Hungry Spirits:

Anishinaabe

Resistance and Revitalization

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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February 2014

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to many people and organizations who have taught and supported me along the way. First, I am greatly indebted to White Earth community members who have extended their generosity and hospitality to me since I began my studies in economic anthropology at the University of Minnesota. I am also grateful to Winona LaDuke and the White Earth Land Recovery Project staff, especially Robert Shimek and Florence Goodman.

My studies were supported by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, White Earth Land Recovery Project, Vocational and Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Anthropology, and the Center for Advanced Feminist Studies.

I am especially grateful to my committee members Guy Gibbon, Frank Miller, and Jean O'Brien. I also want to thank Timothy Dunnigan, Kathleen Barlow, and Jane Gilgun for serving on my committee in the past.

My deepest appreciation goes to my advisor Stephen Gudeman who has always supported and encouraged my efforts.

Finally, I want to thank my family for their support and encouragement.

Abstract

Tribal members of the White Earth Band of Anishinaabe-Ojibway have struggled for generations to maintain their collective rights to *Turtle Island*, their vast homelands and territories stretching throughout North America, especially through the Upper Great Lakes region where they have lived and traveled for more than 10,000 years as America's first residents and First Nations (Quimby 1960; Wright 1972; Usher et al 1985; Tanner, ed. 1987; Morton and Gawboy 2000). The focus of this dissertation is the struggle of the White Earth Anishinaabe to recover land (LaDuke 2005; Silverstone 1987; Lurie, J. 2003) and protect subsistence rights to hunt and fish in northern Minnesota (Lone Fight 1994). It also represents an ethnography of resistance and revitalization in the face of land loss (Gibson 1978; Lurie, N. 1978) and market debasement (Swenson, ed. 1982; Spry 1983; Shkilnyk 1985) in an increasingly globalized world (Davis, S. 1982, 1991; Davis, W. 1993; Hornborg 1994; Abrahamson 1998; Piot 1999).

In 1986 twelve U.S. Congressmen voted in Washington DC to end all land claims held by the White Earth Band (Shipp 1987). However, the Band has never relinquished rights to fish and hunt throughout their territories ceded by treaties of 1837 and later in 1855. Today 93 percent of the reservation's 837,000 acres is controlled by non-Indians: two-thirds held by European American immigrant farmers and individuals who own lake cabins, resorts, or hunting grounds; the U.S. federal government including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; State of Minnesota; Becker, Mahnomen, and Clearwater counties (tax forfeiture lands); religious organizations and major corporations.

The anthropological research problem is this: how does one analyze and compare relationships between community and market economies (Lofving, ed. 2005; Gudeman 2008)? In their struggle to recover their land base and revitalize their community's economy and well-being, tribal members want to show that a *standing forest*, one that provides food stuffs (animals and plants), material needs, and medicines, for local community members, has *more* value than a clearcut forest (Woehrle 1996).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Hungry Spirits is an ethnographic study of how a present-day tribal community strives to recover what they, as a people, hold sacred—their land and their way of life. Anishinaabe, indigenous to North America, often describe themselves as a Forest People. Forests, the base of their community economy, are not described as wilderness—wild, untamed, pristine natural areas that only hold value if untouched by humans. To the contrary, Anishinaabe claim their place, and their role, in maintaining the health of the environment, and ensuring that life, in all its forms, will be renewed. Like continuous rebirth, revitalization is an ongoing renewal of the material or natural world that provides sustenance and well-being. The focus of this dissertation is their struggle to revitalize their community by resisting debasement by markets and recovering their collective rights to their land and subsistence base.

Ethnographic studies by anthropologists show how traditional subsistence activities are threatened by changes in land ownership and encroachment by markets that support profit and material accumulation, not survival or well-being (Shkilnyk 1985; Swenson, ed. 1982; Gedicks 1993). This is a case study of the processes of colonization, marketization, extraction, and debasement and the effects on a community that lives at the edges, or the margins, of the world capitalist system. This is a story about a people who have been debased, their resistance, and their revitalization. In this case study, there is a clash between a community culture and a market culture. In this ethnography I use a framework

that is based on interactions between community and market economies. Community and market are the terms I use to make sense of this ethnography.

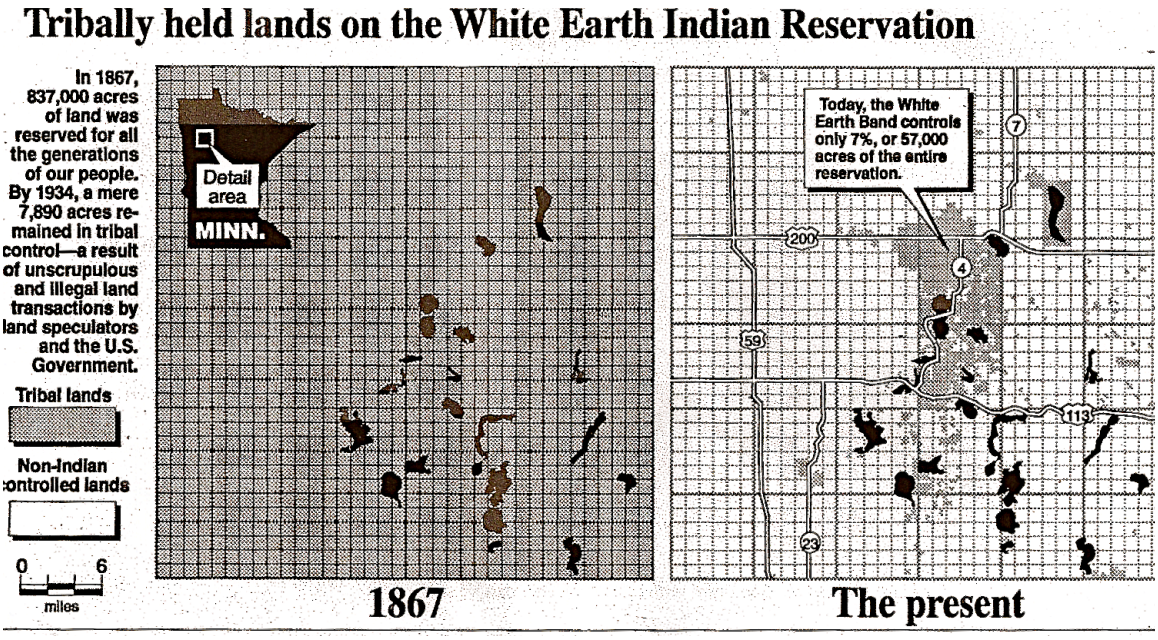

Figure 1. Tribally held lands on the White Earth Indian Reservation. In 1867, 837,000 acres reserved. Today, White Earth Band controls only 7% or 57,000 acres. "Tribally held lands on White Earth Reservation" is a visual depiction of land loss at White Earth Reservation. The image was created and used by White Earth Land Recovery Project as an educational tool. Source: White Earth Tribal Land Office, White Earth Land Recovery Project.

White Earth Reservation

White Earth reservation, home of the White Earth Band of Anishinaabe, is located in northwestern Minnesota approximately 220 miles from the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. A Treaty of 1867 between the Mississippi Band of Chippewa and the U.S. government established *Gaa-Waabaabiganikaag ishkonigan,* or White Earth reservation.[1] The land was selected by tribal leaders as a final homeland for Anishinaabe bands and their descendants. Today only about 4,500 of the 22,000 White Earth Band members live on the reservation in

several communities that include Pine Point, Ponsford, White Earth village, Rice Lake, Beaulieu, and Naytahwaush. Many band members live in the Twin Cities or other urban areas, and they return to the reservation to visit or collect resources. The majority of White Earth residents, over 11,000, are non-Indians.

As the first residents of *Turtle Island*, Algonquian speakers have lived, traveled, and subsisted for more than 10,000 years as hunter-gatherers in the forests and waterways of their homelands in North America. They have survived by developing knowledge, skills, and practices, as hunters, gatherers, and harvesters, to ensure their families' subsistence in a bountiful but harsh environment (Palmer 1878; Jenks 1900; Quimby 1960; Yarnell 1964; J. Wright 1972; Ritzenthaler 1978; Rogers 1978; Peers 1994; Ingold 1996; Brody 1987, 2001; Morton and Gawboy 2000).[2] What proved to be an even greater challenge than survival in harsh northern climates began with Columbus' arrival in 1492 and subsequent conquest and encroachment by Europeans that followed. Today, Anishinaabe communities can be found throughout the Great Lakes region in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan (Yarnell 1964; J. Wright 1972; Erdrich 2003:5).[3]

The White Earth reservation encompasses the northern half of Becker County, all of Mahnomen County, and part of Clearwater County. Its southern border is just north of Detroit Lakes. Inside its boundaries, three of Minnesota's ecosystems conjoin. In the western part of the reservation, land is prairie, rolling toward the vast, flat horizon of the Red River Valley. Along the east side of the

reservation, the eastern pine woods meet the hardwood forests of the central zone. Sprinkled over it all, clear, shallow, glacial lakes sparkle.

The land within the reservation boundaries totals 837,000 acres. The reservation boundaries, however, do not reflect the White Earth Band's land ownership within the reservation. Out of the 837,000 acres that make up the reservation only 57,000, or seven percent, are in tribal trust or owned by individual members of the tribe. Nearly complete land dispossession within years of the reservation's creation has greatly limited the ability of Anishinaabe to protect and care for their forests which are the base of their subsistence economy.

The seven percent of the land that is in tribal trust or ownership is dispersed throughout the reservation. The remaining 93 percent of the reservation land is held by non-Indian individuals and government agencies that include farmers; the U.S. federal government; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the State of Minnesota; Becker, Mahnomen, and Clearwater counties; churches; and major corporations, most notably, Potlatch Corporation and RDO Offut Corporation.

The variety of ownership on the reservation is primarily the result of the 1887 Allotment Act and the 1889 Nelson Act which divided the reservation land into allotments and assigned them to individuals. The impact of allotment at White Earth reservation, as well as other reservations across the country, divided a unitary, collectively held land base that led to rapid land and resource dispossession, poverty, disease, and diaspora.

Historian William W. Folwell (1969:261) described the loss of land at White

Earth as the "Tragedy of White Earth," and other historians (Youngbear-Tibbetts 1991; Meyer 1994; K. Peterson 2012) have shown how quickly land loss swept through a collectively held territory where an economy of self-sufficiency was a way of life. By 1920, the reservation land-base of some 837,000 acres declined by 90 percent (Beaulieu 1984; Meyer 1990, 1994; Weil 1989; Youngbear-Tibbetts 1991).

Historical violence, compounded over time from one generation to the next, is how the White Earth people describe their experience as a community devastated by colonial conquest and over a hundred years of American colonialism that has debased the community and economy by destroying their forests. This devastation is reflected on their land. Forests that sustained people for generations, have been clearcut, or burned, as many as three times by capitalists supported by colonial governments and market enterprises. Prairies and potholes, which sustained the buffalo, elk, deer, ducks, moose and geese, have been plowed and drained. Once known as the “Medicine Chest” of the Anishinaabe the medicinal plants as well as local ecological knowledge of these plants, has diminished (LaDuke 1994).

From the perspective of the White Earth community, land loss is not only the cause of their poverty—it is a denial of their shared cultural heritage and identity. The purpose of recovering the base is to enfranchise the White Earth's community to which they have historically and systematically been disenfranchised, that is the process of self determination and the exercise of sovereignty.

Making a Plate: Sharing and Hospitality

Generosity and hospitality are highly valued among Anishinaabe, or Ojibwe, people, especially in their homes where *provisioning* is the purpose of household activity.[4] For some, hospitality defines who they are as a people: 'Hospitality, that's what *we do*. We're Ojibwe.' At mealtime, food is allocated among household members and guests by *making a plate* for one's self (by invitation) or for others. At feasts, small or large, informal or formal, spirits are honored with a plate of food set outside for them.

Feeding Spirits

Provisioning is also the purpose of traditional Anishinaabe funeral rituals associated with the *Midewiwin* [Grand Medicine Society]. Lake of the Woods were ancestral territories of the Anishinaabe and the Dakota. High above Obabikon Channel, a rock painting gives instructions to spirits on how to travel from this life into the next life, a journey that takes four days and may be filled with difficulties (Erdrich 2003:62). Just above the rock paintings, people leave offerings such as tobacco for the spirits.

In preparation for the spirit's journey, "loved ones provide the spirit with food, spirit dishes, and encouragement in the form of prayers and songs" (Erdrich 2003:62). During funeral ceremonies, mourners place traditional foods such as walleye, whitefish, wild rice, deer meat, maple sugar, blueberries, or other berries or fruits, with a bowl and spoon, in the casket with their loved one's body.[5] Family members bury their loved one in small family cemeteries. A short wooden house is built and placed over the grave to provide shelter and

protection for the body, and particularly the spirit, of the deceased. Rectangular in shape with a two-sided angled roof, a *spirit house* sits low to the ground. A round hole is carved out of one end of the house, and it is there, through the window, where relatives, or friends, bring food or tobacco to feed their loved one's spirit which might travel and return to the grave at various times.[6]

Household Provisioning

In households at mealtime, plates are made for children and elders after spirits are fed. More than a polite gesture, the custom of making a plate for another person (or receiving a plate made by someone else) *marks* a relationship in many ways. Feeding spirits first honors their presence in the lives of community members. Traditionally, marriage between a man and woman was signified by eating together. Today, making a plate for another person, especially children or elders, continues to be a sign of one's commitment to caring for that person.

Making a plate extends both community and its base. The act of sharing entails a gift of self. By sharing part of the base—wild rice, deer meat or walleye—the giver gives part of her self, and the act of giving draws the receiver into community. Feeding each other renews communal relations and provides assurance that everyone will be fed, and no one is left hungry.

Making a plate is often a gendered practice. For instance, a man who makes a plate for a woman makes a quiet, but public, declaration of his intentions for the relationship, or the care and intimacy they already share. Likewise, when a man or woman, after some cajoling, politely refuses to make—*or even take*—a

plate from another individual, a message of disinterest in starting an intimate relationship is conveyed. At mealtime, these gestures, exchanges, and rejections, all serve as fodder for teasing and laughter among relatives, extended kin, and other guests who witness these exchanges or recall scenes from meals and romances of the past.

Greed is the antithesis of Anishinaabe hospitality because it threatens household provisioning. One particular conversation with an Anishinaabe friend illustrates this concern. Encouraged by his hosts, one of my friend's cousins prepared a large plate of food for himself then sat down to enjoy the meal with others in the home. As he finished his meal, he stood up, walked into the kitchen, and dumped a large amount of uneaten food from his plate into the trash. Each time my friend describes this situation, he concludes by saying, "Everyone knows that you leave something on the table for the next person." He adds, "It doesn't matter who that person is or when they make a plate." Such a transgression is rarely confronted directly. Nevertheless greed makes a person less civil in the eyes of others.[7]

The Ethnographic Problem

In this dissertation I will argue that making a plate is more than a unique cultural practice among the Anishinaabe. Making a plate is a representation of their base and reflects the health and well-being of the community and embodies a central value of Anishinaabe life that is expressed in the phrase *mino-biimaadiziiwin* which means "to live well, have good health, and lead a good life" (Nichols and Nyholm 1995). This value entails health, longevity, and well-

being for oneself and one's family and suggests the wisdom and strength to survive and to live well (Benton-Banai 1988).

What defines a good life for the Anishinaabe, like any community, depends upon their ability to maintain the base that keeps them alive, healthy, strong, and well. For the Anishinaabe, mino-biimaadiziiwin, is realized through a unique way of life, or experience of material life, that shapes their culture and identity in the past, the present, and the future.

Making a plate reflects the health and well-being of the community and its base by revealing how the base connects people to each other, to the forests, to the ancestors, to their heritage, and to their identity. Land loss and resource extraction by capitalists has impoverished many families living at White Earth reservation by disrupting, and in some cases eliminating, these connections. Using Stephen Gudeman's model of economy that has two value spheres, community and market, I will show that the tension between the community's ability to care for and maintain its base and the encroachment and growth of market capitalism affects the ability of community members to make a livelihood from the land and provide for themselves. It also affects their identity as a people. The local community's response to this tension is resistance in the form of revitalizing their base by recovering both the physical environment and their shared identity. Resistance is a struggle to maintain the plate.

A Framework for Understanding the Ethnographic Problem

This study supports a community's claim that there is another way of life beyond market society. With the use of anthropological theory and ethnographic

methods, my purpose is to bring to light the debasement of a community by showing how the market has changed a people's way of life. In addition, this work introduces a local example, to anthropologists, of how a people's way of life, and their shared identity, are shaped, and affected, by ongoing, and contemporary, conflicts and tensions inherent to different purposes and practices of community and market economies. My discussion of Anishinaabe debasement and revitalization is organized in four chapters that: (1) introduce a theoretical framework that shapes my ethnographic study of resistance to the debasement of the physical environment and the cultural identity of the community at White Earth reservation; (2) present community voices who describe the ongoing debasement of their land and their lives; (3) present a history of debasement at White Earth; (4) explore White Earth community's efforts to revitalize their community's base.

Economic Anthropology: Communities & Markets

Anthropologists recognize two realms of economy: community and market (Gudeman 1986). Mutuality defines the first, and impersonal trade, the second (Gudeman 1992a, 1992b, 2008). A community economy revolves around maintaining the base (Gudeman and Rivera 1993). In a market economy profit-making and accumulation of capital are the aim. In *The Anthropology of Economy*, Stephen Gudeman (2001) describes how these separate projects are achieved through four domains of value that occur across economies, albeit in different forms, in both communities and markets: (1) the base or foundation; (2) social relationships and associations; (3) trade; and (4) the appropriation and

accumulation of wealth. In a later work, *Economy's Tension: The Dialectics of Community and Market* (2008), Gudeman describes how each realm—community and market—is driven by different purposes that reflect fundamental differences in collectively shared values.

The Base

Mutuality creates community, whose purpose is to provide for its members material needs, health, and well-being. What is essential to community survival, well-being, and continued self-sufficiency is its ability to maintain its base (Gudeman and Rivera 2001; Gudeman 2001, 2008). The base of a community is composed of people, land, and knowledge. The base, in general terms, is both the material foundation and heritage of a community. Gudeman (2001:8) describes what makes up the base: "community's shared interests, which include lasting resources (such as land and water), produced things and ideational constructs such as knowledge, technology, laws, practices, skills, and customs." Despite diverse expressions of groups and activities, what remains constant at the base is the experience or expression of what is *sacred* in people's lives.

A base is not a static entity. It will grow, diminish, or be used up, and for those reasons, the quality of a community's existence, or its ability to realize a good life, depends upon the status of its base. Self-sufficiency is the aim in community economies where limits are recognized and decisions are focused on long term implications of resource use.

In communities, production and distribution are central activities. This is reflected in the practice of making a plate because the production of traditional

foodstuffs and its distribution are central and shaped by social values. Likewise, in an economy of livelihood, land and natural resources are held or distributed in ways determined by the shared values of a group. Sharing and reciprocity are the typical forms of exchange or distribution in a community. Distribution is shaped by values regarding social relations through exchanges, sharing or giving, as based on gender, age, or equality.

Other aspects of the base, such as natural resources, knowledge, and equipment, are shared through communal relationships and by its outgoing expansion with those outside of the group. Maintaining relationships and the welfare of others are more often the purpose of sharing than accumulating individual wealth. Sharing may also contribute to self-sufficiency and extending mutuality to others (Gudeman 2008:37).

Like making a plate, "a base is made, held, and used through social relationships" (Gudeman 2008:29). In an Anishinaabe household, family members provide the food for each other, and guests, and gather to prepare and eat the meal together. Everyone takes turns making a plate for herself or others. Relationships with the ancestors are also honored. During feasts or celebrations, a spirit plate is made for the ancestors and placed outside. And, when food is gathered tobacco is left in thanksgiving for the gifts from the land. In a community social relationships are mediated, and occur, through things and the environment in which they live. Community is linked to the environment, not abstracted from it.

Anishinaabe members share a land base, a language, rituals, kinship, and social norms. Practicing subsistence strategies provides the food from the land. The instructions for successful subsistence are expressed in the Ojibwe language, as are instructions for rituals, the clan system, and other aspects of living a good life.

From an Anishinaabe perspective, all inhabitants of the land are alive and hold standing in the community. Linguistic evidence shows that humans, animals, birds, fish, plants, trees, rocks, water, the sun, moon, and the wind are all expressed as *animate*, alive with spirit and standing. To have standing, in an Anishinaabe sense, is to be recognized as an important entity in the world that contributes, in its own way, to community well-being. Not only is their base alive, its elements are described and treated as relations. Storyteller Ignatia Broker (1983:3) describes how the trees are alive:

> The forests have never failed the Ojibway. The trees are the glory of the *Gitchi Manito* (Great Spirit). The trees, for as long as they shall stand, will give shelter and life to the Ojibway and the Animal Brothers. They are a gift. As long as the Ojibway are beneath, the trees will murmur with contentment. When the Ojibway and the Animal Brothers are gone, the forest will weep.

Markets

The project of market societies is the acquisition of property measured as profit and, more specifically, the "generation of profit as the motor of capitalist growth" (Gudeman 2001:21). Impersonal trade or exchange, often anonymous

and short in duration and with the purpose of making a profit, characterizes markets as arenas for trade. The purpose of capitalism is making a profit by orienting the market toward production (Slater and Tonkiss 2001:21). Markets are competitive domains of economy where participants, through exchange, strive to outdo others in profit-making and material accumulation. Collecting value is the primary goal of the accumulation of wealth. Increased riches through innovation almost always comes at the expense of the material world as well as labor.

With the expansion of markets, calculated relationships fragment local constructions of economy (Gudeman 2008:19). Physical debasement may be caused by the cascading of the market when "participants, through the search for profit, extend their reach to non-commoditized things and services," including forests (Gudeman 2008:18). People who do not share mutuality are those who enter into market trade where exchange creates alienation because it "disconnects people from relationships with others and from themselves" (Gudeman 2008:58). This cascading is the cause for the tension between the base and capital.

