverWatch Coordinator, environmental advisor and Golden Lake steward to build and demonstrate a watershed model of the Bonnechere watershed, discuss the Nature in Your Neighbourhood (*NYN*) initiative and to identify sites important to those attending, and to conduct a benthic assessment and water quality sampling as part of the BRWP RiverWatch program. The activities were videoed by the *NYN* coordinator and clips posted on the BRWP and ORI websites and YouTube (more details follow). The event was also covered by the local paper, the Eganville Leader.

- **Participation in the *Nature in Your Neighbourhood (NYN)* initiative**

Through the partnership with the OP, the BRWP participated in a morning program in early July on water conservation awareness with the Pikwakanagan child day camp (20 kids plus their teacher), an OP youth intern and the EarthWalkers (4 teens plus their coordinator) at the beach on the reserve on Golden Lake focused on building and demonstrating a model of the Bonnechere River watershed, stream assessment using benthics, and identification of sites of importance from a *NYN* perspective. The activities were videoed by the *NYN* Coordinator and youth videographer with clips posted on the BRWP and ORI websites and YouTube and for inclusion in the *NYN* series with TVCogeco for broadcasting this season.

The BRWP chair, *NYN* coordinator and youth videographer also interviewed and videoed at the EarthWalkers work day in July at the elders residence on the reserve with clips posted on the BRWP and ORI websites and YouTube and for inclusion in the *NYN* series with TVCogeco for broadcasting this season.

Video interviews were also conducted by the BRWP chair and *NYN* youth videographer for the TVCogeco series during the traditional Algonquin Pow Wow on the reserve in August with a council member on wildlife management and an elder on traditional attire and ceremonial practices.

In part because of the partnership with the OP, the BRWP chair attended two “Footprints in Time” trail workshops in late October hosted by the OP and the Friends of the Bonnechere Provincial Parks, one at the Bonnechere Provincial Park and a second on the Pikwakanagan reserve. *FIT* trails are designed to enhance the interpretative value of outdoor spaces, especially walking and hiking trails, and feature interpretation of the natural and cultural heritage of the area including Algonquin First Nation teachings.

- **Outreach to youth**

As noted above, the BRWP engaged with Algonquin children and youth during the summer through the day camp program, the EarthWalker program, field excursions for the *NYN* initiative, watershed modelling and environmental assessment using benthics and water chemistry.

In November, the BRWP provided support from the grant for a half-day program with 25 native studies students, their teacher and aboriginal tutor at Opeongo High School. The program included a teaching and feasting with an Algonquin drummer for the drum that had been made by students in the previous year and a presentation by a BRWP environmental advisor on BRWP activities including the Sustainability Network grant, the RiverWatch program being conducted in collaboration with Carleton University and the *NYN* initiative and on-line community mapping tool being conducted in collaboration with the Ottawa River Institute and Ryerson University.

With funding from the grant, the OP A/Executive Director and the BRWP RiverWatch coordinator were able to register for a weekend residential workshop organized by *Waterlution* ([www.waterlution.org/workshops](http://www.waterlution.org/workshops)) entitled “One Watershed, Many Voices: The Ottawa River and Transboundary Challenges” as part of its Future of Water Workshop Series 2011. Unfortunately, the OP A/ED was unable to attend due to illness. The workshop aims to build capacity of current and future leaders aged 18-35 years to design sustainable solutions

to transboundary water issues such as those in the Ottawa River watershed of which the Bonnechere River is a tributary.

## **How diversity will foster a more effective environmental movement**

There is an active land claim by the Algonquins underway throughout the Ottawa River watershed which includes the Bonnechere. It is thus even more important for the BRWP to actively engage with the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan at this time to be more effective in advancing environmental awareness, addressing environmental degradation and promoting stewardship and as we attempt to develop adaptation strategies for dealing with environmental effects of climate change.

A Diversity Committee was formed to guide the BRWP diversity initiative comprised of Kathryn Lindsay (BRWP chair, diversity champion, environmental advisor), Cheryl Keetch (Ottawa River Institute, BRWP and NYN Co-ordinator) and Michele Gervais (A/Executive Director, Omàmiwininì Pimàdjowin - The Algonquin Way Cultural Centre, Pikwakanagan). In October, the A/Executive Director of the OP agreed to join the BRWP Board.

As the Diversity champion, the BRWP chair attended two Sustainability Network workshops in Toronto as a condition of the grant: the grantee workshop in mid June at the Brickworks and the diversity in environmental governance workshop at Ryerson University in November. The latter workshop helped articulate the community served by the BRWP, including the Algonquin First Nation and non-native residents, rural and urban residents, year-round and seasonal residents, young to old, and various sectoral interests particularly farming, forestry, power generation, outdoor recreation and tourism. The need for representation of this diversity is recognized in the BRWP strategic plan and has been achieved in earlier Boards. A summary of the results of the diversity survey undertaken by the BRWP as a condition of the grant (through Google surveys as suggested by the grant officer) is attached. Respondents generally thought that the BRWP was reasonably diverse for this rural area. Working on engaging business, more youth and the First Nations community was seen as important. The recent addition of the A/ED of the OP, largely as an outcome of the current grant, is an important step on the latter two.