Profit-making requires establishment of property rights, which are essential to market systems. Through the processes of establishing a clear legal system that both defines and protects private property rights, social "units"—individual persons or corporations—are also established in market society (Slater and Tonkiss 2001). A market model, unlike a local narrative, defines forests, for example, as a natural resource not an essential base of a community. A

consequence of the expansion of private property is that the "market realm of private property cascades into and debases mutuality" (Gudeman 2008:79). In addition, the cascading of private property onto communal holdings causes debasement. Gudeman (2008:74) describes private property as "the substance of market trade" which is "alienable, and held by individuals or disjoint persons. In contrast, conjoint persons share access to a base in the mutual realm. The two forms of possession are distinctly justified." Gudeman distinguishes between two different "selfways" or types of identities: "conjoint" and "disjoint" identities refer to the "interdependent and independent self" (Gudeman 2008:32). Disjoint persons or individual selves are "constituted in competitive market trade and economists' models" (Gudeman 2008:32). In contrast, "conjoint selves or persons-in-community are constituted in mutual relationships" (Gudeman 2008:32). These two selfways relate to the base in very different ways. A disjoint self acts without regard for others in relation to a base, however, a conjoint self interacts with others through the base.

Karl Polanyi (1957) points out that Aristotle describes what he calls, commercial trade, as an unnatural way to exchange or trade things. Trade is not inherently unnatural or unjust. Trade holds the potential to be detrimental to living a good life, however, at the same time, Aristotle acknowledges that trade is necessary for creating wealth. According to Aristotle, the origin of commercial trade sprang from an "unlimited and unnatural urge of money-making" (1957:79). Polanyi identifies key attributes of market trade as means to end relationships created by calculated decision-making, and action tempered by

reason. Combined, these activities are organized by humans to secure the greatest possible gain in an environment that holds only scarce resources (1957:140-143).

Polanyi (1957) argues that commercializing land and labor are preconditions for the development of a market economy. He writes, "A market economy must comprise all elements of industry, including land, labor, and money" (1957:71). He describes these three elements as "fictitious," and concludes that "A market economy can only exist in a market society" (1957:71). Later, Don Slater and Fran Tonkiss define market society in *Market Society: Markets and Modern Social Theory* (2001:110) as behavior "conceived in terms of agents pursuing their own interests by calculating in optimizing ways and resolving their divergent interests in relation to price."

White Earth band members do not participate solely in a community economy. Their economic lives are a mix of community and market. This has been the case since their involvement in the fur trade. Historically, they have also exchanged surplus resources obtained by fishing, trapping, and gathering in local markets. When divided between community and market, people lean toward community participation in maintaining their base. In *The Other Side of Eden*: *Hunters, Farmers, and the Shaping of the World*, Hugh Brody (2001) admits that there are few people living today who subsist solely by hunting and gathering. Nonetheless, there are many individuals, families, and societies for whom their way of raising their children, using land and speaking of their culture is rooted in hunter-gatherer heritage (Brody 2001:6). Like other communities that identify themselves as hunter-gatherers or harvesters, *making a living* at

White Earth is a complex and diversified pattern of hunting, fishing, gathering, and seasonal wage work.[8] The mechanics and technologies of harvesting have changed, but the purpose of provisioning remains the same: White Earth Band members continue to hunt, fish, trap, pick berries, make maple sugar, and gather wild rice to feed their families. As Thomas Vennum (1988) describes in *Wild Rice and the Ojibway People*, the timing of these activities follows the seasons, but not necessarily the legal statutes of the dominant society.

Next I will discuss the importance of the base to Indigenous peoples and the effects of debasement of the physical realm and the in the social realm or identity.

Physical Debasement

Indigenous peoples, as a term, refers to a culture group in an ecological area that developed a successful subsistence base from the natural resources available locally to them. They are typically descendants of the original inhabitants of the area taken over by more powerful outsiders. They are distinct from their country's dominant group in language, culture, and religion. They commonly live in or maintain strong ties to a subsistence economy; many are, or are descendants of, hunter-gathers, fishers, nomadic or seasonal herders, shifting forest farmers, or subsistence peasant cultivators. Relationships are site-specific. Industrialized natural resource extraction encroaches on lands that Indigenous peoples continue to occupy generation after generation without a desire to seek a new or different place to live. In many instances, whether separated by choice or exile, Indigenous peoples return to places where their ancestors lived, traveled, hunted, fished, took water, picked berries, collected medicinal plants, held

ceremonies, and both gave birth and buried their dead. These places, which make up their homelands, are held *sacred* by Indigenous peoples throughout the world (Hitchcock 1992).

Narratives of the physical and social aspects of subsistence activities legitimates how the base is used and allotted. For the Anishinaabe, their way of life, including making a plate, also legitimates the group's commitment to each other. The community insists that their traditional economy is dependent on a healthy, biologically diverse forest.[9] Clearcutting and mono-crop forest plantations destroy the ecosystems which sustain their cultural practices. They believe that Indigenous peoples' traditional ecological knowledge, based on generations of residence and observation, provides the best source of information for environmental planning for present concerns and future needs. Local knowledge, developed and shared across generations, provides the instructions for identifying and utilizing the diversity of plant and animal species which the land provides.

Physical debasement of indigenous territories has been a result of colonial encroachment and extraction. All colonial nations in the Western hemisphere have marginalized Indigenous peoples to varying degrees. Michael Lerma (2012:92) describes how a variety of policies have been used by all states in the Americas for one basic purpose: to "allow non-indigenous individuals (mainly through colonial actors) privileged access to political and economic institutions."

The result of the creation and perpetuation of the image of the "vanishing Indian" contributed to a colonial mythology that encouraged, even expected, the

elimination of Native people from their homelands, justifying the ultimate physical debasement of the existence of a people.[10] Mishuana Goeman (2011:4) claims that the image of the vanishing Indians "accompanied times marked by the brutal repression of tribal peoples across the globe as nation-states clamored for fixed boundaries and fixed populations in order to exploit land and labor easily and systematically." Goeman (2011:4) describes "settler colonialism" as an ongoing condition of settler occupation of Native land that seeks to "eliminate Native peoples either through genocide or disavowal" by setting up structures that support their territorial claims and set up structures to create a new colonial society on the expropriated base.

From a political ecology perspective, environmental degradation is attributed to the capitalist development of space. Molly Doane (2007:453) writes that Indigenous peoples "are no longer the objects of the national modernization projects that sought to transform them into modern citizens." Instead, it's "the resource-rich lands they live on, not the people themselves, that have become the object of development. Indigenous lands are integral to the economic strategies of nation-states attempting to survive in the global marketplace" (2007:453). In other words, this form of colonization is about infiltrating a place, or a specific location, not to colonize the people, but to take the resources that made their life. However, the loss of a base colonizes the people mentally and physically.

Today, farmers and hunters live at the margins of each other's worlds (Brody 2001; Wallerstein 1974), as they do at White Earth Indian Reservation. The achievements of both groups of people might be compared alongside one

another, but hunters and farmers are not equal in their power to influence the lives of others. Brody (2001:7) characterizes agricultural peoples, especially in the world's rich nation-states as

> numerous, immensely rich, well armed and domineering. On the other hand, hunter-gatherers are few in number, poor, self-effacing and possessed of little military strength. Farmers have the power to overwhelm hunter-gatherers, and they continue to do so in the few regions of the world where this domination is not already complete.

It is a struggle to maintain the base against industrial exploitation fueled by excessive consumption of resources. The dangers of unlimited consumption are echoed by many including Indigenous activists such as Simon Brascoupe (1992) who challenges western, industrialized peoples to

> rethink their relationships with Indigenous peoples, relearn history from an Indigenous perspective, stop labeling the issues affecting Indigenous peoples as 'Indigenous issues,' realize that defending Indigenous peoples and their lands secure non-Native peoples' futures as well, become aware of the realities of the world's ecosystems and social systems, and realize that nothing less than a wholesale abandonment of the drive for commodity accumulation will save the human race (Brascoupe 1992:15).

Deforestation

Timber markets have cascaded into the forests that are home to Indigenous peoples. Deforestation is the extraction and clearance of naturally occurring forests by logging and burning. Deforestation occurs for many reasons: trees are

used as, or sold, as a commodity; while cleared land is used as pasture for livestock, plantations of commodities, and settlements. The removal of trees without sufficient reforestation has resulted in damage to habitat, loss of biodiversity, and aridity. Disregard or ignorance of intrinsic value, lack of ascribed value, lax forest management and deficient environmental law are some of the factors that allow deforestation to occur on a large scale. In many countries, deforestation is an ongoing issue that is causing extinction, changes to climatic conditions, desertification, and displacement of Indigenous people.

Timber corporations have deforested the White Earth reservation since the late 1890s. After a hundred years the forests began to recover and the industrial timber companies, including the same companies that clearcut the reservation in the 1890s, returned to clearcut the emerging forests. Deforestation opens the land to farmers and industrial agriculture. Recently expanded plants give corporations the capacity to meet greater consumption demands in the near future for timber, paper, particle board, and other wood products sold in global markets. The timber corporations, Potlatch Corporation most notably, have secured rights to timber growing throughout northern Minnesota on treaty lands, state forests, tax forfeit land held by counties, and other governmental units with landholdings.

The result of the transformation of the reservation base into private property has been the impoverishmentß of the White Earth community. The *Tragedy of White Earth* is no longer solely the loss of land, but the loss of people through poverty, alcoholism, violence, abuse, diabetes, early death, and

separation of families.[11] County and state courts increasingly send more young adults (some teens) to longer and often repeated sentences in prisons with little prospect of escaping injustices caused by the dominant society. Every family is affected.[12] There is even a shortage of foster care parents within the tribe.

Identity and Debasement

"Local identity" is described by Hornborg (1994:258) as "a profound and experience-near identification with a particular and irreplaceable *place* or set of social relationships. Local identity implies that the specifics of a place or community are incorporated in, and largely constitutive of, a person's self image." Indigenous people experience this type of identification with specific land and social relations that are mediated through specific local places. Panich (2013:107) also supports the notion that identity is constructed socially and through connections to a particular place or membership in a certain social of kin group. He encourages archaeologists to consider the persistence of Native American communities in recent research that considers the "myriad ways that native peoples actively reinterpreted social organization and identity during the colonial period, resulting in a broad spectrum of native communities that have persisted in various forms into the present day" (2013:106).

In a similar instance, presence and commonality shared by Indigenous people in relation to a place contributes to developing a social identity, as Tveskov describes (2007:432):

> Landscapes are powerful arenas of social experience, and the act of physically or intellectually manipulating a place or landscape and inscribing

> it with meaning, common experience, and ancestral presence recursively reinforces or challenges those common experiences that over the long term create the precedence and stability of meanings that help constitute social identity.

In "Indigenity and Homeland: Land, History, Ceremony, and Language," Michael Lerma (2012) identifies a particular form of Indigenous "organic attachment to place territory" as a result of the practice of ceremony, language, sacred history, and an oral tradition that promotes the transmittal of these traditions to youth. This type of attachment shapes the identity of Indigenous groups.

These forms of identity are closely related to the base and the social relationships that are enacted through the base. Debasement breaks these connections, harming community and individual identity. Encroachment and extraction of land bases is caused by cascading of capitalism into areas rich with natural resources. After extraction, in this case clearcutting, corporations move on with no regard for the community that has been debased.

One way identity is debased is the encroachment of a society characterized by people identifying their interests with an increasing standard of living measured in greater power to purchase consumer goods in the marketplace. Rather than actually increasing well-being, this "sinks people yet further into class-based relations of exploitation and alienation, which are no longer even perceived or challenged" (Slater and Tonkiss 2001:67).

A culture of consumerism encroaches into communities and a conjoint identity is affected by what Slater and Tonkiss (2001:68) describe as

> modern consumerism which is about the ability to construct identity through the untrammeled exercise of individual choice—consumer culture suggests the equality of consumers, in their capacity as free choosers who themselves determine their social standing.

People become bombarded by "endless images of how to assemble these commodities into meaningful identities and lifestyles, expert advise, and self-help suggestions for dealing with the anxieties of choice" (Slater and Tonkiss 2001:184). More specifically they suggest that (2001:184):

> We are incited to construct our identities through the assemblage of commodities into personal lifestyles or share subcultures or communities of taste. This means that it is through consumer culture that we are integrated within market society, locked into commodity exchange through a desperate and insatiable need for identities and pleasures that can be secured only through the marketed good that inflame these needs in the first place. Both individual and more collective identities then seem to be 'made up' out of market choices, producing a condition of instability and anxiety.

Resistance

Resistance to debasement by colonialism takes many different forms. Not all acts of resistance are the same, each is conditioned by locational and historical contexts (Wakeham 2012:24). In "Archaeologies of Persistence: Reconsidering

the Legacies of Colonialism in Native North America," Lee Panich (2013) describes resistance as a continuation of identity, all be it flexible and dynamic: "Persistence, in common usage, refers to a continuation of existence in the face of opposition. As a general observation, this definition works well for describing those individual groups that intentionally maintained identities distinct from Euro-American colonists and settlers" (Panich 2013:107). Resistance to the image of the vanishing Indian, described by Geoman (2011:7) takes the form of an Indigenous performance movement that

> insists that we engage Native issues in relation to the issues of American colonization and empire, which form that current capitalist endeavors that touch upon everyone. With the use of new technologies and media forms, give Indigenous people, especially youth, opportunities to express their worldviews and create visions for their communities.

An historical example reveals a variety of forms of resistance. Ethan Schmidt (2012) describes how Indigenous people in the seventeenth century resisted colonial rule in order to survive encroachment and warfare in various ways: fleeing, hiding, using strategies of avoidance or obedience, petitions, diplomacy, sophisticated knowledge of colonial political and legal systems, and alliances, at times marital, with powerful colonists. These forms of resistance developed over decades in response to changing circumstances in relations between Indigenous peoples and powerful colonial forces. Indigenous anticolonial resistance ranges from political demonstrations, protests, and land occupations to other forms of civil disobedience. Violent rebellion is another

response to colonial domination by Indigenous people who are trying to protect their traditional homelands, and confront limited access to resources, lack of political power and lack of economic means (Lerma 2012).

In recent years some nation-states have proposed an end to their responsibility for centuries of colonial domination and violence against Indigenous peoples by pushing them to accept apologies and securing reconciliations for the injustices waged against Indigenous peoples. Resistance by targeted Indigenous peoples to these apologies has been interpreted by colonial powers as "terroristic." This interpretation by colonial powers is an extreme response to an unwillingness on the part of Indigenous peoples to accept apologies for injustices that continue today (Wakeham 2012).[13]

In Canada's boreal forests, Anna Willow (2011, 2012) describes how the "remaking" of Indigenous-environmentalist alliances between the Grassy Narrows First Nation and Rainforest Action Network organized and maintained a blockade on a logging road to successfully resist industrial logging by the powerful Weyerhaeuser corporation in 2006. Public opposition against industrial logging began in the 1990s because of threats to their land base, subsistence culture, and, they argued, their treaty-guaranteed right to harvest resources throughout their traditional territory. Prior to the blockade, years of expressing concerns by writing letters and peaceful protest had little effect (Willow 2012:371). Long distance healing walks are another form of resistance by Indigenous people. For example, in recent years six youth James Bay Youth initiated a 68 day trek from Hudson Bay to Parliament Hill in Ottawa to protest

the violation of Aboriginal treaty rights and to encourage the unity of the Cree and other First Nations people (Hall 2012).

At White Earth, land use policies, driven by the demands of industrial timber industries, fail to recognize local subsistence needs. According to Anishinaabe community organizer and traditional harvester, Robert Shimek, government timber policies directly affect his community's identity and very existence (White Earth Land Recovery Project 1996:11):

> We are a forest people. County, state, federal policies are clearcutting our culture. Our people live for these woods, yet no one is considering us. No one is considering the medicine plants, the basket materials, the essence of what it is to be Anishinaabeg. What right do you have to destroy this?

At White Earth, a response to debasement is an effort to revitalize the base of their community including the forests and the community relationships that are enacted through the forest and the community. The response was formulated by community members who organized the White Earth Land Recovery Project which, through its multi-faceted and holistic approach to protecting their base may be described more accurately as the White Earth Base Recovery Project. Many outsiders who have some familiarity with the organization are not aware that the purpose of the organization goes beyond recovering land. In the chapters ahead more will be described about the purpose of the organization's revitalization efforts.

Fieldwork

I began my graduate studies in economic anthropology at the University of Minnesota in 1993. As a graduate research assistant for the White Earth Recover Project (WELRP) in the mid-1990s, my research was supported by the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA). My research also received support from the University of Minnesota's Department of Anthropology and the Center for Advanced Feminist Studies.

Under the direction of White Earth tribal members, my work as a researcher and writer supported local efforts to recover land and revitalize the local forest economy (see Davis, W. 1993). I also contributed to efforts to protect cemeteries.[14] In November of 1993 I visited White Earth for the first time. As a guest of Winona LaDuke and her family, I stayed at her home, a small cabin on a hill overlooking Round Lake about ten miles northwest of Pine Point which is the closest village located in the southeastern corner of the reservation. Less than a mile from Pine Point village, across the southern boundary of the reservation, lies the town of Ponsford, originally a boom town established in the late 1890s by logging interests.

What would become my fieldwork site was only 120 miles from my hometown of Little Falls and the midpoint between the Twin Cities and the reservation. In the months to follow I traveled to and from Minneapolis to White Earth to work on various research projects. In later years, I made trips to White Earth to visit friends and their families for powwows and celebrations, hunting and fishing trips, holidays, and funerals.

What struck me most during that first visit was first, the beauty of White Earth's forests, lakes, rolling hills, and prairies; and second, how completely unfamiliar I was with the White Earth reservation or the history of its people, despite growing up two hours away and making regular visits to Park Rapids, Detroit Lakes, Wadena, Bemidji, and other towns that had sprung up just off the reservation boundaries by settlers in the mid-nineteenth century. Until that time, this place, its people, and their struggle had been *invisible* to me.

Soon after arriving at Round Lake during my first visit, I set out with Winona and her two young children for a tour of the reservation. Our first stop was "The Refuge," which is the name used by tribal members to refer to the northern half of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR) which lies within the original boundaries of White Earth Reservation. My first assignment for the organization was to secure letters from Native organizations in support of a campaign to regain tribal control of the northern half of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge with an administrative transfer within the U.S. Department of the Interior: Fish and Wildlife to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, in trust with the White Earth Nation. Known locally as "The Refuge," Tamarac's beauty and abundance has been a site of conflict (since the early 1930s) between Band members and non-Indians, especially hunters. At the time the campaign, despite the public support we gained, proved unsuccessful in securing the simple administrative transfer of title within the Department of the Interior.

The *Native Harvesters Research Project* was initiated by local community members at White Earth reservation in 1996. Since that time this study has

maintained approval from the University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board to conduct fieldwork and use descriptive, ethnographic, and oral history research methods. The location of subjects during research activity may be a community center or White Earth Land Recovery Project office; or the subject's home, both on- and off-reservation.

The topics of my study were ecological knowledge and subsistence strategies, forests and forestry, land tenure, land use, consequences of colonial policies, treaty-making and Indian law, and natural resource development. At the University of Minnesota I studied Ojibwe language with Dennis Jones and Keller Paap (Paap 1997). The Ojibwe language (Anishinaabemowin) is one of the most complex languages known. The orthography I have used throughout my studies was developed by linguists John Nichols and Earl Nyholm. In 1995 they published *A Concise Dictionary of Minnesota Ojibwe* which is an orthography based on Ojibwe dialects spoken in communities in central and northern Minnesota that include Mille Lacs, White Earth, Leech Lake, and Red Lake. The publication of Nichols and Nyholm's orthography was especially important because the development of an orthography is central to keeping the language alive.

During the spring of 1996, WELRP staff identified about 140 tribal members who, at that time, actively harvested during the year. Harvesters do not hunt, fish, or rice solely for themselves, therefore, each name represented a household or family. With WELRP staff I traveled throughout the reservation and interviewed people of all ages—elders, adults, and youth. During the summer of

1996 I interviewed 35 tribal members about their natural resource collection on the reservation (McLeod 1996).

The *Native Harvesters Research Project* was intended to support efforts to protect White Earth's forests by documenting the significance of natural resource collection. About fifty harvesters testified to the importance of traditional economic practices as well as the challenges which harvesters face as their forests are destroyed by clearcutting and other destructive practices. This information provided a foundation for community efforts to affect public policy and to build more awareness and support for protection of White Earth's forests.

In late August of 1996, Winona LaDuke agreed to join Ralph Nader as the vice-presidential candidate on the Green Party's U.S. presidential ticket. For the next eight weeks the campaign was our primary focus. Winona gave countless telephone interviews and wrote editorials. I scheduled interviews as requested by journalists and communicated with organizers in the Green Party and Nader's camp. We made one campaign trip to Santa Monica, California. In late October, just days before the election, the sudden onset of a debilitating illness abruptly took me off the campaign trail. In just one day, an exciting and productive chapter in my life closed as a student and researcher.

From there I moved into a small farmhouse I rented just northeast of Pine Point village. Between trips to Minneapolis for medical appointments I rested at the farmhouse I shared with my collie pup. A little girl named my puppy *Animosh*, which means "dog" in Ojibwe. My identity in the field was linked to Animosh. Collies attract a lot of attention, and Animosh was especially popular

with children, some of whom knew Animosh for most of her life and throughout the lives of the children.

I rented the farmhouse in Pine Point from 1996 until 1999. The house was cozy but rustic. One pipe in the kitchen served as the only water source, and there was no indoor plumbing. Rent was $60 a month, and an additional small sum covered electricity, firewood for an indoor furnace, and gas for back-up heat. Each week I worked one or two shifts to cover the bills at Ice Cracking Lodge, a set-up bar frequented mostly by non-Indian locals—retirees, fishermen, hunters, and resort owners. I had developed friendships with the WELRP staff, and two families in particular adopted us, looking out for our well-being during one of Minnesota's coldest winters on record.

In 2000 I moved into a second-floor apartment in South Minneapolis. In 2002 two girls in the neighborhood introduced themselves to me—they wanted to meet my collie. I soon discovered that during the summer the girls stayed in Minneapolis with their great-grandmother Marjorie.[15] Both Marjorie and her husband grew up on the White Earth reservation, and they moved to Minneapolis in the 1950s to raise their family. The girls introduced me to their great-grandmother, and I recall our first conversation at her kitchen table (just across the alley from my apartment). Marjorie talked to me about her family: her thirteen children, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, naming and counting them. Before too long she threw up her hands—too many children to count! It was Marjorie who invited me to join her family for a meal and to "make a plate."

My collie and I were adopted by Marjorie's large extended family with households in Minneapolis and on the White Earth Reservation. Since then Marjorie's family has extended their hospitality to me with invitations for coffee, meals, birthday parties, holidays, cookouts, funerals, and memorial feasts. They also invited me to White Earth to fish and hunt. I continue to communicate weekly with someone from her family or the White Earth community.

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[1] The Ojibwe word for *reservation* is *ishkonigan. Gaa-Waabaabiganikaag ishkonigan* is the Ojibwe name for White Earth reservation. "Gaa" is a tense marker; "waabaabigani" means white clay; and "kaag" means abundance of.

[2] Algonquian language speakers have lived from Newfoundland to the Rocky Mountains and from Hudson Bay to North Carolina. Linguists recognize the following groups as members of the Central Algonquian language family (I. Goddard 1978, 1996): Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi, Menominee, Fox-Sauk-Kickapoo, Shawnee, Potawatomi, Ojibwa Ottawa, Algonquin, Salteaux, and Delaware. The Central Algonquian language was spoken aboriginally in the region of the upper Great Lakes and the Canadian North, east of the Great Plains (Powell 1891; Blair 1911; Michelson 1912; P. Goddard 1914; I. Goddard 1978; 1996). Ojibwemowin is the Algonquin language originally spoken by the Ojibwe people living throughout Michigan, Minnesota, Ontario, Manitoba, and on into North Dakota (Erdrich 2003:5).

[3] The meanings of both *Ojibwe* and *Anishinaabe* are contested terms. Louise Erdrich (2003): *Traveling in the Land of My Ancestors: Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country* (Erdrich 2003:6). Erdrich dismisses other explanations for the origins of names given to Anishinaabe. "The meaning that I like best of course is Ojibwe from the verb *Ozhibii'ige*, which is 'to write.' Ojibwe people were great writers from way back and synthesized the oral and written tradition by keeping mnemonic scrolls of inscribed birchbark" (2003:11).

[4] See Narotsky (2005) for a discussion of provisioning.

[5] Living among the Ojibwe at Lac du Flambeau, anthropologist Huron Smith (1932:344) reported that the Ojibwe "believed that the spirit of the departed brave often returns to the grave."

[6] In other instances, any visit to a gravesite always involves a practice of leaving tobacco (or a favorite food) at the foot of a gravestone, again with the intent to honor a loved one's spirit.

[7] Narotsky (2005:89) discusses how allocation is "politically conditioned and socially embedded in multiple and complex social relations."

[8] See Brody 1987, 2001; Bodley 1983; Brody, ed. 1988; Bird-David 1990, 1992, 1993; and Brown 1996.

[9] White Earth Land Recovery Project Year End Report (1996:12-13). WELRP: works as an advocate for Indigenous harvesters).

[10] A photographic image depicted by photographer Edward Curtis among others.

[11] In the United States, suicide rates among the general population have declined. But among American Indians suicide rates continue to rise according to Richard Carmona, Surgeon General (Senate Subcommittee briefing June 2005). This growing epidemic is highlighted by both Larry Batson in 1990 in his article, "Rash of youth suicides moves White Earth Ojibway to action," (StarTribune, Thursday, October 4, 1990); and Paul Levy in 2005 in his article, "The Red Lake Indian Reservation: An Epidemic of Sorrow. For teens, suicide risk is ever present," (StarTribune, Sunday, August 7, 2005).

[12] One woman explains why she just cannot bring herself to kick out the alcoholic nephew from her home; she asks: *how do you kick your own people out of the house?* It's her nephew, he's no one in the white world and doesn't have the skills to make a living in the dominant society by selling his labor for wages.

[13] Case studies from New Zealand and Canada are used to illustrate this phenomenon.

[14] As an undergraduate student I had done research for Walter Echo-Hawk (Pawnee), lead attorney at the Native American Rights Fund in Boulder, Colorado. I reviewed ethnographic and archaeological reports to be able to determine the culture groups of human remains that might be eligible for repatriation from museums back to tribes. In 1990, at the time I was doing research for the lawmaking campaign, the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA, Public Law 101-601) was enacted and required museums and federal agencies to return human remains, funerary and sacred objects of cultural patrimony to tribes who can show that they belonged to the tribe and had been removed without the tribe's consent. This law prohibits trafficking in human remains.

[15] This is not her real name.

Chapter 2: Debasement

The seasonal round, described in the passages to follow, is still important for many White Earth Band members. In interviews with harvesters they describe subsistence strategies that they continue to pursue. Practicing subsistence, especially with family members, is an important source of their identity. Their heritage and the descriptions of the past are as important as the present. Community members describe how they have lost much of their material life. They also complain about how their efforts are limited by debasement. Debasement cuts the ties between generations. When the base is destroyed, a person can no longer do the things she did with her parents or grandparents, or practice the skills they taught her. They are experiencing the loss of their culture, knowledge, and relationships as this first example shows.

Martens and Men

Martens are carnivorous animals related to minks, weasels, or wolverines. Slender, agile, with bushy tails, large paws and partially retractible claws, martens live in northern coniferous forests (Wilcox: 1907:110).[1] Solitary animals, martens meet only to breed in late spring or early summer. Litters of up to five blind and nearly hairless kits are weaned two months after birth and leave the mother to fend for themselves at three or four months of age. Their diet consists of squirrels, mice, rabbits, birds, fish, insects, and eggs, fruit, nuts, and honey.

Pine martens make their homes in pine forests. A rare animal to encounter at anytime, martens are prey for eagles or fox, but their greatest threat is

deforestation which destroys their habitat. Pine martens are prized for their shiny and luxuriant fur that resembles that of the closely related sable. At the turn of the twentieth century, the fur trade depleted the pine marten's population. With numerous protection and reintroduction efforts, the population has increased slightly.

An exchange between a friend and one of his elders was brief, but reveals the significance of a relationship between martens and men.[2] During his visit with the elder, a member of the marten clan, the man posed this question to my friend: 'What will happen to me when all the martens are gone?' The marten is his birthright and gives him his identity as Anishinaabe, as the marten had done for his father, grandfather, and great grandfathers.[3] The elder feared extinction of his clan's badge, the marten, and with only a few words, expressed his bewilderment of its ramifications for his own self. The elder's question is haunting: 'What will happen to me when all the martens are gone?' My friend had no answer, nor remedy, for the elder's question, but he understood that the threat of the marten's disappearance threatened the man's identity.

Seasonal Round: Subsistence and Identity

At White Earth Reservation, the day-to-day life of local families is shaped by a seasonal round of harvesting activities (McLeod 1996:7).[4] Spring is the time of renewal and regeneration of people's spirits. This is the time for most ceremonies, beginning with a celebration of spring. Families gather in the sugarbush to tap the maple trees in spring. Years ago, people began to move their summer camps at this time, knowing when to make this move by listening and

watching the animals and the stars. Medicines, such as raspberry and mint, are picked at this time. Flower tops, leaves, and roots of various plants will be used for teas or other medicinal uses. Some planting is done at the end of spring, close to summertime.

Summertime arrives, and this warm season is welcomed and celebrated with songs, ceremonies, and dancing. Now it is time to plant the seeds that had been stored away before winter while some seeds will be carried away by the winds and sowed elsewhere. The work will be shared by all who are able to participate. The children watch the little ones while the older children help plant the gardens.

Berries, corn and nuts will be picked soon. Sage, tobacco, cedar, and sweet grass, all medicinal plants, will be picked now and saved for later use. 'Old tobacco' comes from the willow tree in shaved form and is used for prayer, offerings, and ceremonial purposes. This is also the time to peel birch bark from the trees for making baskets for storing food, cooking, and covering shelters. By watching the stars and animals, predictions about weather changes can be made and preparations begin for the next season.

Next, the leaves turn gold, red, and then brown. These changes signal that preparations for the cold months must begin. Animals gather and store their winter supplies of food, too. Venison, bison, fish, berries, and other foods are smoked, dried and stored with much care. Furs and hides, prepared by tanning, will keep everyone warm. All these skills are passed on to the next generation.

The Ojibwe Calendar

The Ojibwe calendar of subsistence activities, which follows the changing moons, guides the seasonal round of subsistence activities. The Ojibwe calendar has thirteen moons (*giizis*) although the list to follow recognizes twenty different possible names for moons throughout the changing of the seasons (the list reflects regional dialectical differences as well).[5] "Months were recorded by moons and were known by natural events which occurred from new moon to new moon."[6] The names of moons reflect changes in weather (hard crust moon; broken snow shoe month; freezing water), animal behavior (birth of bear cubs; suckers ready to harvest), birds (the crows' return brings spring; loons return); or plants (boiling sap moon signals a return to the sugarbush to make maple syrup; flowering plants; budding of leaves; strawberries or blueberries ripen). *Manidoowi-giizis* [spirit moon] and *Gichi-manidoowi-giizis* [Great Spirit Moon] are typically the coldest stretches of the long northern winter, and that is the time when hunger is the greatest threat.

(1) *aabita-bibooni-giizis*	mid-winter moon
(2) *gichi-manidoowi-giizis*	great spirit moon
(3) *migiziwi-giizis*	bald eagle moon
(4) *namebini-giizis*	sucker moon
(5) *makoonsag-gaanitaawigiiyaat-i-giizis*	birth of bear cubs
(6) *aandego-giizis*	returning of the crow
(7) *onaaban-giizis*	hard crust moon
(8) *maango-giizis*	returning of the loon

(9) *bebookowaagamewi-giizis*	broken snow shoe moon
(10) *iskigamizigewi-giizis*	boiling sap moon
(11) *waabigwani-giizis*	flowering moon
(12) *zaagibagaawi-giizis*	budding of leaves moon
(13) *ode'imini-giiizis*	strawberry moon
(14) *aabita-niibino-giizis*	mid-summer moon
(15) *miinikewi-giizis*	blueberry picking moon
(16) *manoominikewis-giizis*	wild rice picking moon
(17) *waatebagaawi-giizis*	leaves turning color
(18) *binaakwewi-giizis*	leaves falling moon
(19) *gashkadino-giizis*	freezing water moon
(20) *manidoowi-giizis*	spirit moon

White Earth Is My Home

O-my-yah-way-be-quay is the name of an 80-year-old Anishinaabe woman whose personal narrative focuses on the seasonal round and captures the experience of living a good, long life.[7] She made White Earth reservation her home in 1934 when she married, moving from Leech Lake to her husband's family's home to Pine Point village, or Ponsford,[8] where they raised seven children.[9]

> I was born at Battle Point, Leech Lake, Minnesota in 1918. My *dodem* is *Mong* [My clan is the Loon Clan].[10] Our family was Grand Medicine. That's how my parents were buried, Grand Medicine. I had three brothers and one sister, and we lived out in the country.

> Life was a struggle then, but it seemed like we lived pretty good. There were no jobs at the time. My dad hunted wild game. My folks had a sugarbush, and we brought horses out there and camped, it was a lot of work. We went to the rice camp, too. We had plenty of fish for the winter. We traveled around quite a bit moving from logging camp to logging camp. That's how we made a living. We had a garden with potatoes and corn, and we'd make hominy. We raised cattle and chickens. We used to go ricing in the fall. We used to sell the rice and that's how we got school clothes for the kids. We picked blueberries and I'd sell some and can some. We picked chokecherries, high bush cranberries, strawberries, and juneberries.[11]

Ziinzibaakwad [Maple Sugar Bush]

For Anishinaabe, the seasonal round of harvesting activities begins in spring with their return to the Maple Sugar Bush or *Ziinzibaakwad* (Paap and Paap 1998). The return of crows marks the end of a long northern winter, the arrival of spring, and the return of families to collect maple sap and make syrup, sugar, candy, and other treats. A maple basswood forest runs along a corridor from the northwest to the southeast corner of the reservation. Families prefer to return to the same sugar bush camps every spring. Trails are groomed annually, making the trek throughout the trees easier each spring.

People hold fond memories of the sugarbush, as an elder at Roy Lake described his family's annual return to the sugarbush:

My grandma used to collect sap and make syrup when I was young. When I was older all my nephews they'd come help me and I'd teach them how to harvest maple syrup. They (loggers) cut all that maple down, too, by the woodcutters. There aren't any. It's all cut out, all cut down.[12]

A harvester in Roy Lake said,

In the Buckboard Hills area, Mahmomen County tried to charge people 10 cents a tap for syrup. On the reservation they shouldn't be charging—people should have the right to collect syrup.They (loggers) go in and cut down the maple because it's considered 'cheap wood.' It's a cash product. Up north we're losing our woods. The sugarbushes keep getting sold. And a lot of it's tribal land. That's happened three times that I know of in our family.

***Mawinzo* [Berry Picking]**

Berry picking begins in late spring and continues through the summer. One woman told me that she picks "whatever happens to be in season—pincherries, chokecherries, juneberries, blueberries (if you're lucky), blackberries—any berry that's in season." This woman has fond memories of camping and berry picking with her Grandmother and Auntie. Berries are an important part of Ojibwe heritage because legends are shared about berries and people dream about them all the time.

I pick strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, juneberries, blueberries, chokecherries, plums, and apples. Last summer I

canned about 10 dozen jars—quarts, pints, and little ones to give away. I make jelly, jam, syrup, and pies.

Every year you have to find a new spot because of the logging. I don't pick next to forest roads any more. The berries there are poison because of the spraying. You have to go way back in the brush to find berries now. I have to use a canoe to get to one place where I pick.

There are a lot of Ojibwe legends and stories about berries. People dream about them all the time. As a girl I picked berries with Grandma and my old Auntie from Red Lake. We'd go camping and picking together. I remember those women picking in cotton dresses with long wool socks and elastic garters, sweaters with big pockets, white aprons and big straw hats.

Debasement caused by clearcutting has destroyed areas where berries grow. Community members return to areas where they have found berries in the past only to discover that the plants have disappeared after the trees were clearcut and the land was plowed. The ten mile Height of Land Trail, a popular berry patch for many White Earth harvesters, was recently sacrificed for the expansion of a logging road as one tribal member describes: "The Height of Land Trail was a well-known berry patch, but there aren't any berries there now."

Another berry picker observes: "It seems like nothing grows after they cut and plow over it. Nothing comes back."

Manashkikiiwe [Gather Medicine Plants]

Anishinaabe are knowledgeable about the plants that grow in the forests, prairies, and wetlands at White Earth and throughout the biologically diverse region where generations of Anishinaabe have relied on plants for medicinal remedies (Densmore 1974 [1928]; Gilmore 1932, 1953). Some tribal members, well known for healing others, have developed a wealth of knowledge about how to use plants as medicine and where to find them. Environmental debasement limits the ability for practitioners to find important plants they use for medicinal purposes.

At Roy Lake, every year more than 200 people visit a man who picks medicinal plants. Local people depend on this man for medicinal needs, and he adds that more are coming to learn, too, from Minneapolis, and eastern locations like Wisconsin, Green Bay and Chicago.

A woman who has picked medicines for a long time picks for 40 to 50 people:

> I pick plants if people need them—but the plants don't last too long. I pick plants for my daughter's asthma. There are a lot of people up there (at Cass Lake) with kidney problems. I pick for them. I make salves for all the babies. I also make a lot of teas—swamp tea or red clover tea, the mints that are wild. Willow is good for curing headaches. Each plant has a specific use.

Sweet grass [*bashkodemashkosiw*] and sage [*bashkodejiibik*] are two plants used frequently by the Anishinaabe. Both are used for cleansing and spiritual purposes. Before picking sage, sweetgrass or other medicine plants, *asemmaa* [tobacco] is put down on the ground near the plant in thanksgiving. Sage, often found along sunny roadsides, is hung to dry and used for cleansing, healing, and other ceremonies. Considered to be the first plant to grow, sweetgrass is braided like the braids worn by mother earth.

Sweet grass is increasingly more difficult to find at White Earth, according to one local woman:

> Sweetgrass, it's pretty well picked over. Some people pick the roots and then the plant can't grow again and it's no longer around. The elders, they know where the sweetgrass grows. If you find the elders, they can tell you where you can find sweetgrass. You go riding around, and you can smell it, and you hope like hell you can find it!

Some medicinal plants, like ginseng have disappeared from the White Earth region entirely because their habitats were destroyed. A tribal member described the situation:

> Once those pine forests are harvested, those plants are gone. Ginseng, that's gone. It's a very important medicine—it's strong. After clearcutting, nothing else will grow there. I can still locate plenty of plants. I have to go to new places after old areas get logged off. I think the clearcut logging just hurts everything. And I think that the spraying kills everything.

Cranberries are a medicine plant. They're harder to find now. They're really hard to find. You can't find those in cut areas, only virgin woods. A lot of plants are disappearing. It's getting plowed up and harvested. Once that happens, it's gone. I have a place where I like to pick strong woods medicines. The medicine I pick in the jackpine forest—that medicine is a lifesaver. The jackpines—they've been butchered—where they've been butchered, the medicine's gone.

Giitigaan [Garden]

Many local families keep summer gardens as one person described:

We garden every year. We do a lot of canning and give a lot of it away. We eat a lot right out of the garden. When we were growing up, Grandma always had a garden—that's how she grew up. I save seeds and plant them. This year the gophers ate everything except the tomatoes, cilantro, and sunflowers. The potatoes are good, too. I planted those out by the road, not in the garden.

Anokaajigan [Making Crafts]

Trees and plants provided the materials for traditional shelters, canoes, baskets, cooking containers, and other household needs. Today craft production is an important source of income for Native craftspeople. Birch bark, basswood, black ash, and red and green willow are all used for basket production. A skilled

craftswoman and teacher describes how she harvests birch bark. Nothing is wasted.

> I use the scraps that craftspeople don't need. I peel and freeze bark flat in the freezer. By myself, I use a little freezer (forget about the food!). I'd strip 30 to 40 trees in the spring, and then 30 more in the late summer. Nine times out of ten I'd run out in the winter. Then I'd have to go out in the snow. If I see a good grove (of birch), the car goes off to the side of the road and off I go! I'm always on the lookout for good bark. I need the beautiful, white, smooth birch bark for my quillwork boxes, earrings, and necklaces. Taking bark doesn't hurt the tree—as long as you don't cut into the trunk. The second growth is rough and dark—it's sturdy and good for making baskets. You can take bark year round, but the best time is from June to August or late July—it depends on the weather. After that it's more work! The best time to strip bark is when the nights are cool, and then I go out in the morning. In the early spring, you make a cut, and the bark just peels off—you don't even have to work! It's important—I always harvest bark carefully and with respect.
>
> I cry when I see the truckloads of birch trees go by. I yell, 'Follow that truck—give me that bark!' I just hate seeing them drive away

with all of that bark that just goes to waste. I need the smooth bark for my quillwork, and it's so hard to find. It's getting harder to find those birch trees with the smooth bark.

Near McKenzie I found a bunch of stripped trees, and further down the road there were big piles of dried bark. I just cried when I saw that. Whoever stripped the trees, they had just thrown the bark on the side of the road—it all went to waste. They killed those trees. The trunks were all gouged out. They weren't careful when they stripped the trees. It was dried out. It was just wasted. If you're going to strip bark, they should do it right—with respect. You should take the bark carefully and respectfully. And, don't take more than you're going to use.

Porcupine quills are used by Anishinaabe to make jewelry and decorate boxes, baskets, dance bags, and other things. A highly experienced quillworker talks about her work:

I've been an active quillworker for 19 years. I wanted to get good enough to teach others. I quill boxes, jewelry, dance bags, pipe bags, whatever people want. I always carry a brown paper bag, a plastic garbage bag, and a box. I sort the quills when I get home and keep them in a paper bag. There are over a million quills on one porcupine. I can fill up a garbage bag with one animal. One time I had six porcupines in the tub and my friend brought

over four more! I pluck'em bald! In a busy year I can go through 15 porcupines—which I've done.

Teaching others how to quill is important: "I try to keep a stock of willow at home because I have all the kids coming over to learn crafts. We do beading, sewing, key chains, moccasins, and quillwork. I instruct about 100 people each year. They start at about six years on up." Many of her delicate artistic pieces require as many as 5,000 needle-thin quills that are two to three inches long. On a small box or case she has made from birch bark, she uses her awl to sketch the outline of a turtle, loon, or flower and fills in the outline with quills that lie one above the other, sewn into place with sinew, a threadlike fiber made from deer muscle. Inspired by the natural wonders of the reservation, she said that anything worth sketching can be duplicated in porcupine quills, and adds, "To me, it's like coloring a picture, but I realize that to others it's a lost art."

In Naytahwaush a woman spoke about returning to the reservation and learning craftwork:

> I'm just basically new at all this. My home has always been here, so I'd come back here a lot. I was in the Cities until last December when I moved back here. I'm just learning how to do craftwork. They showed me how to make birch bark canoes, then I started making dream catchers and earrings. Now I'm learning how to quill. My daughter, she's learning more than me. She's learning from my grandmother and our friend. She'll sit here all day cutting out her patterns and putting it all together. I just

starting selling my craftwork, so it's bringing in new income for us. That's a savior here!

Manoominikewis-giizis [Wild Rice Picking Moon]

Ricing is a sacred harvest for families, as it has been for generations (Vennum 1988; Regguinti 1992; Welsch 1996; LaDuke 1999). Anishinaabe teach that the Great Spirit (*Gichi Manidoo*) gave *manoomin* [wild rice] to their people as a gift (Benton-Banai 1988; Vennum 1988; Regguinti 1992). Wild rice is central to Anishinaabe health and well-being because of its high nutritional value, ease in harvesting, and suitability for drying and storing.[13] Wild rice grows in lakes and rivers, the only cereal native to North America, and its characteristics, quality and taste are affected by regional variations in climate, ecology, and water ecology.

In his classic report "Wild Rice Gatherers of the Upper Lakes," Jenks (1900:79) describes how rice was gathered, processed, and used at the end of the nineteenth century. In those days it was customary for an Ojibwe family—typically a man and woman with their children, grandparents, uncles and aunts—to move to the rice lakes during the last part of August or the first part of September. Not more than two or three such families, related to each other, went ricing together. Even so, each household set up its own camp and cooking was done separately. In each group there was one man, usually the head of a family, who owned a ricing drum.

An elder living at Rice Lake described the routine and sociality experienced when families gathered at Rice Lake at summer's end to harvest their wild rice. A feast of thanksgiving was celebrated before the harvest began:

> Years ago when I was a kid they used to camp from here way on down to the landing. And they used to have a store. A couple of guys used to go out and check the rice. They'd go out and check it every now and then. And then when it was ready they'd go out and get the stuff. And they would come back and parch it up, right there, and have a big feast and say thanks for the rice and they would thank the Lord for everything that we have. Then everybody could go ricing. That's how they did it way back years ago when I was a kid.