## **Documenting and Sharing Lessons Learned**

Key project participants were surveyed by email to document lessons learned. The need to re-evaluate commissioning local aboriginal artists as a form of engagement was noted. The OP valued that the BRWP was an active partner, someone they were comfortable with, could trust to work with and an excellent partner to assist the OP with interpreting environmental information in their project to develop a FIT trail on the reserve.

In terms of sharing, many of the excursions and activities facilitated by the grant were covered by local media (scans attached), have been videoed and shared via the BRWP website, YouTube and Facebook pages and will be included in the NYN TVCogeco cablevision/YouTube series for broadcast this season.

The BRWP public sharing event in April was attended by a total of 85 people including four mayors and the local MPP. The slide presentation and summary report of the event have been posted to the BRWP website. Event evaluations indicated that most of those responding found the format informative, engaging and entertaining and greatly appreciated the inclusion of the science and the visual and performing arts, the past, present and future perspectives, and inclusion of the Algonquin First Nations.

Results of the stream assessment and water quality sampling will be posted on the BRWP website as soon as they are available and submitted for publication in the scientific literature by Carleton University researchers.

All lessons learned will continue to be shared by the BRWP Chair, the *NYN* coordinator, the RiverWatch coordinator and via the BRWP/ORI websites, YouTube and Facebook pages as well as the Algonquin advisors and OP staff.

### **Next steps to continue diversity and inclusion efforts**

A first next step is to share and discuss with the BRWP Board, this report, the information from the environmental governance workshop and the results of the diversity survey (once available) as a precursor to formulating a plan of action to represent even better the community we aim to serve.

For example, the BRWP should endeavour to appoint and elect a more diverse set of Directors. This is a particular challenge in our area given our geographical extent, low population density and generally low levels of volunteerism in environmental stewardship.

We also need to try more diligently to conduct Board meetings in a manner that will reduce the need to travel (e.g. telecoms, net meetings) at the same time as acknowledging budget and IT limitations.

By engaging more actively on Facebook with recruitment of a youth coordinator or Director, we could hope to retain and increase the interest of youth and other users of the social network.

BRWP activities related to communication, education and awareness through the *Nature in Your Neighbourhood* initiative in partnership with the Ottawa River Institute will continue through 2012 which will include on-going broadcasts of the cablevision/YouTube series.

**Summary of the BRWP Diversity Survey** (attachment)

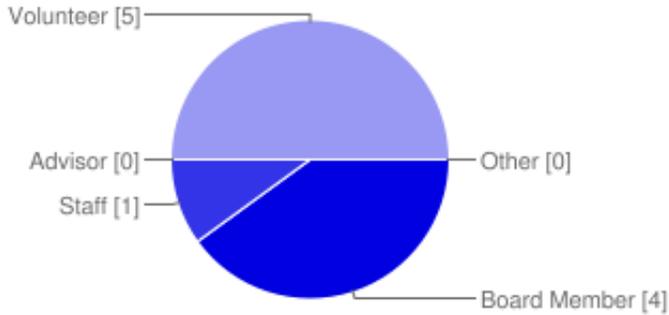
**Financial Report** (attachment)

**Scans of local media coverage** (attachment)

# 10 [responses](#)

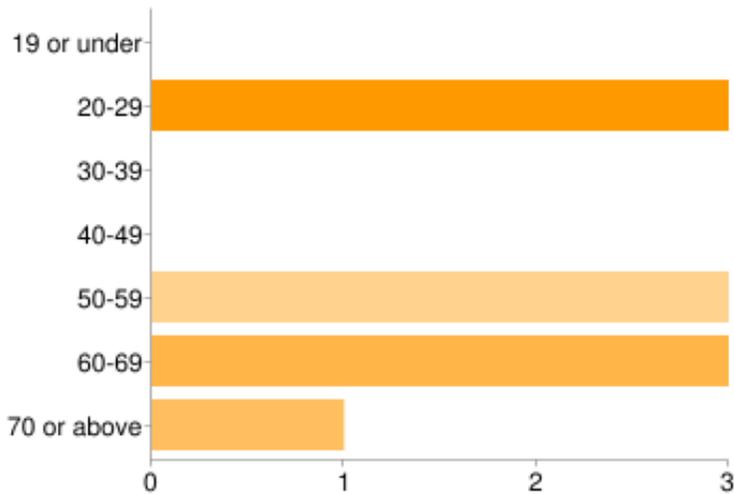
## Summary [See complete responses](#)

### Are you a(n)



Board Member	<b>4</b>	40%
Staff	<b>1</b>	10%
Advisor	<b>0</b>	0%
Volunteer	<b>5</b>	50%
Other	<b>0</b>	0%