Today, ricers who live on the reservation transport canoes with a car or truck to ricing lakes daily. Tribal members who live off-reservation and return to the reservation for ricing season typically stay with extended family members in the evenings after long days of ricing. Wild rice is a topic of everyday conversation, especially in late summer as preparations for the harvest get underway. Like Thomas Vennum (1988:54), I also observed how many Ojibwe, especially elders who keep rice in the pantry, know where it came from and who processed it.

Two people work together in a canoe to gather wild rice from the rice beds. Standing in the back of the canoe, one person uses a long pole to push the canoe slowly, and at a steady pace, through the rice beds. In the bow, a person uses two wooden sticks—one to grab, or bend, the rice stalks over the canoe and the other to "knock" the rice into the boat. When the ricers return to the shore, they bag and tie up the green rice to prepare it to sell to a rice buyer or finish it themselves.

In addition to its nutritional and medicinal values, wild rice creates and reinforces social bonds. During visits over the past years, an elder woman in Minneapolis has often said to me, "I riced with my husband every year." Each time we've had this conversation, she adds, "And we never sold any of our rice." She and her husband kept all of their rice in their household for consumption, refusing to sell their rice in the market for cash.

Sitting at a picnic table on his family's land that lies on the northern edge of Pine Point village, a man described the importance of the annual rice harvest. Like others who have told me about their experiences ricing, he begins by describing how his parents took him ricing as a child. Again, like many other tribal members, as an adult he returned to White Earth each year (from wherever he was living and working off-reservation, sometimes as far away as California) for the annual fall harvest. Ricing is part of his heritage and a way he relates to his family both in the past and in the present.

> I've been ricing since I was 12 years old. My parents and grandparents were ricers. My parents used to camp out for the whole season. They'd camp and rice at Big Basswood. Now you can't even get a car in there. I rice at Basswood Lake if there's rice there. It's changed, too. I go to the east end of the lake. Sometimes they don't let you in. They put chains and cables across the driveways, so we don't have access to the lakes. It seems like it's all posted land. A lot of places you can't get in there. The rice just goes to waste. That's the problem. They don't let you in or the roads are all bad, you can't

get the rice. I'd like to see the cardboard signs come down. Take the cables off the roads and the chains so we can get the rice.

Ricing is everything to me. We used to get all our school clothes from that. My Dad used to finish his own rice at our house. My parents would sell some finished and some green—about half and half. Everything you needed you got out of ricing—it'd last you through the winter. I started ricing for myself when I was 20 years old. I'd buy a new car every ricing season, seems like I'd always have enough money to buy a car.

I take my grandson ricing. He's 16 years old and lives in Minneapolis. I'm showing him the ropes. Last season he made his school clothes and sports equipment. He made $600 dollars last ricing season.[14] I give my grandson all the money to get him started in ricing. I promised him that he'd get all the money if he went ricing with me. I said, 'You rice with me and I'll give you all the money.' I didn't want to discourage him by saying, I'll take half. I like to rice whether I make anything or not. I like being out on the water. I've riced every year except when I lived in California. Even when I lived in California, I'd take my vacation during ricing season and then I'd come back to rice. I only missed a couple of years in my whole lifetime.

Another tribal member recalls ricing as a youth:

> I started ricing when I was 12 years old. We'd sell the rice for school clothes. We usually missed the first weeks of school because we were ricing. Our family kept some finished rice. We got 25 cents a pound for green rice when I was growing up. We riced at Bass Lake. We'd go out every day for a couple of weeks. The rice at Bass Lake seems to be thinning out. When I was a kid there was a lot of rice there. Damming causes a lot of problems. Land management people are also causing problems.

The wild rice district has shrunk in recent decades along the upper two-thirds of Wisconsin; the area in Minnesota east of the Mississippi River, Leech Lake, Lake of the Woods, Nett Lake, and the eastern sections of White Earth Reservation, especially at Rice Lake (Vennum 1988:33). As in the past, Ojibwe cultural survival is linked to intergenerational safeguarding of ancestral wild rice fields (1988:289).

Wild rice is considered to be a sacred food among Anishinaabe. The community's wild rice harvest is also sacred. Wild rice is an important basic food for families that gather and process large amounts of rice to supply their households throughout the year. In addition, wild rice is an essential food for

making a plate at feasts or special occasions where rice is shared through communal relationships.

Among Anishinaabe, their social relationships are mediated, and occur, through the environment in which they live. Community is linked to the environment, not abstracted from it. When people are cut off from ricing, for example, they are separated from the base that provides their subsistence and the social relations that give them an identity. Rice is more than food. Ricing is connectivity because it relates people. Gathering and sharing rice at meals or feasts are ways of being with others. When a person is eating rice, she is connected to others through the past and how they learned to rice from their parents. People look forward to the future when they hope to teach their children how to rice. People are not hired to gather rice, instead, it is gathered by the community and served to others at meals and feasts. Sharing rice means being one of the community. There is a different context of meaning than just an object in the natural environment. When people lose ricing, they lose their connection to others. Likewise, when hunting grounds are lost, or places to pick berries or medicines are destroyed, connections between people are also lost. Losing these connections among people and between people and places is what destruction of community is all about.

Nandewenjige **[Get food by fishing or hunting]**

Amik Beaver
Gaag Porcupine
Mikinaak Snapping Turtle
Mooz Moose

Nigig Otter
Ozagaskwaajimeg Leeches
Waabooz Rabbit
Waagosh Fox
Waabizheshi Marten
Waawaashkeshi Deer
Wazhashk Muskrat
Zhaangweshi Mink
Giigoo Fish
Adikameg Whitefish
Ashigan Bass
Ginoozhe Northern pike
Giigoozens Minnow
Maanameg Catfish
Namebin Sucker
Ogaa Walleye

Fishing

Fish are harvested with spears, nets, or poles. In the spring of the year when fish are running in creeks, spears are used to harvest them. The best times to lay nets to catch fish are in the spring and in the fall on cold days when a boat breaks through a thin sheet of ice covering the lake. Whitefish, suckers, walleye, and northern pike are harvested with nets.

A woman who has lived in Pine Point village all her life shared this story about bass fishing in a collection of stories for children. Fishing is not only a subsistence activity, it is a favorite way to spend time with family and friends. Her memories of fishing with her boyfriend are still important to her. Today she and other band members lack access to most lakes and waterways because non-Indians own and reside on nearly all of the lakeshore property (47 lakes in all) that lies within the reservation boundaries.

One time when I was about 22 years old I went fishing with my boyfriend at the dam at Round Lake. It was daytime and we were fishing for bass. There was a log in the water and my boyfriend stepped on it because he was trying to get out of the weeds so he could cast better. All of a sudden, out of the rushes flew a blackbird. I remember that bird being a blackbird because it had red spots on its wings.

So out flew this blackbird, stopping in mid-air right in front of my boyfriend's nose. That blackbird looked like a hummingbird, just flapping its wings and staying in one spot right in front of his nose. That looked so funny! I never saw a bird stay in one spot like that except for a hummingbird, like I said.

At the same time, my boyfriend tried to catch his balance on that log in the water without letting that blackbird bite his nose. His arms circled around and his feet slipped on the wet log like a lumberjack rolling in a log in the water with his feet. He tried hard to keep his balance without going in the lake, and I thought it was funny so see this. I just laughed and laughed.

Hunting

At White Earth, hunters grow up hunting with the same people—their grandfathers, fathers, uncles, brothers, cousins—and typically in the same areas.

Hunting is a gendered subsistence activity, but not gender exclusive. Men hunt with deer rifles. Boys learn how to hunt by hunting with their male kin, and as they become hunters, they also become men. Hunting makes and reinforces bonds between men as *brothers*. When describing relationships among hunters or brothers, men will say "what's yours is mine, or what's mine is yours, you know." Among some of the best hunters, hunting shapes *who they are*. Within their own community, they are recognized by an expression of their best selves—skilled hunters, providers, and a brother among brothers.[15]

Unlike hunters sitting in stands, waiting for a "trophy"—a big buck or doe—to find them, Native hunters work together as a group tracking deer and making drives to push them to particular positions in order to give a designated shooter a shot at the deer. Some hunters are better marksmen than others, and their abilities are recognized and applauded by family members and friends. A hunter relates to a deer with respect and admiration whether the deer is taken at their first encounter, or after a long period of time during which a deer has been watched and followed. Men who are exceptionally skilled hunters can recount every move of a particular drive they made in previous months or years. They describe in great detail the deer's movement across the terrain, the identity of the hunters in the group, what transpired, the weather and its changes, and who made the shot. A hunter's ability to shoot with great accuracy is known throughout the community, and recognition of his skill is heralded in the telling of hunting stories. His exceptional skill might be reflected in his nickname.

Most women express disinterest in hunting, although most know how to shoot a rifle with accuracy. On occasion a woman may choose to hunt. A male hunting party, made up of kin, includes her in the hunt without prejudice. People in the community know that she hunts (or hunted). If she takes a deer, it's her skill in taking a deer that is remembered and recounted over time among her family and friends. Long before my first hunting outing on the reservation, my White Earth friends had a question for me—"Laura, do you think you could shoot a deer?" Many people asked me this question, especially men. I really did not have an answer, but hunters weren't asking me if I thought I could shoot a rifle with the accuracy needed to shoot a deer—they wanted to know if I could take a deer's life. The first time I saw a hunter take a deer, I knew my answer: I could shoot a deer if I had to feed my children.

Another hunter describes learning how to hunt with his father and the changes he was witnessed over his lifetime:

> I've been hunting all my life. I started hunting when I was three, four, five years old before I even went to school. My dad would take me hunting, he'd take me way back there in the brush. Sometimes he'd have to carry me out. There's one area where I've been hunting all my life. You can't go in there now—it's posted even though it's on the reservation. It's all posted, every speck of that land. Regardless, if it's on the reservation we could still go in there —my uncle told me that. Now people who own that land they don't want you in there. They threaten to shoot people who 'trespass' on

that land. There's miles of land in there and we could make good use of it.

The importance of provisioning is described by a hunter:

White Earth is my community because this is where my people live. I'm Menominee, Cree, Chippewa and Ojibwe. Right now our people are in so much trouble for what's happening. They (loggers) cut down all the trees, even the fir trees. There is no freedom, no sovereignty. Then they say we can't practice our way of life. *We are this land, and everything that comes from it*. I hunt all over. You become what you eat. Our people are very sick. The only way our people can be strong again is by eating our sacred foods. If I see a family who needs rice, I'll give them rice. I'll give them maple syrup cakes. I'll give it to them—fish or deer meat.

A hunter at Round Lake in the southeastern corner of the White Earth Reservation describes the seasonal round of subsistence activities practiced by his family:

I like hunting for deer, rabbits, moose. I don't hunt bear. I trap beavers, mink, muskrat, otter, and fox. I collect some medicine plants. We collect high bush cranberries, chokecherries, wild strawberries, raspberries, juneberries, and blueberries. We also rice, trap leeches, and fish.

A tribal member who hunted at White Earth for nearly fifty years described the changes he witnessed: "My old hunting grounds are all damaged. It's all clearcut. I hunted there my whole life, so did my dad. Now it's like hunting in a strange country."

Another hunter described clearcutting a forest to "bulldozing your home." His comparison is not a metaphor, it is a reality for the community.

> Clearcutting ruins the habitat for deer—it chases them away. It's like what I'm saying if a bulldozer came and bulldozed this house, you can't live there. That's what clearcutting is like for the deer habitat. Over in Camp Seven that used to be one of the prime hunting places around here. Now you can drive around and there's nothing back there, no trees.

> They (clearcutters) just dried everything up. . . . We spend more time in the woods now because clearcuts interrupt our harvest areas. Last year at the meadow we had deer stands ready in the spring, then (the loggers) cut the trees and we couldn't hunt there anymore. Now we hunt in a small area along the road. Green Water used to be a good place to hunt, too, but it got cut out.

As more hunting grounds disappear, hunters themselves are disappearing. Every hunting season more and more hunters are absent—dying young, in their 40s or 50s most often from accidents, chronic alcoholism or diabetes. Community members frequently tell me about another relative or friend who just died. Someone is always losing someone who he has hunted with for years, some their entire lives.

Further Debasement of Forests

A tribal member describes how land ownership conflicts cause loss of subsistence habitat:

> Some of those medicine plants are harder to find because of lake shore development. With all of the land getting leased out to non-Indians, you can't go where you used to go to pick plants. Other folks own the rights to it and they don't want Indians around picking. Every year you have to go out further to find plants. Sometimes you find what you're looking for and sometimes you don't.

Another tribal member describes the consequences of timber harvest regulations:

> If you look in those trees, when they cut the oak, we lose the acorns. The acorns are feed for the deer, raccoons, squirrels, and bears. When the forest is first harvested, the state, the county, and the tribe require that everything is leveled to the ground—even the basswood—everything's got to be leveled down to one to one and a half inches. If the logger's all done and anything is standing, he gets docked for anything higher than one and a half inches. They shouldn't do that. It's okay with the poplar—that grows back. But the basswood, the red oak, the white oak—that doesn't grow back. That's pure raping the earth—nothing else will grow there.

A harvester at Roy Lake describes how the State of Minnesota sprays particular trees: "Those big trees—the box elder, birds nest in those. I've seen the

state spraying whole areas and killing the birds and everything else in there. They make plantations and nothing else comes back."

Tribal members are unable to stop outsiders from contaminating their food: "I do know how to hunt. I hunt deer. I remember growing up with my grandpa, and we never bought store-bought meat. My favorite is muskrat! But with all of the pollution and the chemicals, a lot of the muskrats aren't any good to eat any more. It's just miserable." Another tribal member describes the sick deer that move onto the reservation from the west. She claims that half of them are poison, "They're saying they're grain fed deer. They spray all that grain with insecticide and crop dusting for worms. The deer eat that stuff and their liver's all spotted up. And they don't taste that good."

A man at Roy Lake reported: "Spraying is contaminating the plants. I mostly pick around Roy Lake in areas that I know haven't been clearcut or sprayed. Some places like roads and fields—I hate to pick plants there because of the spraying—it causes a chemical change in the plants."

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[1] Their territories included the White Earth reservation.

[2] *Waabizheski* [marten] clan members serve as pipe bearers and message carriers for chiefs.

[3] In *History of the Ojibway Nation*, William Warren (1985 [1885]) describes numerous historical events involving the Marten Clan.

[4] The claim contradicts McNally's (2000) assertion that the seasonal round is only part of a bygone era.

[5] Notes with Ojibwe Calendar from Ojibwe language study at White Earth Reservation.

[6] Notes on the interpretations of natural phenomenon by Ojibwe were gathered by M. Inez Hilger on the Red Lake Reservation in Minnesota in the summers of 1932 and 1933 and on the Lac Courte Orielle, the Lac de Flambeau and the La Pointe Reservations of Wisconsin and the L'Anse Reservation of Michigan in the summer of 1935.

[7] I conducted this interview in 1998 for a manuscript called "Going Home" which is a collection of narratives by, and about, people who have made White Earth their home.

[8] Pine Point and Ponsford are names of two adjacent villages which are used interchangeably by the local community. The first was settled by the Pillager Band in 1868. In the early 1880s Ponsford sprang up as a bustling pioneer town that was the center of the logging activity throughout the area just north of Pine Point village in the transitional zone between the eastern edges of the Great Plains.

[9] Inez Hilger published two articles about Ojibwe culture at that time (Hilger 1936, 1937).

[10] See Schenck (1997) for a discussion of Algonquian totems and totemism.

[11] They picked blueberries at Lake George and around Two Inlets in northern Minnesota.

[12] *The Sugar Bush* (1999), written by Winona LaDuke and her daughter Waseyabin Kapashesit (who appear on the book's cover) is a children's book that describes the tradition of harvesting maple syrup at White Earth. Photographs taken by John Ratzloff illustrate the book. My collie and I enjoyed working in the sugar bush with Waseyabin, her family and siblings, WELRP staff and many community members.

[13] Some ricers sell rice for cash to make purchases, typically school clothing for children or a car.

[14] The money was earned by selling green rice to rice buyers who process the rice and sell it.

[15] This is an identity held within their own community, not imposed by dominant market society.

Chapter 3: History of Debasement

The history of debasement and land loss at White Earth is a history of mutual holdings transformed into private property, which are "dramatically different types of possession" (Gudeman 2008:74). This is certainly the case at White Earth Reservation where less than 10 percent of reservation land is held collectively by the White Earth Band and 90 percent of the land that lies within the reservation borders are held by non-Indians as private property. Anishinaabe community members do not own the forest, but they do share rights to hunt, trap, and collect resources such as berries, craft materials, and medicinal plants in the forest. In contrast, when land became private property, the dominant society privatized the natural resources. The healthy, life giving base, the forest, is transformed, by capital, into a set of commodities, especially trees, that are managed and extracted to be sold in the market for profit. When the base is transformed into private property, the connections between people and the based are greatly harmed.

The history of debasement at White Earth reservation is a history of capital's encroachment and expansion that continues to engulf the community's base, a collective territory, by converting the shared land into private property. Colonial powers and the U.S. government enable capitalists to cascade the market across reservation boundaries where land and forests were transformed into private property that was alienated from the community and bought and sold as real estate and timber. After the reservation was clearcut, for the first time in the late 1880s, settlers moved onto the newly divided and clearcut land to farm. At

White Earth, like other reservations, the community never consented to trading their base for money.

This chapter opens with a moment from my fieldwork that shows that land is still not conceived as private property by Native peoples. Today White Earth community members continue to declare that their land and its resources have never been sold because it was never owned or sold by its first inhabitants. From the perspective of Native peoples, it is inconceivable to trade money in exchange for the base that gives them life because "you can't eat money." The result of debasement, the privatization and destruction of the natural environment, has impoverished the community.

This Land is Ours

During a recent visit with my former neighbors in South Minneapolis, I had a conversation with a young Anishinaabe woman, a granddaughter of my former neighbor, who makes her home at White Earth. We had not seen each other in a long time, and as she gave me the latest updates about her children and her nieces and nephews, I copied down the words that appeared on the back of her hooded sweatshirt. An image of Geronimo and three Apache warriors appeared on the front of the jacket with the words "Homeland Security...Fighting Terrorism since 1492" printed above the iconic image. On the back of her sweatshirt these words appeared:

> The land...was put here for us by the Great Spirit and we cannot sell it because it does not belong to us. You can count your money and burn it within the nod of a buffalo's head, but only the Great Spirit can count the grains of sand and the blades of grass of these Plains. As a

> present to you we will give you anything we have that you can take with you; but the land—never.
>
> —A Blackfeet Chief

Fundamentally, the experience of living on a reservation, especially at the time of their creation was one of *dependence* on the U.S. federal government for food on arid, non-productive lands where tribes were, in many cases, forced to relocate. The destruction, or separation from, indigenous land bases caused impoverishment on an intergenerational basis. But it was also the land base of a tribal life that people struggled to continue to control, if they had a chance.[1] Ancestral lands have been critical to defining community identity and cultural survival for indigenous peoples living throughout the Americas and the world. Historically, native cultural practices, particularly economic and spiritual practices, have been intimately tied to the lands which their diverse communities and nations have occupied (Dickason 1989; Durning 1991, 1992; Haupt 1992; Bray and Irving 1993; Cone et al 1995; Wub-e-ke-niew 1995).

Indigenous Land Residency

In North America, prior to European conquest, all land was collectively held, used, maintained, and cared for by more than 700 different nations of Indigenous peoples (Dickason 1989; Durning 1992; Hitchcock 1992; LaDuke 1993c). As a conquered and colonized peoples, any remaining survivors fought to maintain their ability to provide for themselves and their children. To do so required land, preferably large tracts, and the control of its use and maintenance. First Nations did not divide land into sections, assign monetary value to it, and

exchange its ownership between individual property owners.

Indigenous peoples recognize that land is the source of all sustenance, not merely wealth. People and land are not conceived as distinct or inseparable entities. Land does not belong to people, instead, from an indigenous perspective, *the people belong to the land.* From Europe, Columbus brought an entirely different relationship between people and land. Western land ownership is one based on rights of certain (legally defined) individuals who hold exclusive ownership and control of land as property for accumulation and exchange. This complex system of land tenure was conceived in western doctrine, secured through proclamation by powerful elites and military conquest, and protected by monarchies or large governmental bodies, their militia, and violence. In spite of these differences in power, there is no question, among Native peoples, of the status of their standing as North America's First Nations and first residents. During my fieldwork, on more than one occasion, a tribal member has looked me squarely in the eye, and very directly proclaimed (see Krupat and Swann, eds. 2000), *"This is our land. We were here first."*

Within the context of the international human rights movement, Indigenous land rights are regarded as a basic human right (Anaya 1994:52). Since Columbus' 1492 arrival to the Americas, First Nations have struggled to maintain their basic human rights, including their homelands (Hecht 1989; Gedicks 1993). Anaya claims (1994:52):

> Native Americans have long sought redress against the forces of empire that have left them dispossessed of lands that once sustained them as

viable communities. The United States, a nation built upon a promise of freedom and justice for all, has been made to contend with the fact that it is also a nation built on land stolen, or skillfully traded (to put it in the best light), from the original inhabitants.

Crown Reserves Aboriginal Lands

In 1763 a British Royal Proclamation reserved to the Crown the right to extinguish Indian title to land, denying Native peoples' land rights after "discovery" by Europeans. In 1823 Supreme Court Justice John Marshall chose a compromising position in Johnson v. McIntosh. While embracing Europe's doctrine of title by discovery, the court did not completely extinguish all Indian land rights. The government held a superior title to the land, but Indians retained a right to occupy and use it as they always had until their right was extinguished through conquest or purchase by the U.S. federal government.

When Indian groups ceded land to the U.S. federal government—which had to be done before their land could legally be taken into possession by the government or anyone else—Indian title was said to be "extinguished," and the land then became part of the public domain, available for sale or other disposition under U.S. federal land laws. The United States, like its predecessor Britain in the 1763 Royal Proclamation, holds fee in tribal lands. Under U.S. law, the United States acquired tribal territories—nearly two billion acres—mostly through treaties of land cessions.

Treaty Making

Beginning in 1778, 370 treaties between the United States and Indigenous peoples of North America were established (and ratified by the U.S. Congress) until treaty-making ended in 1871.[2] Until the War of 1812, tribes negotiated with considerable bargaining power. Treaties gave Indigenous peoples recognition as sovereign and independent nations. The format for Indian-United States treaties, and procedures for putting them into effect, were the same as treaties the United States entered into with foreign sovereign nations, holding the same status, force and dignity as the highest levels of agreements with other sovereign nations.

Throughout its history, American anthropology, as a discipline, has been involved in various ways with Native struggles to reclaim and protect treaty lands and subsistence bases. Since the mid-1800s, anthropologists have work both within and outside of the U.S. federal government to address Native land struggles and protection of human rights (Lurie, N. 1978; K. Peterson 2012). In the *Handbook of North American Indians, volume 4* (1978), Nancy Lurie reviews this history in her chapter entitled "Relations Between Indians and Anthropologists" (Lurie N. 1978). The history of anthropologists and Native land claims cannot be understood outside of the political context of the U.S. federal government which directly shaped all the parameters of American Indian life, including their communities' efforts to maintain their homelands. This political context has included the creation of the following types of agreements and policies: treaties, reservation system, assimilation efforts, Indian claims commission, and a recent recognition of self-determination.

Treaty Lands

Since the arrival of Europeans to North America in 1492, Native peoples have struggled to maintain their homelands because their cultural survival depends upon the control and maintenance of land bases that are particular geographies that hold social, economic, and spiritual significance specific to each community. Gaining legal protection for the remainder of their subsistence base remains a priority for tribal nations because threats to Native lands and their resources include logging, mining, industrial agriculture, recreational developments, nuclear testing, nuclear waste storage, and energy development.[3]

Historically, tribes viewed treaties as ways of preserving themselves as a people. They sought two specific things from the U.S. federal government: recognition of their rights to their homelands, and a commitment from the government to protect and defend their rights, within those homelands, from encroachment by non-Indians. A reservation is an area of land *reserved* for a tribe, village, or band to live on and possibly use as a subsistence base. Title to the reservation land is held in trust by the United States for the benefit of federally recognized tribal nations.

The White Earth Reservation was established by treaty on March 19, 1867. White Earth Reservation covers a 1,296 square mile area. Leaders of the Mississippi Band of Anishinaabe reserved land for themselves, and all future generations, by signing the Treaty of 1867, as a sovereign nation, with the United States federal government. White Earth continues to awe those who claim it as their home—both tribal and non-tribal residents. The abundance of White Earth's

beautiful forests, prairies, rich soils, lakes and streams, has drawn the attention and desire of outsiders—timber barons, land speculators, small businesses, industrial farmers, resort owners, Christian churches, tourists, retirees, and others. Through a series of illegal acts by individuals and legislators alike, nearly all treaty lands within the reservation boundaries were lost within two generations of the reservation's creation, leaving the tribal community with less than ten percent of its original land base. Losing ownership and control of their land base has left many families impoverished because they are no longer able to support themselves, as hunters and gatherers, from the land. From one generation to the next, the local tribal community has been pushed to engage in a land struggle that continues today.

White Earth Reservation was conceived by U.S. federal and state lawmakers as a place where "Chippewa" might "conquer poverty by [their] own exertions," by becoming farmers and increasing participation in markets (Meyer 1994). Few band members who had relocated their families to White Earth aspired to farming although they did keep large gardens throughout the summer and some domesticated animals.

Timber on Treaty Lands

Between 1887 and 1934, approximately two-thirds of all reservation lands (more than 90 million acres) in the United States passed from tribal to non-Indian ownership—*leaving half of all Native peoples living on allotted reservations landless.* Land dispossession in the early twentieth-century forced many tribal members off-reservation. During those years, the land base held by

the White Earth Nation dwindled from 837,000 acres to 7,890 acres as a result of the General Allotment Act.[4]

In 1889, Minnesota ranked second in the country in logging, with the northwest portion of the state, where White Earth Reservation is located, leading in production. In 1889-1900, 11 million board feet of timber was taken from the White Earth Reservation. The next year 15 million board feet were cut, followed by 18 million in the 1891-2 winter logging season. In 1897, 50 permits had been issued for 70 million board feet. By 1898 an excess of 76 million board feet was cut annually.[5] This clearcutting caused a significant loss of medicinal plants, cultural resources, and ultimately, the health and well-being of the people of White Earth.

In the 1890s, Pine Tree Lumber Company headquarters, a mill and office and living quarters were built in Little Falls, Minnesota on the eastern shore of the Mississippi River. The Pine Tree Lumber Company took timber from the southeastern corner of White Earth reservation at that time. The families who owned the mill, the Mussers and Weyerhaeusers, founded the Potlatch Corporation which clearcuts forests at White Earth in contemporary times. In the late 1890s their production was extensive. The saws were dangerous, built to cut logs into timber, and constantly pushed to saw faster (Warner 1993).

On August 4, 1893, Little Falls Daily Transcript announced the ongoing expansion of the operations in Little Falls where timber cut in northern areas was processed. With their new wealth operations were updated with a new office building at the mill site. The newspaper headlines read: "New Office Building Of

the Pine Tree Lumber Company Finished this Week and Occupied Next."

> A company which saws lumber enough in one season to six times encircle the globe if it were cut up into inch strips, to build a baseball fence from here to San Francisco or to construct two or three cities the size of Little Falls, surely ought to have a good office. And the Pine Tree Lumber Company has just completed an office where they may indulge in such computations as these or in what would be more pleasing to them to figure out the profits of the season's work when the lumber is all sold. Seventy million feet will be the work of the season, and 70,000,000 multiplied by 12 to reduce it to strips one inch square, equals 840,000,000 feet, which divided by 5280, the number of feet in a mile, equals about 160,000 miles which is more then six times the distance around the globe.

Pine Tree Lumber Company boasted to the townspeople about the ever-increasing quantity of board feet they cut, milled and sold without revealing specific locations. In later years local accounts by lumberjacks revealed that forests were cut at White Earth reservation. At the time, they cut anywhere, and there was no one to stop them. Profit making by capitalists was applauded, celebrated, and revered by immigrant populations settling in Minnesota (Hidy et al 1963; Twining 1985, 1997). The invention of the light bulb doubled the pace that northern virgin forests were milled and sold to buyers in the south, especially Minneapolis where industrialists were building grand estates and mansions in

the city and around the lakes.

"Logging Around Ponsford" is an account written by J.W. Nunn and published in the magazine "Ponsford News." Nunn gives a firsthand account of the destruction of the white pine, Norway, and jack pine forests that were cut from 1895 to 1902 by logging companies in Becker County. He begins with a description of his first trip to Pine Point from Detroit Lakes:

> We first came to the Shell Prairie country in 1890 and located at what was then known as Pine Point. We started out from Detroit (Lakes) at daybreak. All day we pounded over rocks, up and down hills, through soft swamps and marshy places which kept us much on the alert. We were very tired at sundown when we arrived at Pine Point (Nunn 1990:45).

His account begins with highlights of the beauty of the old growth forests surrounding Pine Point village. Upon his arrival, Nunn found the pine balm laden air in Pine Point "invigorating." Nunn described the area's waterways: "streams and lakes were then teeming with fresh fish of many kinds, streams departed with the forests—lakes that have dried up until fish can no longer live in their stagnant and poisonous environment (Nunn 1990:45)." However, he reported that what was once a "great playground" is now "great barren stretches of unproductive country" as the result of a "gigantic slaughter" and the "aftermath of fire destruction" (1990:45). A witness to the subsequent debasement of the local forests and waterways, Nunn attributes the destruction to the "ruthless hand of greedy human nature" undertaken by logging companies (1990:45). He continued: "It now appears human nature has disposed of a wonderful birthright

for a mere mess of pottage in the form of the almighty dollar" (1990:46).

In the United States, forests were first cleared in the east to open lands for European immigrant settlers. Once thought to be a "virtually inexhaustible resource," eastern forests were nearly depleted by the mid-1800s and logging activities moved westward. By the mid-1890s, northern pine forests in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota were also cleared. Railroads connected the midwestern states with the Pacific Northwest in the 1880s, making the harvesting of Idaho's evergreen forests feasible (Riggs 1994:428).

Broken Treaties and Land Loss

Efforts by the federal government to assimilate, or "civilize," American Indians took legislative form in 1887 with passage of Henry Dawes's General Allotment Act. With the passage of the his Act, the U.S. government broke treaties by dismantling the trust status of all reservation lands in the country. The movement to *civilize* Native peoples living on reservations was built upon privatization of Indian lands to create the opportunity for private property ownership and, in suitable environments, farming. Under this legislation, individual Indians were assigned allotments of reservation land, to be held in trust with the federal government for 25 years. Article VII of the 1867 treaty states "...and the land so held by any Indian shall be exempt from taxation and sale for debt." Minors could not legally sell their allotments during the years of dispossession, nor could full-bloods without written permission signed by the President of the United States.[6]

Other legal mandates were instrumental in this process: the Nelson Act of 1889 and the Clapp Amendment of 1906 permitted adult mixed-blood Ojibwe of the White Earth Reservation to sell their lands. Allottees who did not sell their lands were often taxed, illegally, leading to loss of land caused by foreclosure when taxes went unpaid. So-called *excess lands*, amounting to millions of acres, were sold to non-Indians. Excess lands were those pieces not allotted to an individual member of a tribal nation recognized by the U.S. federal government. A White Earth elder recalls how her mother lost her allotment land:[7]

> My mother told me how she put her thumbprint on a piece of paper. She couldn't write. She couldn't speak English. My mother lost her land that way. She didn't know she was losing her allotment. She was full blood. She wasn't supposed to be able to sell her land, according to the law. The Indians went through their land money in a hurry. It took maybe a year. They bought horses and buggies and clothes. Then it was all gone and they had to live the way they did before.

As early as 1887, the United States government began investigating allegations of land and timber theft on the White Earth Reservation. On November 25, 1905, Reverend Charles Wright arrived in Washington, D.C. with a petition signed by 376 Indians protesting the allotment process at White Earth Reservation. In all, the U.S. government conducted seven federal investigations into the White Earth land scandals. Each investigation supported evidence that

over 90 percent of the land held by non-Indians on the reservation had been taken illegally.

Collier Agreement

In 1935, Indian Commissioner John Collier began reacquiring land for the White Earth Band to help reestablish their land base which, at that time, had been reduced to two percent of its original area. Collier optioned land within what is now Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, but before he purchased it the Biological Survey (now the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) convinced him to relinquish Indian interest in the land *in exchange* for specific benefits (which never materialized) for tribal members. In 1938, when the refuge officially opened, the Biological Survey had still not acquired title to all the land within the refuge. The Collier contract grants White Earth Band members five specific privileges: (1) priority in ricing and trapping rights; (2) training in wildlife management; (3) employment of Indian Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC); (4) employment in developing the refuge; and (5) protection of ricing privileges.[8] All of these privileges have never been realized for the White Earth Band.

U.S. government officials attempted to dismantle the community trust status of the reservation lands within the proposed refuge. In order to do this, John Collier and W.C. Henderson, then acting chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey entered into the "Collier agreement." Despite its status as a sovereign nation, the White Earth Band was, and is, bound to this externally imposed contract about which they were never consulted and to which they never consented.

By 1938, Anishinaabe whose homes remained on condemned land within proposed refuge boundaries were forced to leave. In some cases, wreckers bulldozed their houses, tore down standing structures, and burned everything that remained. Anishinaabe elders who experienced this forced relocation lived near the refuge in the Pine Point community. These individuals, with or without knowledge of illegal proceedings prior to their forced removal, were aware that their forced relocation was a violation of their treaty-guaranteed rights because condemnation of reservation land requires an act of Congress and the institution of special statutes (LaDuke 1993a:7).

Virtually all the 226 allotments left Anishinaabe hands by the illegal means mentioned. Condemnation alone accounts for 80 percent of the reservation land not held by Anishinaabe in the refuge. Even John Collier, a key player in the formation of the refuge, questioned the legality of condemning reservation land: "Doubt may exist as to the validity of title of purchase even if such sale is approved by the Department of Interior" (LaDuke 1993a:7). Nevertheless, the U.S. government condemned the land in order to justify forming the refuge in that location.

In 1934, U.S. Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), ending the land allotment policies of the Dawes Act, and providing the means for purchase of lands for dispossessed Native communities.[9] In the mid-1930s, tribal nations retained about 48 million acres of land, much of it arid, unusable, and unproductive. The Indian Reorganization Act did help some tribes reclaim reservation lands and increase the size of their land bases. Among its many

provisions the Indian Reorganization Act provided for the creation of tribal governments. White Earth was one of the many agencies that recognized the Indian Reorganization Act and formed a tribal government.

A growing number of Native land claims were brought to the attention of the U.S. federal government beginning in the 1940s. In response to these various claims, the U.S. Congress enacted the Indian Claims Commission Act in 1946. From 1946 until 1978, the Commission heard hundreds of cases. Tribes wanted their land back, and although the Claims Court repeatedly acknowledged the legitimacy of their claims, only monetary compensation, not return of land, was offered to tribes.[10]

Consequently, James Anaya (1994:53) writes, "no matter how wrongfully American Indians were dispossessed of their lands, they have remained dispossessed of their lands." He (1994:55) describes the implications of this "money for land approach":

> More fundamentally, the money for land approach of the Indian Claims Commission Act could in any event provide only partial justice for native peoples. It was an approach callous to the cultural and spiritual significance of land to native people and to the importance of a viable land base for the survival of native community-based economies. The Indian Claims Commission Act was born of an era in which policy makers in the federal government adhered to a now defunct philosophy that Indians would be better off when severed from their tribal roots and assimilated into the dominant culture. Under such a philosophy, to provide Indians

with money for past wrongs would ease the hurt caused by the wrongdoer. But it has failed to fully ease the pain of the Indian.

Tax Forfeiture Land

Some of the history of the loss of Indian controlled lands in Minnesota is related to the thousands of acres of county tax-forfeited land. Minnesota ranks first in the country in acreage of tax-forfeited land. The majority of these lands are located in 13 northern counties where the greatest percentage of original Indian reservation lands are found (Minnesota House of Representatives, Research Department, March 1984:6). Thirty-eight percent of state land was acquired from tax forfeiture, much of this land reverted to the state in the 1920s.

The case of ZayZah v. Clearwater County, which was favorably adjudicated in 1978, contested the illegal entry of ZayZah's trust allotment on Clearwater County's tax rolls. In addition to having placed lands on the tax rolls when their trust status precluded their tax liability, Clearwater County eventually had declared the parcels tax-delinquent and offered them for public sale. When the purchasers, the Stevens family, filed for quiet title, ZayZah's grandson George Aubid, Jr., contested both the taxation and the sale. The court found that the lands indeed had been inappropriately entered on the tax rolls and ordered the lands restored to trust on behalf of Aubid (Holly Youngbear-Tibbetts 1991:98).

White Earth Land Settlement Act 1986

As early as 1887, the United States government began investigating allegations of land and timber theft on the White Earth Reservation. In all, the U.S. government conducted seven federal investigations into the White Earth

land scandals, most recent federal investigation was the "2415 Land Claims Investigation" conducted between 1978 and 1982. Each investigation supported evidence that over 90 percent of the land held by non-Indians on the reservation had been taken illegally.

To settle competing claims, the U.S. Congress passed the controversial White Earth Land Settlement Act (WELSA) in April 1986. The U.S. Congress had no intention of removing farmers from treaty lands and reinstating collective ownership to the White Earth Nation. Instead, WELSA vested title in stolen lands to non-Indians and offered monetary compensation to White Earth Band members for land loss. In addition, the state of Minnesota and the three counties that lie within the reservation boundaries (Becker, Clearwater, and Mahnomen), were directed to return 10,000 acres of land taken through tax-forfeiture.[11]

Community members pushed to declare the White Earth Land Settlement Act (WELSA) unconstitutional. The community embraced a new strategy for recovering their land base: *buy back the reservation one acre at a time*. In 1989, White Earth Land Recovery Project (WELRP) became the organizational vehicle to facilitate recovery of White Earth Indian Reservation's original land base.[12] Through extensive research, the organization identified ownership of every acre of land within the reservation by studying county plat maps (Becker, Mahnomen, and Clearwater counties). The White Earth Band held only 74,395 acres of the original 837,000 acres of reserved land. Landholdings within the reservation boundaries included the following: federally held parcels: 48,421 acres (6%); state held parcels: 55,160 acres (7%); county held parcels (Becker, Clearwater,

and Mahnomen Counties): 137,533 acres (16%); with the remaining two-thirds of the original land base held by private non-Indian landholders.[13]

Potlatch Corporation

Multi-national corporations, in this instance Potlatch Corporation, have clearcut forests at White Earth and in the region for more than one hundred years. Potlatch Corporation is a descendant of the Weyerhaeuser timber dynasty founded by Frederick Weyerhaeuser, a powerful lumber capitalist from St. Paul, Minnesota who founded the Pine Tree Lumber Company (described previously) in Little Falls. Potlatch Corporation's accumulation of wealth began in the 1890s and continues today. The magnitude of the wealth and power of Potlatch Corporation can be seen from any reservation road on which large logging trucks continuously haul logs off-reservation to be sold as commodities in highly profitable and capitalized timber market.

Potlatch Corporation is a public company and major producer of wood products in the United States, with extensive land holdings and operations in Minnesota, Idaho, and Arkansas. With its roots in the mountainous, evergreen forests of northern Idaho, Potlatch has grown to be a national, billion-dollar enterprise since its establishment in 1903 (Riggs 1994:428). In its 1994 Annual Report, Potlatch Corporation describes its operations as

> a diversified forest products company with 1.5 million acres of timberland in Arkansas, Idaho, and Minnesota. Our manufacturing facilities convert wood fiber into two main product lines: bleached fiber products (bleached kraft pulp, paperboard, printing papers, and consumer tissue) and wood

products (oriented strand board, plywood, particleboard, lumber and wood specialties). Potlatch's business philosophy is committed to increased earnings and a superior rate of return, achieved by talented, well-trained and highly motivated people who are properly supported by a sound financial structure and a keen sense of responsibility for the environment and to all the publics with whom the company has contact.

Potlatch grows and harvests timber, manufactures wood products, printing papers, and other pulp-based products, employing 7,400 workers with annual sales of nearly $1.5 billion dollars. With headquarters in San Francisco, California, it participates in millwork, paper mills, paperboard mills, and coated and laminated paper industries. In Minnesota Potlatch holds more than 300,000 acres of timber land and operates plants in Bemidji, Brainerd, Cook, Cloquet, and Grand Rapids.

Potlatch's early history has close ties to the national history of the U.S. logging history when forests were first cleared in the east. By the mid-1890s, the northern forests of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota were also cleared. Lumbermen looked to the south and to the far northwest for regions to exploit timber lands (Riggs 1994:428). In 1964 Potlatch merged with another Weyerhaeuser company, Northwest Paper Company, located in Minnesota where jack pine, aspen, red pine, and balsam fir were the most common species.

In 1981, Potlatch built the first U.S. plant in Minnesota to make oriented strand board (OSB). An alternative to plywood, OSB is a multilayered board made from strands of aspen "oriented" in various directions; the strands are held

together by a mixture of wax and resin and compressed under intense heat. By 1991 the company was making more than a billion square feet of OSB a year in two varieties. With sales skyrocketing in the late 1980s, Potlatch spent large sums of money to upgrade its plants and machinery.

In the early 1990s, Potlatch's earnings were highest in its wood products (lumber and oriented strand board). Total sales jumped from $356 million dollars in 1971 to $820 million dollars in 1980, and $1.33 billion dollars in 1992 when profits reached $78.9 million dollars. In the early 1990s, Potlatch's earnings were highest in its wood products (lumber and oriented strand board).

The paper industry is the most capital intensive of all basic U.S. manufacturing industries, requiring nearly continuous major investments for plants and equipment. New Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) water and air rules require capital expenditures in billions of dollars throughout the industry. In the early 1990s, the Potlatch Corporation expanded its operations in Minnesota by expanding its paper mill in Cloquet and doubling the size of a plant in Bemidji and also building a sawmill there. Bemidji is located 50 miles northeast of White Earth reservation. The plant produces a plywood substitute called oriented strandboard, or waferboard. The aspen tree, Minnesota's most populous tree, has been described as the foundation of the boom (in profits).

Potlatch sales on Minnesota products were more than $400 million dollars in 1994 (Potlatch Corp. Annual Report 1994). Becker County sells timber to Potlatch Corporation from the 250,000 acres of tax forfeit land lost to the Anishinaabe in illegal tax expenses imposed on them and Tamarac National

Wildlife Refuge. National forest sales to corporations such as Potlatch have resulted in annual net losses for most national forests (Rebuffoni 1992:7B).

With increased plant capacity Potlatch will extract greater amounts of trees as raw material for production. As one of the leading manufacturing companies in Minnesota, Potlatch Corporation is a major contributor to environmental pollution. Potlatch operations in Cloquet rank among the top ten corporate operations in Minnesota which emit chemicals into the environment. Environmentalists struggle to hold Potlatch Corporation accountable for its impacts on Minnesota forests (Associated Press 1992:5B; Duchsere 1992:5B; S. Peterson 1992:1D; Meersman 1993:1A)

It is evident from this brief profile that Potlatch Corporation dominates the woods products industry in profits and impacts various markets and communities where Potlatch operates. Since its founding in 1993, Potlatch Corporation has built a substantial financial and resource base which has allowed the company to develop new products while meeting the high capital demands typical of the industry.

Poverty

The White Earth community has been debased by Potlatch Corporation. The extraction of aspen and other trees from White Earth reservation impoverished the local community. Reforestation rarely occurs. Forests rich in biological diversity recover naturally in an area only after hundreds of years. Families and children living on the White Earth Reservation are among the most impoverished communities in Minnesota.[14]

This first description of a family's impoverishment is described here. Members of a family from White Earth have told me at numerous times that during World War II their father and his brothers left their family's village on White Earth reservation to serve in the war. By the 1940s, White Earth band members possessed less than 10 percent of their land, and without access to their land base, families struggled to meet basic subsistence needs. "They (people on the reservation) had nothing, no money, and often went hungry. You can only eat so much deer meat before you get tired of it," one family member told me. Throughout their service, their father and his brothers sent their earnings back to their parents living at Rice Lake village on the reservation.