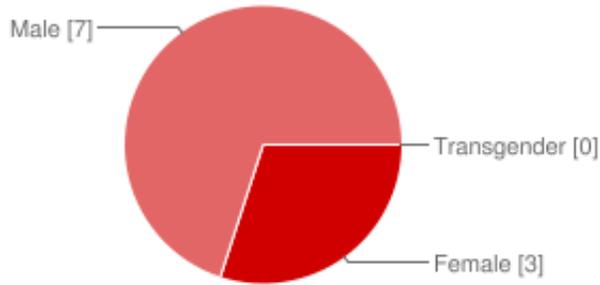
### To which age group do you belong



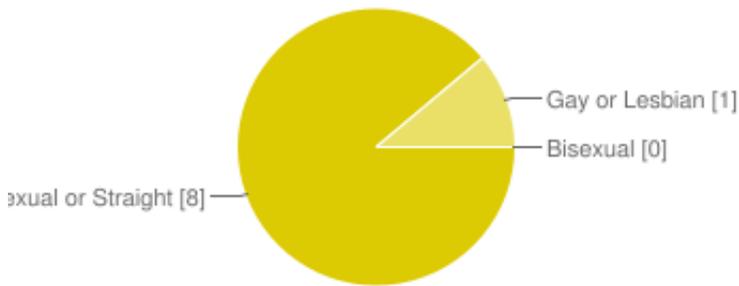
19 or under	<b>0</b>	0%
20-29	<b>3</b>	30%
30-39	<b>0</b>	0%
40-49	<b>0</b>	0%
50-59	<b>3</b>	30%
60-69	<b>3</b>	30%
70 or above	<b>1</b>	10%

### Are you:

Female	<b>3</b>	30%
Male	<b>7</b>	70%
Transgender	<b>0</b>	0%



**Do you consider yourself to be:**



Heterosexual or Straight	<b>8</b>	80%
Gay or Lesbian	<b>1</b>	10%
Bisexual	<b>0</b>	0%

**Please list which ethnic or cultural group(s) your ancestors belonged to and/or which ethnic or cultural groups you identify strongly with.**

Canadian Scottish Irish Scot/Irish Canadian, Scottish, Acadian French Canadian, Polish Canadian; English, Irish; French; Canadian Norwegian/Swedish French-Irish Canadian French-Irish Canadian

**Please list all the language(s) you can speak well enough to conduct a conversation.**

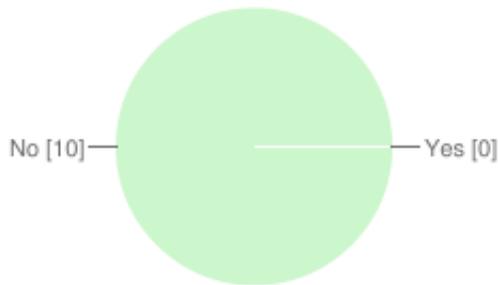
English English english English English English French English English English, French English, French

**What is/are your country(ies) of citizenship?**

Canada Canadian cdn Canada Canada Canada Canada Canada Canada Canada

**Are you, or have you ever been, a landed immigrant?**

Yes	<b>0</b>	0%
No	<b>10</b>	100%



**If you answered "Yes" to Question #2, please indicate the year you first became a landed immigrant.**

**What does diversity mean to you?**

Variations and inclusion of different types of people and things. Respecting others individuality variety or a full selection Representation of a wide range of interests and backgrounds valuing many different characteristics Acceptance, curiosity, opportunity, social fabric Diversity means people of different races, creeds, genders, age groups, and backgrounds coming together to work towards a common goal. accepting the differences of other law abiding citizens A diverse organization embraces ideas and participation from a wide range of people, from a broad spectrum of different genders, ethniciti ...

**Would you characterize our organization to be a diverse and inclusive organization? Why or why not?**

Our organization is a diverse as is possible for the geographical area. It includes members of different genders and ages. There are very few different cultures or ethnic groups to draw from in the area. Yes yes because although small in numbers, there is a variety of socio/ethnic background to all members Diverse and inclusive in principle but not in practice. Challenge of motivating and retaining rural residents. yes - has rep's of different genders, sexual orientation yes: includes First Nation groups, the gender rainbow, bigots and open-minded people. Bigots tend to go away. Yes I would bec ...

**What suggestions do you have for our organization to become a more diverse and inclusive organization?**

Approaching for inclusion into the organization, persons of different ethnic backgrounds and younger age groups. greater numbers would add to diversity Organize events to engage a greater diversity of backgrounds and interests as a strategy for recruiting volunteers and directors from the diversity in the community served. engage more youth Affirmative action around First Nations inclusion; remain open to the non-harmful activities of business, and engage businesses that do do harm, so they can hear the alternatives Find ways to communicate our desire to include everyone in watershed discussions, ...

**What would you like to learn more about regarding diversity?**

Age distribution of our County. What motivates different types of people to volunteer for environmental causes. Strategies for transcending the we/they diversity-stifling effects of business/environment agendas. We're all in this together! I enjoy hearing about different cultural customs and the history of families who have lived in the bonnechere for generations. Unsure. But I'll know it when I see it! Unsure. But I'll know it when I see it!

**Thank you for completing this survey! Please press the submit button below to ensure your answers are submitted.**

Welcome! ok.