Years later, as a father himself, their father refused to grant permission to his young sons to enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces and serve in Vietnam. His sons claimed that their father told them— 'it's not your war or your problem. The only reason I fought in the war was to feed my parents.' Each time one of his sons tells me this story, they admit that they know little about their father's experiences as a soldier. However, they all agree that his purpose as a soldier during the was was to earn wages to support his parents at White Earth.

Today more than 40 percent of people on White Earth are unemployed. For people living on the reservations, the numbers are "no surprise," according to Robert Durant, secretary-treasurer for the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, where jobs are scarce.[15]

It's really hurtful in our hearts that we have so many families that have to go without," Durant said. "Many times I feel tears coming up for situations

you see that are out of a family's control. And it's food, it's the electricity, it's the heating, it's the transportation, it's the clothing... And many times we feel that we always operate in a crisis mode.

Diabetes is a fast growing epidemic among American Indians. It affects people with earlier onsets, greater complications,[16] and rapid progression of the disease.[17] The death rate from diabetes is over 400 percent greater in native people than the general population. The diagnosis of diabetes in children has increased eight times in the last ten years. Serious kidney disease, amputations, and blindness are four to six times more common among Native peoples than in the dominant society. Unemployment, low income, lack of medical insurance, and lack of transportation exacerbates the progression of the disease (White Earth Tribal Council 1996). Other factors, such as lack of medical care and access to medications also have led to a wave of illness affecting every family in the community. One local community response to the crisis is to bring back traditional foods locally harvested that can provide a nutritious diet.

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[1] Personal communication with Stephen Gudeman.

[2] The first treaty was the treaty of the Delaware Nation, dated September 17, 1778. The last official treaty with an Indian tribe, which the U.S. Senate ratified, was the Nez Perce treaty of August 13, 1868. In 1871, the U.S. Congress officially abolished treaty-making with Indian tribes.

[3]See Swenson, ed. 1982; Spry 1983; Shkilnyk 1985; Gedicks 1993; White Earth Land Recovery Project 1993; Abrahamson 1998.

[4] The Termination Act of 1953 reversed trends initiated by the Indian Reorganization Act. From 1953 to 1957 about 2 million acres of Indian land passed from Indian tenure. In all, 109 Nations, or elements of Nations, were terminated by U.S. Congressional action during the 1950s under President Eisenhower's administration. A handful of Nations were restored to federal recognition during the 1970s, including the Klamath and Menominee Nations.

[5] See Folwell (1969:261), *A History of Minnesota*, rev. ed. 4:261.

[6] This action was conducted via the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

[7] Native rights activist Winona LaDuke collected this story from an elder woman in an interview conducted in 1978.

[8] Specifically on the Rice Lake Migratory Waterfowl Area located in Aitkin County.

[9]See LaDuke 1993a, p. 7.

[10] U.S. federal policy shifts in the 1970s recognized the integrity of native communities, and in some instances land was returned to tribal nations. In 1970 the U.S. Congress voted to return (following years of struggle by Taos Pueblo and their allies) the Sacred Blue Lake to Taos Pueblo and 48,000 acres of forest land in New Mexico. One year later, Congress returned 61,000 acres to the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation in Oregon. In 1972, by executive order, the Yakima Nation regained possession of Mount Adams and 21,000 acres of land in Washington state. In 1988, Congress decided to return 16,000 acres which had been improperly surveyed to the Quinalt Nation (Washington State). Other cases of returned land include the Payson Community of Yavapai-Apache Indians (Arizona), the Havasupai Tribe (Arizona), the Paiute and Shoshone Nations of the Fallon Reservation (Nevada), and the Zia and Santa Ana Pueblos (New Mexico).

[11] The lump sum payment of $19 million dollars was used by the White Earth Band to leverage capital to finance construction of Shooting Star Casino in Mahnomen. U.S. federal government offered White Earth Band members $13 million dollars to settle land claims, and after some negotiation, the tribe received $19 million dollars and return of 10,000 acres of land taken by the State of Minnesota under tax forfeit laws. Federal and state lands were not included in the investigation.

[12] WELRP is a 501(c) non-profit organization.

[13] Shelly Brown, Land Officer, White Earth Reservation Tribal Council. Tribal land holdings recorded from Bureau of Indian Affairs Land Office, Cass Lake, Minnesota. Personal communication, 28 August 1996.

[14] The new American Community Survey was released on 16 December 2010. Reporter Tom Robertson (Minnesota Public Radio) spoke with White Earth tribal members in Bemidji, Minnesota when the information was released.

[15] The high poverty rate in Mahnomen is followed by poverty rates in Blue Earth, Nobles, Beltrami, Lake of the Woods, Wadena, Winona, Clearwater, Stevens and St. Louis counties. One in five children live in poverty in the United States.

[16] Complications from diabetes, such as serious kidney disease, amputations, and blindness are four to six times more common among Native groups than the dominant society.

[17] Diabetes is a serious public health problem affecting nearly 16 million Americans. The prevalence rate of diabetes among Native Americans and Alaska Natives is more than twice that for the total population and at least one tribe, the Pimas of Arizona, have the highest known prevalence of diabetes of any population in the world.

Chapter 4: Revitalizing the Base

Resistance to debasement at White Earth is a movement to revitalize the local economy and community. The purpose of the White Earth Land Recovery Project (WELRP), founded in 1989 by Native rights activist Winona LaDuke, is recovery of all land within the White Earth reservation boundaries. Besides pursuing recovery of the reservation land, the organization is involved in revitalizing the base of the local community. The name of the initiative might be better understood as the White Earth Base Recovery Project, referring to the forests, waterways, animal and plant life as well as the heritage of their nation—the language, history, customs, kinship, subsistence practices, and values. To recover only the land would ignore the social relations between the people and their base as well as the culture and knowledge that grew out of their long-standing residence in the region. Over the years the organization has broadened its revitalization efforts with the development of model initiatives that support language learning, leadership, environmental programs, and small-scale farming.

The philosophy of the organization is not based on a return to the ways of the past but a commitment to self determination based on choosing what's helpful from modern society, particularly technological advances that reflect a respect for the environment. A unique aspect of this revitalization is a measured embrace of market activity, through the development of a cottage industry called Native Harvest, that uses a surplus of the harvest of local products, especially maple syrup, wild rice, berries, and traditional crafts, to build capital and support revitalization efforts. Self determination is conceived as respect for the traditional

values and teachings and a commitment to the future that includes development, and local control of technological advances and trade and exchange outside of the local community. The organization identifies with the struggles, and successes, of other Ojibwe communities in the region, other reservation based communities throughout the United States and Canada, grassroots Native environmental activists, and Indigenous peoples throughout the world.

As one of the four largest reservation-based, non-profit organizations nationally, WELRP is a model of community development in a rural area. Members of the organization reach out to tribal, county, state, and federal government officials to negotiate land acquisition, promote sound and sustainable resource management, and influence public policy on a number of issues. The organization also aims to broaden local educational efforts among both Native and non-Native residents who live on the reservation and create political will for change, especially regarding proposed cutting on reservation lands and resource extraction.

The White Earth Nation has struggled to maintain their reservation land base since its creation by treaty in 1867. Passage of the White Earth Land Settlement Act in 1986 terminated all federal land claims by the White Earth Nation, exhausting all legal options for land return within the context of the U.S. federal government (Shipp 1987). The community's response was first voiced through the formation of an organization called *Anishinaabeg Akeeng* [The People's Land]. The White Earth Land Recovery Project grew out of Anishinaabeg Akeeng, and its solution to land loss was to request return of land, negotiate with

landowners and policy makers, and secure funds to purchase alienated reservation land, one acre at a time.

The organization began its work, as mentioned, by identifying land ownership within the reservation boundaries through research of county plat maps. After identifying land ownership, requests for land returns were sent to non-tribal landowners: absentee landowners and ranchers; the U.S. federal government; the State of Minnesota; Becker, Clearwater, and Mahnomen counties; the Boy Scouts of America; the Nature Conservancy; the Catholic Church; Protestant congregations; and others.

Staff also completed interviews, research, and data analysis to develop a Community Land Use and Needs Assessment for the reservation. The document outlined the status of land tenure on the reservation, and addressed the relationship of land tenure to housing, economic, and cultural issues that affected the local community. The community and tribal government identified priorities in land acquisition, and made recommendations for recovery and revitalization of the base.[1]

Soon after its creation in 1989, WELRP also began a varied but holistic approach to support the revitalization of their base. They initiated a series of legal battles to recover lands taken from the Anishinaabe through unethical tax foreclosures, treaty abrogations, and property thefts during the 1800s and early 1900s (Youngbear-Tibbetts 1991; Meyer 1990,1994; McLeod 1994a, 1994b, 1995). One of their first projects was to demarcate the reservation boundaries to visibly claim the existence of their reservation. Many non-tribal members, including

those who reside on or visit the reservation are unaware of the existence of the reservation and its boundaries. That act was a proclamation, and revitalization, of the local identity of the White Earth Nation.

In its early years, the organization purchased and recovered over 1,300 acres of land, much of which could support subsistence and sustainable farming activities; established themselves as key organizers in northern Minnesota forest issues; mobilized to stop a 11,000 acre clearcut on the reservation; successfully litigated to preserve burial grounds; established their right as a Native organization to hold land in a tax exempt manner on White Earth Reservation;[2] installed two wind monitors to assess the feasibility of alternative energy on the reservation; conducted extensive language immersion programming in the community and with the tribal school systems; and developed a cottage industry called Native Harvest to develop local markets to support the organization's land acquisition and to strengthen the local land based economy. Winona LaDuke led these revitalization efforts and her leadership and experiences are integral to understanding the challenges her community faces.

Winona LaDuke, Native Rights Activist

In early autumn of 2010, a journalist and her crew traveled from New York City to northern Minnesota to join Winona LaDuke for a tour of the pine forests, lakes, and windswept plains of her homeland, White Earth Reservation. "The Promised Land" is a radio show produced by American Public Media that features stories about leaders and visionaries who are transforming lives and communities. During the hour-long radio program LaDuke gave her guests a tour

of her home.[3] As she's moving, she talks about harnessing wind power, nutrition and diabetes, preserving heritage crops, and protecting land inherited from her ancestors.

The tour begins in Calloway, the windiest spot on the reservation, where a refurbished wind turbine lies chained, but ready to be connected to the electrical grid. Ottertail Power Company has been sitting on the organization's request to get connected to the grid for more than eight years. The organization is ready to harness wind to generate electricity for its program offices and production area for Native Harvest, a cottage industry that markets wild rice, maple syrup, raspberry jam, art, and craftwork.

LaDuke is also leader of the national and international native environmental movement, but she finds the struggle for justice the most challenging at White Earth, her father's homeland, and the place where her great, great, great grandparents lived, hunted, and fished, and where her grandmother owned land. She has raised her children on a lake near Pine Point Village.

Ambassador for the interests of the White Earth Nation, LaDuke reflects during the radio program:

> I explain this all the time. Our neighbors have no historical context to understand why we still fight—for our land and our right to survive as a people. They're puzzled. They wonder, 'Why are Indians so mad? Why don't you Indians just give it up. Why don't you Indians just quit. It's been a long time since those treaties were signed. You should be happy you got those casinos.' Whites don't understand why Native people are still in

courts, still getting arrested for hunting and fishing. We want non-Native neighbors to know the history.

In her prologue to a manuscript called "Going Home," LaDuke (1996) writes, "The land of White Earth, the lakes, the water, the villages, the families, the people, all speak to me, in words which resonate with a great and beautiful spirit of hope and meaningful existence. *White Earth is the only place I call home*."[4] Winona recounts in detail an experience that shaped the trajectory of her life. As a 10 year-old girl she received a U.S. federal treasury check for $94.60, issued to Winona LaDuke.[5] No letter or explanation accompanied the check. She discovered that the check was a land payment, a settlement check for land in central Minnesota. The rate of "compensation" was about 11 cents an acre: "Somehow the payment was not compensation, could not compensate me, for the loss of land, and the payment could not cleanse me from an unresolved historical grief, from yearning for knowledge of my place."[6]

LaDuke's family's allotments are located along the shores of Many Point Lake. Here Winona describes how her great-grandmother was swindled out of her allotment along the shores of Many Point Lake by a land shark:[7]

> She lived on Many Point Lake, where her allotment was. She had a bill at the local store, the Fairbanks grocery store, and she had run it up because she was waiting for fall when she could get some money from trapping or from a treaty annuity. So she went to a land speculator named Lucky Waller, and she said, 'I need to pay this bill.' She asked to borrow fifty bucks from him until treaty

> payment time, and he said, 'Okay, you can do that. Just sign here and I'll loan you that fifty bucks.' So she signed with her thumbprint and went back to her house on Many Point Lake. About three months later she went back to repay Lucky Waller the fifty bucks, and he said, 'No, you keep that money; I bought land from you instead.' He had purchased her eighty acres on Many Point Lake for fifty bucks. Today that location is a Boy Scout Camp.

In November of 1996, after a brief ten-week campaign (mostly Jeffersonian in nature with a budget of less than $5000) the Green Party's U.S. presidential ticket with Nader and LaDuke finished fourth place nationally with 600,000 votes in 22 states. In Minnesota, the Green Party mustered enough votes to attain minor party status. Election day marked the end of a short campaign and the start of a new chapter in LaDuke's life.

A local newspaper published an article about Winona's historic vote. At the end of the article, the journalist captured a telling moment: "As she casts her vote another truck headed to Potlatch timber mills off-reservation passed the Round Lake Town Hall. LaDuke is a vocal opponent of timber industry clearcutting. 'Look at that,' she pointed at a logging truck traveling past and said with disgust. 'I *hate* that'" (Shaw 1996).

The national campaign was challenging, but exciting. Now, as a human rights activist, LaDuke travels throughout the world to educate and persuade individuals, institutions, and corporations to protect communities and local environments. But her greatest challenges remain at home where she and other

members of her community struggle to persuade local county governments to stop industrial logging and unsustainable agricultural practices on reservation lands and throughout the region.

Seven Generations

Although Winona LaDuke considers herself a journalist, she has stories to tell which do not fit in the journalism category. LaDuke's first novel, *Last Standing Woman*, published in 1997, is written with a sense of humor, a gentle spirit and with much wisdom. This book, about the history of White Earth and the Anishinaabe community beginning in the 1860's and continuing through seven generations, is LaDuke's expression of "how we see ourselves, who we are and how we came to be." Within this time frame, three women have earned the name *Ishkwegaabawiikwe* [Last Standing Woman].

LaDuke's storytelling combines historical events with characters based on White Earth residents. She tells the reader about racism and social injustice suffered as a result of contact with white people and the colonialism which followed. LaDuke's storytelling reflects many aspects of traditional Anishinaabe culture, including a sustenance lifestyle and the importance of community, ceremony and respect for all things. The book reflects a people who struggle with imposed lifestyle changes and reaffirms the determination and the courage with which they fight to protect their culture and traditions.

The story is told in a circular pattern. However, LaDuke continues the story into the future, a future which is hopeful and promising as the next generation is born and continues to practice a traditional way of life. The last chapter is

written in the Ojibwe language as a tribute to the Ojibwe people and as evidence that the Ojibwe language is alive today.

Buffalo Nation: An Image of Revitalization

The following story reveals an important image of revitalization presented by one band member. During a visit to Pine Point village, located in the southeastern corner of White Earth reservation, a friend was eager to show me a collection of wood carvings made by her brother. When I first met her brother he was carving flutes which he sold to shops in the Twin Cities. In the years since his skills developed and became more refined. There were four painted carvings in the set, each depicting a Native warrior with a horse. One carving in particular represented a vision for revitalization of the White Earth community. It depicted a young brave riding a horse, together moving at high speed with a buffalo running alongside them. The hunter holds a spear next to his side, ready to take the buffalo.

While I held that carving in my hands, I remembered a conversation with my friend's brother years earlier in Pine Point. While we were outside visiting, he told me that the first bands to migrate to White Earth after treaty-signing in 1867 survived by eating buffalo. As he looked toward the western horizon, he said that "he could *see those buffalo* heading east, back to White Earth." He added, *"We'd have all our land, our buffalo would return, and we could hunt anywhere we wanted."* That image holds the ideal of land recovery for dispossessed Anishinaabe.[8] In my friend's experience, it was this *vision*, not the loss of land, that defined him, his family, and his people.

Anishinaabe Values and Identity

The White Earth Land Recovery Project sponsors many educational and cultural programs to revitalize the community's knowledge of its language, history, and heritage. An education survey for the community reveals the knowledge that the organization, and others, view as important: Do you know the Anishinabe Creation Story? Where did the Anishinabe got the pipe? Where did the Anishinabe get tobacco, how and why it is used? Do you have an Anishinabe name? Do you know the history of the Anishinabe Ojibwe people? Can you speak the Ojibwe language? Do you know the days of the week in the Ojibwe language? the months? the seasons? the four directions? the four basic colors? Do you know why the Anishinabe provide a spirit dish at a feast? What happens at the death of a person and their funeral in the Anishinabe way? At the end of the survey information about history classes in schools and the community are described.[9]

The organization's spring newsletter featured numerous cultural and educational events that happened during the winter months of 1994. The project supported a strong educational program by inviting speakers to the community, teaching traditional activities in the schools, hosting Ojibwe language immersion camps, starting a woman's cultural retreat, and sponsoring drum classes. The teachers taught respect for the drum and the cultural significance of the drum and traditional songs. Elders and others from throughout Minnesota and Ontario Anishinaabe country wrote or spoke of the many facets of Anishinaabe customs and traditions. Ice fishing, netting, the sugar bush, and theater were all included in the winter and early spring activities.

The newsletter highlights a speaker's message to high school students and the Naytahwaush community that included a description of several Ojibwe values.[10] The speaker spoke about her childhood at White Earth, the ceremonies and traditions, picking berries, making maple syrup, and always being busy helping her family. Here are the six values she discussed:

(1) Respect for Yourself: Don't put chemicals into your body. You are the leaders of tomorrow.

(2) Respect for Elders: She enjoys being an elder now because she has spent her life respecting elders and now she gets to receive that respect.

(3) Sharing: Always give to people, help them, give them your time, listen to somebody. Most Indian people died without material possessions because they shared everything. Stealing and being stingy were looked down upon.

(4) Extended Family: Each family member is important to the others.

(5) Being Brave and Strong: This value is within each person. A good example is with drugs and alcohol, it takes a lot more courage to say no. A much stronger person refuses to take alcohol or drugs.

(6) Respect the Drum: It is the heartbeat of the people.

Clan Identity

White Earth Land Recovery Project is making strides to recover knowledge about the clan system which traditionally was a central source of Anishinaabe identity. Clan identification reflects a person's name, place of residence and clan name. Clans also traditionally defined community member's role in governance

and protection of the group. Clan identification and roles imposed governance systems established by the colonial government.

Anishinaabe have close kin relations. Grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins are all members of extended family households. Besides having many relatives, a person is also a member of a grand family, *dodem* [totem], or clan. In *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway,* Eddie Benton-Banai (1988) describes how clan society shapes Ojibwe identity. No matter how many miles apart, members of the same clan recognize each other as siblings who are expected to extend, and reciprocate, hospitality, food and lodging for each other. Members of the same clan greet each other in Ojibwemowin: "*Aaniin* [hello!] *Dodem"* [fellow clan member]" *Daga Anishinaabemodaa*. [Let's talk in the Anishinaabe language]. A proper introduction has three parts that reflect name, place, and clan: (1) [name] *niin nindoonjibaa* [_____ is my name.].[11] (2) [place] *(niin) wenjibaa* [I live in _____.]. (3) *Awenen (giin) gidoodem?* [What is your clan?]. [Clan name] *izhinikaazo nindodem*.

Clans are represented by animal emblems, or symbols, that appear on birch bark scrolls, treaty documents, and body tattoos. In the *History of the Ojibwe Nation*, William Warren (1984 [1885]) recorded at least twenty offshoots of the original clans, describing distinctive characteristics of each and traditions surrounding clan membership, duties, and governance. According to Warren, the original clans were created in the beginning of time by six creatures that came out of the sea to live among the Ojibwe: *Wawaazisii* [Bullhead], *Ajejauk* [Crane], *Makwa* [Bear], *Moosance* [Little Moose], *Waabizheshi* [Marten], and *Bineshii*

[Thunderbird]. *Makwa Dodem* [Bear Clan] is the largest clan in Anishinaabe society, and many men in this clan are warriors and war chiefs. *Maiingan Dodem* [Wolf Clan] produced scouts. The loud, clear voices of *Ajejauk* [Crane] clan members make them known as famous speakers. Fish Clan people are teachers and scholars. The *Giigo* [Fish] clans—*Wawaazisiig* [Bullhead], *Namewug* [Sturgeon], *Maanamegwug* [Catfish], *Ginoozhez* [Northern Pike], *Adikamegwug* [Whitefish], *Memegwesiwug* [Merman], and *Namebinug* [Sucker] —are known for long life.

Menominee Forest: A Model of Sustainable Forestry

Menominee forestry was embraced by White Earth Land Recovery Project as a model of caring for a forest (Nesper and Pecore 1993).[12] From the perspective of White Earth Land Recovery Project staff, the Menominee forest represents what their forests would resemble if revitalization develops. The original homelands of the Menominee people extended along the Menominee River, north to the Ascanaba River, south to the Milwaukee River and west to the Mississippi River. The archaeological record reflects their continuous inhabitation of the area for at least 3,000 years, making the Menominee people the oldest continuous residents of Wisconsin. Today 4,000 people live on the reservation. What is most significant about the Menominee Forest is that it covers 95 percent of the Menominee reservation.

During the 1800s the Menominee Nation retained a small portion of their original land in what became the state of Wisconsin.[13] Located in northeastern Wisconsin, the Menominee Reservation shares the same borders as Menominee

County. Established in 1854, the reservation covers 235,000 acres of land. White pine, red maple, red maple, sugar maple, red oak, basswood, hemlock, and yellow birch grow in the forest. While most of Wisconsin's pine forests were ravaged by the timber barons during the 1800s, the Menominee Forest was spared because the Menominee resisted division of their lands by the General Allotment Act of 1887 (Huff and Pecore 1995:4).

For more than 180 years, the Menominee Nation has successfully maintained their forests and provided a base for the local community for subsistence hunting, gathering, and harvesting. The purpose of tribal forestry is to care for old growth white pine and hardwood forests. Unlike much of the Great Lakes region, the Menominee forest has never been extensively clearcut. A local tribal saw mill is collectively owned, trees are harvested selectively, and profits are used to maintain their reservation base. Menominee prepare timber for sale as certified green timber in global markets. Over two billion board feet of lumber have been removed from the forest in the last 140 years, and yet the volume of saw timber on the reservation is greater than when the reservation was established (Huff and Pecore 1995:8).

Reclaiming Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge

The purpose of the proposed legislation called the White Earth Wildlife Refuge Act, created by the White Earth Land Recovery Project in cooperation with the White Earth Tribal Council in 1993, was the return of over 45,000 acres of federal lands, that lie within the White Earth Reservation boundaries, from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the White Earth Band of Chippewa Indians.

Despite a vigorous campaign and broad support in the Native community, the Act never became law. At that time Senator Paul Wellstone refused to sponsor the bill on behalf of the White Earth Nation. The land proposed for return comprises 21,480 acres of the northern portion of the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR) and 24,200 acres of National Federal Wetlands. Tribal members are denied access to these wetlands, and the plots scattered across the reservation were acquired primarily through tax forfeiture.

The Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge occupies 42,724 acres in Becker County, Minnesota. Approximately half of Tamarac lies within the original boundaries of the White Earth Reservation. The Refuge includes 7,800 acres of lakes and 12 miles of streams. In addition, the gentle, rolling hills of Tamarac are interspersed with thousands of bogs, marshes, swamps, and wooded potholes. Botanically, Tamarac lies in transition between the northern hardwood and coniferous forest zones.

Under the proposed Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would work with White Earth authorities to uphold the Collier Agreement by establishing an accredited natural resources management program for White Earth Band members. Migratory bird sanctuaries and wildlife refuges would be maintained and made accessible for tribal members to hunt, fish, trap, and gather wild rice, birchbark and medicinal plants.

The White Earth Band now has no input, beyond the power to issue hunting, fishing and trapping permits, on any management activity on Tamarac. The primary management goal on the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge is that of

waterfowl production and maintenance. However, consideration of the endangered and threatened species (the osprey and the bald eagle), may sometimes eclipse even this primary management goal.

Tamarac management personnel from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service log trees to manage the forests. Aspen, or poplar, is the dominant tree species on the refuge. While some aspen is located everywhere on the refuge, the vast majority of the aspen is on the reservation half of the refuge, it is here where Tamarac logging activities have the greatest impact, short-term, and long-term. The exploitation of the aspen resources on the reservation half generates the great majority of the monetary proceeds flowing from logging on Tamarac.

The logging of aspen has a significant impact on the deer population in Tamarac; generally, the more aspen cut, the more feed for deer, and thus, more deer. There are few natural predators like the wolf on Tamarac. Thus, logging is seen as a tool to increase the amount of desired wildlife vegetation.

Commercial clear-cuts are used to procure aspen at Tamarac. Tamarac's forester decides what areas will be cut and contracts are made with loggers who pay the stumpage to cut it. The price per cord is set by comparable county and state prices, though at times the price may be set lower to encourage logging. The bulk of the logging activity on Tamarac is done by large logging companies who ship the logs to large mills, like Potlatch.

Oversight of the thousands of cords logged every year, to determine if loggers are indeed following the management practices required, is totally the responsibility of the Forester who works without staff or assistance. The Forester

makes a rough estimate of cordage for the site, chooses and gives a logger a scale ticket. Loggers record how much is on his load on half of the ticket, leaving that half of the ticket in a box provided by Tamarac. The mill where the logs are hauled gets the other half of the ticket and records the weight and cordage on the load in it and mails it back to Tamarac.

Hunting and Fishing at the Refuge

Hunting and fishing by non-Indians began on Tamarac in the 1960s. Refuge records are not clear, but it is likely that hunting began on Tamarac around the time of the passage of the U.S. Recreational Use of Fish and Wildlife Conservation Area Act in 1962, which defined, and approved, hunting as a valid form of recreation on National Wildlife Refuges. Generally, hunting is seen by Tamarac management as the most viable tool available to manage and regulate wildlife populations. Wildlife Refuge formal hunting program's objectives are twofold: (1) to maintain stable deer and small game populations compatible with habitats; and (2) to provide a safe, wildlife-oriented form of recreation.[14]

Tamarac Refuge management retains the final authority on whether hunting will be allowed on the refuge. Tamarac management may choose to restrict the season in any way, or have no season at all. Some 40,500 of the total 42,500 acres of Tamarac are currently open to some type of hunting. Hunting on Tamarac is split between migratory bird hunting, (ducks, geese, coot, woodcock, rails, and snipe), allowed on some 16,000 acres (4,000 acres on the reservation side), and deer and small game hunting, allowed on all of the 40,500 acres open

to hunting. Animal populations are estimated from a variety of surveys, the number of permits issued are dependent on the estimates from these surveys

Five Tamarac lakes are included in the refuge fishing season: Lost, Wauboose, Tamarac, Two Island, and Blackbird. In addition, a small portion of the Ottertail River is open for spearing and fishing on the non-reservation side of the refuge. Fish management activities on Tamarac are shared with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the White Earth Band. Fishing is used as a tool to regulate and sustain fish populations.

Tribal members receive little benefit from natural resource management on Tamarac. One harvester made these comments about Tamarac: "I don't think they should be cutting any trees. There are only trees on the edge of the road, when you walk back, there aren't any trees—just sticks and brush. I know they're taking a lot of trees. I know a lot of the trees are coming right out of the Refuge (Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge). There are two or three (logging) outfits. From here (road adjacent to the Refuge) sometimes we see 40 to 50 logging trucks a day."

A Voice at the Table

The White Earth community wants a voice at the decision making table where decisions are made about the health of their reservation forests. Becker County manages 74,000 acres of forested lands, and 90 percent of those forests are on the White Earth reservation. In a report from White Earth Land Recovery Project to the Becker County Forest Advisory Committee, the group describes its concerns about forest management in Becker County. They are especially

concerned about threats to the forest's biodiversity (Brooks 1993:2). The report states:

> Becker County currently clearcuts the forested lands it holds within the White Earth reservation. As a result, the once abundant biodiversity found on these lands have been greatly altered or destroyed. Deforestation of the White Earth reservation's diverse forests, drainage to the once abundant wetlands, conversion of the indigenous prairies to cropland and forced acculturation of the Anishinaabe people to European lifestyles has changed the way of the White Earth Anishinaabe forever. Even so, over half of the Anishinaabe living on the reservation continue to practice traditional activities on the land, including ricing, hunting, fishing, maple sugar collection, making paper birch crafts, and traditional medicine gathering. Unless the natural resources are protected on the reservation, however, Anishinaabe tradition at White Earth may perish within the next generation. The survival of the culture literally depends on the survival of the land.

In 1995 White Earth tribal members brought their demands to a Becker County Commissioners meeting. The Detroit Lakes Tribune's (1995) headline read "Indian Group asks Becker County for 2-day summit: Reservation timber harvest is top concern." LaDuke said, "We are a forest culture. We can't continue to practice our culture if the current rate of timber harvesting and management continues." WELRP wants Becker County to implement better management practices.[15]

LaDuke added, "Thousands of our people are buried in the forest. We want to preserve that. We are aware of the financial implications," she said. "But we believe it is a moral and legal responsibility of the county to not desecrate sacred ground." WELRP's request for preservation includes a requirement that archaeological and cultural impact assessments be conducted prior to any issuance of timber permits or cutting.

Along with a moratorium on white pine cutting, WELRP recommended selective cutting as opposed to clearcutting. Becker County Resource Manager Lohmeier did not agree with a moratorium on white pine cutting because of a concern about the limitations a moratorium would present if a disease threatened the white pine or other trees. He tried to convince others that on the reservation the amount of white pine being harvested for timber had declined dramatically and new logging roads are built to block public use. WELRP provided evidence to county commissioners that the roads are being used as dumping sites.[16]

Lohmeier said the wildlife project includes white tail deer as well as grouse. "The area we are proposing to manage contains aspen that is about 60 years old. Aspen doesn't live much past 80 years so we have the opportunity to do something with that area. They are people of the forest and as they said a forest doesn't only mean trees. I think it would benefit if the amount of wildlife in the area increased," Lohmeier said.

Lohmeier admits that aspen, based on its market demand and natural growth ability, is the county's choice tree for timber: "We admit aspen is a product of the market. Aspen is a product of the market and at the same time, the

county can't afford to take stands to do site preparations and plant other hardwood. We have to try to balance the future and now, they (WELRP) are looking a long ways down the road. It takes hundreds of years for oak or maple basswood to come back."

Although Lohmeier agreed with many of WELRP's requests, he disagreed with the group's basis for revised management practices. "They're quoting a lot of management practices used on the Menominee Reservation in Wisconsin, where they've worked very well. Unfortunately, Menominee Indian Reservation is mostly hardwood whereas we are dealing with aspen, a pioneer species."

The Becker County Timber Advisory Committee is a local organization active in recommending policies to the Becker County Commissioners. "Much of the tax forfeit land in Becker County is within the boundaries of the White Earth Reservation. We have a vested interest in how forests within Becker County are managed," said Bob Shimek, a tribal representative to the Advisory Committee. Despite the Commission's reluctance to implement tribal recommendations, Shimek is hopeful, "We've been successful in setting the agenda and opening policy making discussion to these ideas. That's the first step" (White Earth Land Recovery Project Annual Report 1996:7).

Industrial Forestry: Land of Ten Thousand Tree Stumps

White Earth Land Recovery Project staff initiated an outreach effort to educate the local community about the negative effects of clearcutting. "Land of Ten Thousand Tree Stumps" is a pamphlet created and distributed by WELRP staff in 1996. The pamphlet asks the questions, "Do you know where your trees

are going?" and "Have you noticed logging going on in the area?" In the pamphlet White Earth Land Recovery staff make the following claims: Turning forests into tree farms is unsustainable. Aspen regeneration at its present rate depletes vital top soil and threatens the health of future generations of trees. When aspen is depleted, the timber companies will move on, and local communities will be devastated both economically and environmentally. Forest depletion is not a question of trees versus jobs. As new technologies become available to the timber industry, fewer workers are needed. One person can now cut 80 cords of woods daily. Therefore the same job requires fewer loggers.

The organization suggests some alternatives: The timber industry must move towards following the natural cycles. Even in fire, clearcutting does not occur naturally. Some downed trees must remain to rebuild forest floor biomass. This means switching from the current practice of even age, single species, short rotation forestry to a multi-species, uneven aged, extended rotation method. This type of forestry requires a more hands on approach that means more jobs. Since this forestry approach is sustainable, there will be forests and logging jobs for future generations. Paper companies must explore and utilize alternatives to paper made from trees. Companies and government agencies must begin to take cultural factors into account before making irreversible environmental decisions.

Tribal Representation on Minnesota Sustainable Resources Committee

White Earth Land Recovery Project staff have been invited to state-wide committees to encourage decision makers to recognize the needs of harvesters

and revitalize their land base. The Sustainable Forest Resources Act of 1995 (SFRA) commits the State of Minnesota to pursue the sustainable management, use and protection of Minnesota's forest resources. Cultural collaboration in resource management and education is an effort to increase community involvement and encourage dialogue between American Indian traditional users and forest resource managers. The Sustainable Resources Committee encourages Anishinaabe traditional users, particularly berry pickers, basket makers, medicine plant gatherers to contact WELRP to find out how to participate in this process.

An important breakthrough was an invitation to tribal members to join the Minnesota Forest Resources Council as the member of a committee to rewrite guidelines and policies of timber harvesting related to cultural and historic resources. This committee is a result of the implementation of the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) relating to timber harvesting in Minnesota. The GEIS recommended that four committees be established to review current guidelines and policies and make recommendations for the future: (1) soil science; (2) wildlife; (3) water quality; and (4) cultural and historic resources (White Earth Land Recovery Project Annual Report 1996:3).

Protecting Ancestors

Protecting ancestors is another way that the organization is revitalizing their community. Community organizer Richard LeGarde was largely responsible for encouraging the Minnesota State Legislature in 1994 to strengthen laws, particularly the Minnesota Private Cemetery Act, Minnesota Statute 307-8,

against willful disturbance of Indian cemeteries. White Earth Land Recovery Project filed a suit on July 21, 1994, against land developer Carr Enterprises, Inc. in Ottertail County to protect 23 graves located on land owned by Carr Enterprises in Ottertail, Minnesota. OTC Residential Park is a mobile home park built on 3,000 year-old graves. Together the White Earth Tribal Council, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, and Minnesota Historical Society secured protection of unmarked cemeteries located on lands held by the State of Minnesota (White Earth Land Recovery Project 1994:4).

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, passed by US Congress in 1990, protects graves or cemeteries located on federal of tribal lands (lands held in trust between tribes and the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior) and all other federal lands held by the United States. This law does not protect graves found on state or private lands, leaving possibilities open for state legislation, according to Walter Echo-Hawk, senior attorney for the Native American Rights Fund in Boulder Colorado. He was the co-author of the bill with brother Roger Echo-Hawk, an historian.

Supporting the Seasonal Round

White Earth Land Recovery has purchased various parcels of land in its recovery efforts. An important acquisition was a sugarbush located in Sugarbush Township in Becker County that the organization operates each spring. Syrup is sold through Native Harvest, a cottage industry developed by the organization. A staff member describes the experience of working in the sugarbush: "You can cut a tree once and get some money," explains a White Earth tribal member working

at *Ishpaadina,* a maple sugarbush where he and a host of others waded through spring snow to set 4,400 taps in the trees in a 300-acre maple basswood forest recovered by White Earth Land Recovery Project.[17] He continued, "But if you make syrup every year, you will get money, you will get food, a sweet taste, you will smell spring, and you will get food for your soul." A team of coal-black Percherons, Rosebud and *Aandag* [Raven], hauled a bobsled full of sap, and sap haulers to the evaporator, a 20-foot by four-foot monstrosity, which sent steam through the crisp spring's sleet, sun, and wind.

As *iskigamizige-giizis* [sugar making moon] approaches, community members begin to prepare for a return to the sugarbush for a season that typically runs from mid-April to the beginning of May.[18] A team of Percheron mares, Rosebud and *Aandeg*, go to camp early in the season to clear trails and the area around the boilers and cabin. Sap collection is rewarding work, especially tasting that first sip of clear pure maple sap, smelling the rich full flavor of the sap turning to syrup, carrying the logs to the fire, and walking through the deep snow alongside the horses who are hauling vats of sap make it all worthwhile (White Earth Land Recovery Project 1996:4).

Addressing the community's diabetes epidemic, especially among children, is a central focus of local organizing efforts to revive, and protect native seeds, heritage crops, naturally grown fruits, animals, wild plants, as well as the traditions and knowledge of indigenous and land based communities. In Pine Point village, Pine Point Elementary School has one of four state pilot projects to give children the opportunity to eat organic food grown by local gardeners and

farmers at school. The organization serves traditional food to children in tribal schools and elders in the community.[19]

At the Berry Farm, White Earth Land Recovery Project's office at Round Lake in Becker County in the southeastern corner of White Earth reservation, organic raspberries [*miskominag*] were grown and preserved. More acreage is planted every year (White Earth Land Recovery Project 1996:25). Over 2,000 pounds of hominy corn [*gijikonayezigan*] were harvested from *Mino Aki* [Good Land] in 1996. Seven acres of hominy corn were planted and harvested for distribution among the White Earth community and for market sale in gift baskets that contained locally gathered foodstuffs and crafts made by tribal members (White Earth Land Recovery Project 1996:1).

Reforestation

Mino Aki is land located in Maple Grove Township in Becker County where White Earth Land Recovery owns 160 acres of forests. Storms damaged 80 to 90 percent of the aspen forests in the late 1990s. The damaged trees needed to be cut, and as the organization planned and implemented a timber sale, community members developed a conifer restoration project for the 160 acres of prairie and forests. Later in the spring of 1997 about 6,000 white pine, Norway, and other coniferous pine samplings were planted on Mino Aki. The Department of Natural Resources partnered with the organization and supplied the samplings. Trees were given as gifts to community members who planted the samplings on land at their homes.

Harvesting the Wind: Red Power for the Green Market

Developing safe, sustainable energy sources contributes to White Earth Land Recovery Project efforts to revitalize the health of the local environment and move away from the use of fossil fuels. The organization made a commitment to transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy: solar and wind power in their efforts to pursue energy justice (Honor the Earth 2008). Some suggest that on the Plains this transition—from fossil to renewable—might actually be easier than in other regions because of the Plains' sparse population and rich resources of grass and wind (Callenbach 1996:221). White Earth reservation is located at the far eastern edge of the Great Plains (Kemp et al 1995).[20]

Present energy sources such as coal, nuclear, and hydro-electric have significant environmental impacts on area lakes. Mercury pollution is caused by coal-fired plants and finds its way into rivers, contaminating fish and the people who harvest them. Many lakes in Minnesota are contaminated with heavy metals as a consequence of this problem, and herald fish consumption advisories. In a 1987 harvesting study, over half of White Earth tribal members indicated that they harvested more than 25 fish annually, making mercury poisoning a real concern (LaDuke 1988). The dams force Native communities to relocate and destroy ecosystems, as well as ways of life.[21] Finally, the effects of nuclear waste storage and radioactive emission can be seen in the nearby Prairie Island community, on the Mdewanktan Dakota Reservation in southern Minnesota.

Alternative energy sources are required to avert these environmental problems. A report released by the Union of Concerned Scientists (and similar

report issues by Environmentalists for Full Employment), indicated that the wind energy potential for this region of Minnesota could easily provide a viable alternative for most of these communities. The area around the western half of the reservation is classified as a Class 4 wind area, with the potential to produce 14 percent of electricity use in the United States.

In 1996, the community took the first step toward bringing wind power to the reservation, naming the campaign *Harvesting the Wind: Red Energy for a Green Market*. With assistance from the Minnesota Department of Public Service two 140-foot towers equipped with wind monitoring systems were installed in Mahnomen County in October 1996. Wind speed data was collected at those sites. Located at the far eastern edge of the Great Plains of middle America, there was uncertainty about local wind energy potential, but the results were encouraging.

Reservations may be, in short, a vital link that can "bring renewables to market" (Howarth et al 1996). Tribes are in a position to structure their resource development to respond effectively to different likely market scenarios. Tribes could establish or become "independent renewable power producers" (IPPs), distribution utilities, power generators and/or operators of transmission, or joint venture partners in resource development or power generation projects.

Tribes possess a number of legal and institutional resources important to renewable energy development including power to create tribal business, issue tax exempt bonds, and regulate energy projects on their lands. Ernest Callenbach (1996) suggests in "Bring Back the Buffalo! A Sustainable Future for America's Great Plains," bison and wind power offer strikingly parallel opportunities—ways

to utilize the endlessly renewable sources of grass and wind that can preserve the Plains ecosystem and support its human inhabitants indefinitely. The Great Plains as a whole could meet the nation's energy needs many times over. And wind installations, including the narrow service roads they need, occupy only a fraction of the land's surface, leaving plenty of room for bison.

Sustainable Agriculture

In opposition to industrial agricultural practices, and in support of revitalizing safe and sustainable farming on lands that lie within the reservation boundaries, the White Earth Land Recovery Project announced its support for the nation-wide Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, which promoted changes in federal farm policy that promotes family farms, protects the environment, and creates a just food system. More than 200 other grassroots and national organizations across the country are already supporting the national Campaign.

"More and more, people understand that farm programs need to make better sense for family farmers, the environment, and consumers. Instead of penalizing farmers for taking care of the land and staying connected to their communities, it is time to design farm support programs that will benefit all segments of society," said Robert Shimek, Environmental Coordinator for WELRP (White Earth Land Recovery Project 1995:15).

The Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture will coordinate the efforts of hundreds of organizations representing family farmers, environmentalists, consumers, animal protection advocates, farmworkers, people of faith, and other concerned citizens fighting to remove farm program barriers that discourage

environmental stewardship and tilt the scales against family sized farms. In particular, the Campaign will work for stronger conservation programs, healthy family farms and rural communities, an emphasis on sustainable farming systems in federal research and extension, local marketing and process opportunities that reinvigorate rural communities, and improvements for minority farmers and farmworkers.

"The Campaign has grown like wildfire," noted Amy Little, the Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture's national coordinator. She added, "This Campaign represents an unprecedented success in bringing together partnerships of farm, environmental, religious, and grassroots community organizations which are willing to roll up their sleeves and work for a Farm Bill that makes sense. The White Earth Land Recovery Project will be a terrific addition to this Campaign" (White Earth Land Recovery Project 1995:15).

Waawiyezi **[Circle Loan Fund]**

The Circle Loan is a micro-enterprise loan fund developed to support the revitalization of local crafts production. [22] The Circle Loan Fund supports artist's efforts to market their handiwork with the intention of gaining income to supplement their family's household needs. Its purpose is to increase the wealth of every individual in the loan fund group. The Loan Fund, called *Waawiyezi,* or "To be circular" was a loan circle developed after a model similar to the Lakota Fund on Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota. Conventional banks do not historically loan to many Native people without collateral. The Circle Loan Fund

is a mechanism to get loans to small businesses on the reservation. Micro-loans are available to be used as capital for a start-up enterprise to create wealth.

The Circle Loan Fund gives people opportunities to start a new business. The loan fund gives its members low interest loans and valuable business skills. The program encourages economic self-reliance. Members work together as a group, attend classes, and receive business training. Together the group receives individualized $500 dollar loans. After the first loans are repaid a second round of loans are distributed to the group in which members support each other in their business endeavors.

Most members make traditional jewelry or crafts. The loans allow artists to market their goods for sale in local, regional, or national markets. Circle Loan members formed an Artist's Association to financially support artist travel and participation in regional art shows and pow wows. During the past year one artist traveled to Connecticut for a pow wow. During his trip he was successful in selling his own work and other pieces sent along by fellow artists in the association. By forming this Artist Association, this program enables artists to market their work directly to the consumer, and by this process, the value of the product is not depleted by selling to a company or store at a set price.

Ojibwemowin - Language Revitalization

A local narrative of the historical circumstances that have led to White Earth Land Recovery's Project language revitalization efforts was described in a year end report in 1995: "Far from being a result of a natural progression of culture in the United States, the decline in the number of Ojibwe speakers was a

result of a systematic effort on the part of the U.S. government to take control of the territories and of the future of Indian peoples. [23] The joint effort of missions, boarding schools, and racist policy enacted on the part of Indian agents and federal legislators was to wipe out the Ojibwe language entirely. Their philosophy was—as we well now know—that to control a people, one needs to control their language (White Earth Land Recovery Project 1995:5):

> Anishinaabemowin, the Ojibwe language, is endangered in the U.S. and particularly on our reservation. Currently there are no fluent speakers of Ojibwe under the age of thirty on our reservation. We are however in s somewhat fortunate situation; although our dialect if extremely endangered. Anishinaabemowin itself if one of four North American languages not projected to become extinct in the next 50 years. Therefore it's clear we need to know our language and culture if we are to be on firm ground for our future.

In 2010, scholars estimated that 678 fluent Ojibwe speakers live in Minnesota. Only 15 fluent Ojibwe speakers live at White Earth (Treuer, 2010:75). To retain and restore the Ojibwe language in the community, staff from White Earth Land Recovery Project operate an early childhood language immersion program at Pine Point School, host language immersion retreats, and provide in-school language and cultural programming in tribal schools. Education for children is focused on Ojibwe language learning in environments that reflect their heritage. Children are grouped by age, the youngest *Wadiswaan* [nest];

Niigaanikwe [women leaders]; *Nopimeng* [in the woods]; and *Jiime* [go by canoe].

The Wadiswaan Project, in cooperation with the Pine Point School Early Childhood Family Education, focuses on early childhood Ojibwe language and cultural exposure and immersion for 3 to 6 year-old children. The Wadiswaan Project is a watershed for language and cultural restorations on the reservation, building from the extended family base.[24] The anticipated outcomes are to have a core group of Ojibwe speakers from this group of young children to ensure the revival of their language, increased identity and self esteem, learning the values of their culture, and nurturing children. Approximately 20 children are in this program (1995) which is held two times a week for three hours. The programming begins after regular Head Start and kindergarten classes end. The children learn Ojibwe through games, arts and crafts, stories, cultural activities, and eating together. Ojibwe is spoken at every moment of the classes. Parents are beginning to report that their children are also using Ojibwe words at home.[25]

Model Language Immersion: *Jiime* (Go by Canoe)

In the mid-1990s White Earth Land Recovery Project worked with other language teachers to create a model for language learning that is based on an immersion process. The people involved in that initial planning have continued their work to support First Speakers who are children who learn Ojibwe as a first language by immersion in schools that incorporate many Ojibwe traditions, including traditional subsistence practices.

White Earth Land Recovery Project developed the first *Jiime* (Go by Canoe)

Ojibwe language camp for youth in 1997. Designed as a model for Ojibwe language learning, the innovative program combined language learning and immersion on ancestral territories on Lake of the Woods. The Ojibwe language and leadership camp was sponsored by WELRP and Laketrails Base Camp. Twelve youth from the White Earth Reservation participated in the *Jiime* Project in 1997. Native Ojibwe speakers Lorraine White Crow Jones and Doris Willie from Seine River, Ontario, were the language instructors for the immersion camp. Camp dates were July 24 to August 1, 1997. Curriculum entitled "Anishinaabemon Endaso-Giizhik" was created by Keller Paap (1997) at the University of Minnesota.

The culture and language immersion program on Lake of the Woods provided an inspiring setting for Ojibwe language instruction by replicating activities of Ojibwe ancestors. Youth learned common words and conversational phrases, animal and plant identification, songs, and cultural traditions from their instructors. In addition, visits to a local Native village at Windigo Islands and petroglyph sites on Lake of the Woods at Picture Rock Point enhanced appreciation for the long-standing and continued presence of Anishinaabe and Cree people in the area.

Founded in 1952, Laketrails Base Camp is located on Oak Island, Minnesota. Camp literature calls Laketrails "a place to challenge your body and mind and fulfill your soul." The Base Camp on Oak Point served as a launching point for canoe trips into the islands and waterways of Lake of the Woods. Since 1952, Laketrails Base Camp continues to give young people an opportunity to discover physical, emotional and spiritual challenges and rewards while paddling, portaging, and camping together in the wilderness. At Base Camp the twelve Jiime campers were joined by 35 other campers.

Before heading out on a canoetrip, instructors Doris Willie and Lorraine Jones visited with Jane and Joe Powassin at the Windigo Island Reserves to seek permission to travel in their territory. The Jiime group traveled together in 6 canoes. Each day two or three Talking Circles were conducted and informal language and cultural instruction occurred throughout the day in the canoes and at meals. On the second day of canoe travel the group visited Picture Rock Point and offered tobacco at the site of the rock paintings. That day they portaged into Shoal Lake and camped at Spike Point where blueberries were gathered and the language instructors led a Blueberry Feast in thanksgiving.

After four nights of camping the group paddled back to Laketrails Base Camp and began preparations for a large feast organized and cooked by the Jiime participants. Traditional foods made up the menu that featured including walleye, wild rice, buffalo sausage, bannock, and soup, and cake. A prayer was led by Doris Willie prior to feast. That evening a final campfire was held at the Base Camp. Jiime campers introduced themselves in Ojibwe and talked about their experience on the canoetrip. Instructors Lorraine Jones and Doris Willie both spoke about Ojibwe values and beliefs.

The first Jiime Language Immersion camp was regarded as a success which was attributed to the abilities of the teaching staff. Lorraine Jones and Doris Willie were exceptional instructors who responded to the challenge of wilderness canoe travel, inter-cultural exchange (working with Laketrails staff), and the needs of youth while maintaining consistent modeling of Ojibwe values. The Laketrails community supported the program and provided resources to support the immersion camp. Most importantly, the experiences of the Jiime participants mark the actual success of the program. Every

camper reported a positive experience at the camp, gained Ojibwe language skills, and grew as a community. For many campers, much of the cultural teachings were entirely new to them—what it means to be Anishinaabe and to be proud of that identity may be the most important contribution that the experience gave youth participants.

Local Radio Station from White Earth

Niijii [Friend] Broadcasting Corporation aired for the first time from Mahnomen, Minnesota on the White Earth Indian Reservation in 2011. Tribal members are proud of their new radio station. The station provides programming related to environmental, cultural, and political issues important to the White Earth community. The radio station was in the planning and organizing stages for many years before airing in 2011. In 1996 the community expressed the hope that "in the next couple of years the corporation would become the first independent reservation-based Native radio station in Minnesota."[26]

Conclusion

To conclude, the story of the debasement and resistance at White Earth began with an introduction to the White Earth reservation, a reservation that held the promise of providing for the Anishinaabe people. Rapid land loss began with the passage of the General Allotment Act in 1887 and other legislation in Minnesota that opened allotment in Minnesota. Land loss was the beginning of the debasement of the community. Timber companies quickly moved in the clearcutting the reservation began in the 1890s. Pressure on maintaining the base of their community followed.

The purpose of this discussion and the evidence presented, especially the voices of White Earth community members, is to convince the reader that the survival of the Anishinaabe community depends upon the control of its rightful base and resources. To regain control of this diverse and prosperous land would give the White Earth Anishinaabe an opportunity to re-establish a symbiotic and sustainable relationship between the Anishinaabe and the place they call home. The organization's message is: We are a forest culture. We require a forest to be Anishinaabe. Their creation stories, language, medicines, canoes, foods, maple sugar, and way of life is based on a diverse ecosystem, not a mono-cropped aspen clearcut.

Throughout its history the community has resisted debasement by continuing to live together on the reservation and maintain relations with family members on and off reservation. Sharing and hospitality are still important values. Participating in subsistence activities in the local area is also a celebration of their daily connection to each other and their heritage. Interviews by community members are provide important perspectives about their relationships to each other and to the land and the gifts it provides. People continue to pursue subsistence activities despite the challenges that have increased over time. They also convey a sadness and sense of loss that debasement has caused them.

A contemporary movement to resist debasement has taken the form of the White Earth Land Recovery Project which might better be understood as the White Earth Base Recovery Project. Their approach is holistic and

comprehensive. Land has been acquired by negotiation and purchase. A cottage industry called Native Harvest markets locally harvested and processed maple syrup, berries, corn, wild rice, and other products that include traditional crafts. Maple sugar bushes have been a priority in the land acquisition. Corn has been grown on newly acquired lands as well. Burial grounds are protected. Environmental initiatives have also been important work undertaken by the project. They work to educate others about the problems of clearcutting and contamination of the forests and waterways.

An important focus of White Earth Land Recovery Project's efforts is to revitalize their own language, the Ojibwe language. Classes for community members of all ages, with a particular emphasis on teaching children language skills are organized and offered through the organization. Immersion models are especially important and effective. The organization works with other language teachers to develop new programs and curricula. WELRP staff organize many opportunities for the community to gather and celebrate and learn more about their culture and history. A new radio station contributes to building community identity, pride, and education.

The White Earth Land Recovery Project looks to sustainable models of economic development. This response rejects the practices of market-based development because it is characterized by conquest. The indigenous model is built on cycles, reciprocity, and respect. These values guided the Anishinaabe people for generations before being confronted with the process of dependency, linked to the extraction of the periphery by the core within the context of the

modern world economy. This response is applicable, not just for Indigenous peoples, but for all living beings and the earth because, as Winona LaDuke insists, a society based on conquest cannot survive.

Although different people in the community do different things, they are ways of relating through the environment that makes community. Like ricing, hunting is emblematic of community. When hunting is taken away from hunters, the community is debased. The local narratives reflect these actions and beliefs. They are not drawing a line between themselves and the natural environment. The material environment is part of social life, hence it is the material culture.

The highest law of the land is natural law. Today, treaties are the law of the land. Revitalizing treaty rights held by Anishinaabe band members will be an important gain that contributes to Anishinaabe identity and well-being, as it has for Anishinaabe who have gained rights to hunt, fish, and gather in ceded territories in eastern Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin (Nesper 2012; Whaley and Bresette 1994). But the State of Minnesota has been reluctant to respond in the case of Aaron Smith (Anishinaabe/Leech Lake) because the state denies responsibility for prosecuting him for violating the State of Minnesota's spring fishing opener when he used gill nets, catching fish to feed his family. He is quoted as saying, 'that's what we eat, that's who we are.' Aaron Smith was exercising his rights to fish under the Treaty of 1855.[27] The White Earth Band is hopeful that they will be able to exercise similar rights lawfully if the case is litigated in state courts. For now, band members are working to gain these rights and are committed over the long term.

In closing, I return to the practice of making a plate. At first I did not understand why making a plate is so important, however over time I understood the practice as symbolic of both community and debasement. The plate is the base. Community is enacted by sharing. Making a plate is also an act of resistance and an affirmation of community. Now I understand that when Anishinaabe no longer make a plate, in other words, when making a plate is destroyed, community is destroyed. Making a plate embodies reciprocity, community values, gifting, sharing, history, and gratitude to the spirits. The plate is in the house. The focus of making a plate is about giving, not buying, food. Making a plate exemplifies what community means—the sociability of people, their foods, emblematic and symbolic. Making a plate revitalizes what it is they have. It captures material, cultural and social life, bringing it together.

Hungry Spirits is an ethnographic study of how a present-day tribal people strives to recover what they, as a people, hold sacred—their land and their way of life. Anishinaabe, indigenous to North America, often describe themselves as a Forest People. Like continuous rebirth, revitalization is an ongoing renewal of the material or natural world that provides their sustenance and well-being. The focus of this dissertation is their struggle to resist debasement by land loss and markets by recovering their community's base. Out of the 837,000 acres that make up the reservation only 57,000, or seven percent, are in tribal trust or owned by individual members of the tribe. Nearly complete land dispossession within years of the reservation's creation has greatly limited the ability of Anishinaabe to protect and care for their forests which are the foundation of their

subsistence economy. The "Tragedy of White Earth" is the loss of the commons.

Hungry Spirits is a local example of how a people's way of life, and their shared identity, are shaped, and affected, by ongoing, and contemporary, conflicts and tensions inherent to the different purposes and practices of community and market economies. It is an account of how "a base is made, held, and used through social relationships" (Gudeman 2008:29), and an account of how a community resists debasement and loss of culture, with its knowledge, and relationships.

What is essential to community survival, well-being, and continued self-sufficiency is its ability to maintain its base (Gudeman and Rivera 2001; Gudeman 2001, 2008) that is composed of people, land, and knowledge. Social relationships among Anishinaabe are mediated, and occur, through the environment in which they live. When the land became private property, the healthy, life giving base, was transformed into a set of commodities sold in the market for profit.

The tension between the community's ability to care for and maintain its base and the encroachment and growth of market capitalism affected the ability of community members to make a livelihood and provide for themselves. As we saw at the outset "making a plate" for others represents the base, reflects the health and well-being of the community, and embodies a central value of Anishinaabe life that is expressed in the phrase *mino-biimaadiziiwin* which means 'to live well, have good health, and lead a good life.'

Generosity and hospitality are highly valued among Anishinaabe, especially

in their homes where *provisioning* is the purpose of household activity. For some, hospitality defines who they are as a people: 'Hospitality, that's what *we do*. We're Ojibwe.' At mealtime, food is allocated among household members and guests by *making a plate* for one's self (by invitation) or for others. *Making a plate* expresses and extends community. Feeding each other renews and provides assurance that everyone will be fed.

Making a plate reflects the well-being of the community by revealing how the base connects people to each other, to the forests, to the ancestors, to their heritage, and to their identity. The act of sharing entails a gift of self. By sharing part of the base—whether wild rice, deer meat or walleye—the giver offers part of herself, drawing the receiver into community.

Elsewhere as well sharing is a critical aspect of many local economies. As among the Anishinaabe it is a social event which demonstrates relatedness, affection, and concern (Bird-David, Nurit 1992). The primary metaphor of "sharing" is both a concept with which *we* make sense of the hunter-gatherers' economic arrangements (Gudeman 1986) and a concept by which *they* make sense of their environment, one that guides their action within it (Bird-David 1992:31).

Through the several meanings of sharing—being connected to the natural world and to one another through the environment—the Anishinaabe take their place among the many Indigenous people who construct their self-image by identification with specific land and social relations.

As we have seen, resistance has been the Anishinaabe response to land loss and debasement. It takes many forms. For the Anishinaabe a main organized response to land loss was the creation of the White Earth Land Recovery Project, a small organization with few resources but a commitment to a long-term struggle to recover their material world that underlies their culture and traditional economy. The work of the White Earth Land Recovery Project directly addresses the environmental, social justice, land, development, language, and cultural issues that confront the people. From their perspective, its mission is to recover the base of their community—its land, people, and way of life. The anthropological notion on which I have drawn closely fit, explicate and help us understand these local endeavors of the people to revitalize their material life and make a plate by recovering their culture and way of life.

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[1] Two summer law students from the National Lawyers Guild conducted research on burial ground desecration and corporate landholdings on the reservation.

[2] As a 501c(3) organization, White Earth Land Recovery Project's tax exempt status never should have been called into question.

[3] "The Promised Land" is produced by American Public Radio. The hour long program aired on Minnesota Public Radio at 7pm on 5 December 2010. http\\:www.thepromisedland.org/audioplayer?playitem=8. Accessed 10 November 2010.

[4] Winona LaDuke, is an enrolled member of the Mississippi Band of Anishinaabe and is the mother of three children. In 1989, she received the Reebok Human Rights Award, with which she began the White Earth Land Recovery Project. She served as a board member of Greenpeace USA. She is Program Director of Honor the Earth, providing vision and leadership for the organization's Regranting Program and Strategic Initiatives. In 1994, Winona was nominated by Time Magazine as one of America's fifty most promising leaders under forty years of age. Other awards include the Thomas Merton Award (1996), the Ann Bancroft Award, Ms. Woman of the Year Award (with the Indigo Girls in 1997), Global Green Award, and numerous other honors including induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame. A graduate of Harvard and Antioch Universities, she has written extensively on Native American and environmental issues (LaDuke 1993b). Her books include: *Last Standing Woman* (fiction), *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life* (1999), *The Winona LaDuke Reader* (2002), and *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming* (2005).

[5] Vincent LaDuke, Winona's father, was an enrolled member of the White Earth Band. Her mother, Betty LaDuke, a daughter of Russian immigrants, is a gifted artist, painter, and author, and life-long advocate for social justice and human rights.

[6] As a child LaDuke grew up in southern Oregon. In 1981, she moved to White Earth where federal investigators were once again present, hoping to identify the cause of land loss and to sort out issues of legality of land transfers.

[7] At the age of 18 Winona testified at the United Nations in support of indigenous rights.

[8] In this instance, self-determination includes decisions about where and what men will hunt.

[9] White Earth Land Recovery Project educational survey.

[10] WELRP Mino-Biimaadiziiwin, spring 1994, p. 9.

[11] An Anishinaabe clan member would share his or her name in the Ojibwe language or what people describe as an "Indian name."

[12] I made a one-day trip to the Menominee Reservation in 1999. The forests are awe inspiring, especially after knowing something about Menominee forestry.

[13] This happened through a series of treaties with and land cessions to the United States.

[14] Compatible with applicable state and White Earth Reservation regulations when possible.

[15] February 23, 1995, p. 1.

[16] In 1992, 35,000 cords were harvested. The volume dropped to 11,000 chords in 1994. Although the reduction in harvested timber was two-thirds, the reduction revenues totaled $106,000.

[17] This land trust is located on the White Earth Reservation in Strawberry Lake Township.

[18] WELRP placed 2,000 taps in 1995 in this sugarbush and in 1996 500 more taps were placed at the site (WELRP Annual Report 1996:4).

[19] http\\:www.thepromisedland.org/audioplayer?playitem=8. Accessed 10 November 2010.

[20] The Minnesota Project and Clean Water Fund. June 1995. Harvesting the Wind: An Assessment of Farmer Interest in Wind Energy for Economic Development. Loni Kemp, Lola Schoenrich, Lori Lanphere.

Renewable energy sources are receiving increasing public support all across the country. Largely unused wind, solar, biomass, and geothermal resources offer a clean, safe and secure energy supply. Costs for electricity produced from these renewable sources are approaching costs for existing power sources, and each of them is economically feasible today in certain applications.

Wind power has special implications for rural areas in the upper Midwest, because it requires the land and open space that is only available in the countryside, and because of the tremendous wind resources. In fact, the upper Midwest in general is sometimes called the "Saudi Arabia of wind energy."

[21] Hydro electric power is made possible by construction of dams, many to be located in the Ojibwe and Cree communities in Manitoba and Ontario.

[22] Mino-Biimaadiziiwin Newsletter May 1997 (McLeod 1997:5)

[23] Mino-Biimaadiziiwin Newsletter May (McLeod 1997:6)

[24] WELRP in conjunction with Bug-o-nay-geshing Cultural Program, St. Scholastic College, White Earth Rediscovery Center, Ojibwe Heritage Council, community educators, and the guidance of the Concordia Language villages planned, developed, and implemented an Ojibwe language camp in 1996 (White Earth Land Recovery Project Annual Report 1996).

[25] White Earth Land Recovery Project Year End Report 1995, p. 6.

[26] KILI Radio located in Porcupine Village on the is a local Lakota radio station It first aired in on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

[27] Tom Robertson reported this event on August 19, 2010. Http;www.minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2010/08/19/treaty-rights/charges. Accessed August 30, 2010.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

White Earth Land Recovery Project
Native Harvester • Interview Guide

- **Describe WELRP organization and campaigns.**

- **Describe harvester survey and WELRP efforts to protect forests.** *We're trying to stop clear cutting on the reservation. We're documenting how important the forest is to us here at White Earth, and how people are feeding their families from the forest.*

- **Identify Harvester** (name, age, household, home(s), tribal enrollment)
- **Identify seasonal harvesting activities:**

Mushrooms	**Trapping**
Berries	**Ricing**
Maple Syrup	**Firewood**
Medicine Plants	**Crafts**
Hunting	**Gardens**
Fishing	**Leech trapping**

For each harvesting activity, identify the following:

- **types** of plants or animals harvested
- **location** of sites
- **season** for harvesting
- **amount** harvested
- **use** of the resource
- **distribution** of resource:
- **shared**? (with whom?)
- **sold**? (to whom? market value?)

Has collection of this resource been more difficult in recent years? Changes in harvesting practices? effects/impact of clear cutting/ Roadside spraying? Government policies (federal, state, county, tribal?) Landowner restrictions/ Access to site?

- **Mushrooms**

Types of mushrooms collected? Eat? Share? (with whom?) Sell? (to whom?) Have they been harder to find in recent years? (Look at map) Site destruction? Impacts from clear cutting? Areas to protect?

- **Berries**

Types of berries gathered? (blueberries, chokecherries, cranberries, june berries, wild plums, strawberries) Share? (with whom?) Sell? (to whom?) Site destruction? Impact from clear cutting? Areas to protect?

- **Maple Syrup**

Look at plat maps. Ask about other family (parents/grandparents) sugarbush areas. Use? Share? (with whom?) Site destruction? Impacts from clear cutting? Areas to protect?

- **Medicine Plants**

(*Harvester may not want to share information about medicinal plant collection, use and location of site*.) Ask general questions about changes in availability, effects of clear cutting, chemical spraying, etc. Are there places that should be protected? [Mark general areas on plat maps.]

- **Hunting** (*note: animals harvested may exceed permit limits*.) Begin with general question: What percentage of your family's meat is wild meat? Identify animals hunted (deer, rabbits, moose)? Type of permit(s)? Who holds the permits? How many deer does your (extended) family eat? Effects of clear cutting on hunting areas?
- **Fishing** Seasons? Fishing methods (spear, net, rod & reel) Number of fish taken per season or per year? Changes in fish harvest? Access to lakes?
- **Trapping** Identify animals trapped (beaver, fox, mink, muskrat, otter, marten, bobcat, fisher, lynx, rabbit). General location of trap line? Type of permit(s). Who holds the permits? Hide distribution? Use? Sell? To whom?
- **Gardens** Have you grown a garden in the past 5 years? Size of garden? Did family garden?
- **Firewood** How do you heat your home? Number of chords burned during the year? Sell?
- **Crafts** Types of crafts? Types of resource collection (birch bark, willow, basswood. etc.)? Difficulties in finding materials? Problems related to clear cuts? Use? Sell? To whom?
- **Leech trapping** Season? Price? Access problems? Recommendations for policies?
- **Other harvesters to interview.**