

# Living Into Right Relations – Water Issue - March 2024

Hello,

For most who read this newsletter, water, and particularly the Grand River, is what connects us. Over the past few months I've been feeling drawn to do a newsletter with a focus on water. The regular offerings are here as well, of course.

This is not a highly curated, themed issue. It is a collection of ideas, issues, resources and events related to water, much of it close to home. Look for information about a virtual book club starting soon; a few groups involved with water and water protection; a small study group learning more about potable water on Six Nations. Also some water related reminders - the Two Row paddle will soon be open for registration and World Water Day is on March 22. In the News and Views section there is discussion about Bill 61, First Nations Clean Water Act, currently working its way through parliament and recent films about water related topics. If you have other information to offer on the theme, please send it my way!

Nancy ([nancydykstra@gmail.com](mailto:nancydykstra@gmail.com)). Thank you, Henriëtte and Bev for ongoing editing and other support!

## 1. Water related book club, Grand River Community play project...

- a. [Unbottled Book Club - Wellington Water Watchers](#) looks at critical issues surrounding water justice, plastic pollution, and the global fight for clean and accessible water. It draws its focus from [Daniel Jaffee's](#) new book "[Unbottled: The Fight against Plastic Water and for Water Justice](#)" which explores bottled water's impact on social justice and sustainability, and how diverse movements are fighting back. Five virtual sessions, held on the first Thursday of each month from 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. (March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6, July 4). Each session will include special guests from the front lines of the fight against water bottling and for water justice, and will provide space for discussion and connecting. The author will join for the opening and closing sessions. Learn more and register [here](#). Thank you, Janet Baine.
- b. We have highlighted this before but it bears repeating. Learn here about the [Grand River Community Play Project: THE VOICE OF A RIVER](#) and watch for the community theatre event happening this summer. They may need volunteers...!

## 2. Land Back

- a. [O:se Kenhionhata:tie](#) - read their Facebook posts
  - i. How to support? [Support us | O:se Kenhionhata:tie](#)
- b. [1492 Land Back Lane](#)

### 3. Potable Water and Six Nations

#### What's going on with potable water on Six Nations? Would you like to know?

Please join us! A small group is looking for people interested in learning together.

Unpacking this complex issue will teach us much and hopefully offer ideas about moving forward. In a quick search I found a number of [articles](#) reposted by an organization that's new to me called the [Safe Drinking Water Foundation](#). I also learned about the [First Nations Drinking Water Settlement](#). Six Nations' application to join the class action was [denied](#); they are not on the [list of impacted First Nations](#). There is plenty to learn! If you'd like to join us, contact me at [nancydykstra@gmail.com](mailto:nancydykstra@gmail.com).

#### Donate to help increase access to potable water on Six Nations

When local citizen Daniel Maoz learned about the lack of access to potable drinking water on the Six Nations of the Grand River reserve, he contacted staff at Six Nations Public Works. He learned that they are able to receive donations which will be used to support more people getting potable water hook-up in their homes. Water hook-up costs an average of \$7000 per household, which is out of reach for many. Six Nations is a [qualified donee](#) and as such can issue income tax receipts for donations. If you would like to contribute directly to this effort, you can contact [Public Works](#) at 519-445-4242. Even if you cannot donate enough for a single connection, every dollar contributes to an eventual home with potable water. You are invited to help in any way you are able.

### 4. Highlighting *Water First*: safe, clean water through collaboration

[Water First Education & Training Inc.](#) is a non-governmental organization that works only in communities where Indigenous leaders have invited them, mostly within Ontario, but expanding into Quebec, Manitoba, and Labrador. Water First does not identify as an Indigenous-led organization but is guided by an [Indigenous Advisory Council](#). Some graduates of the program also have roles in the organization.

Water First has 3 emphases: First, through the [Drinking Water Internships Program](#) they train young adults in the science and management of water and water purification systems so they can effectively operate water systems within their own communities - consequently, providing clean drinking water. Secondly, through the [Indigenous Schools Water Program](#) they offer in-class and on the land training in the science of water, not only about drinking water but also its ecological aspects - fishing, conservation, stream management etc. This can be offered at both elementary and secondary levels, including hands-on summer courses in geography and science. Thirdly, through the [Environmental Water Program](#) they use western and Indigenous knowledge to support Indigenous communities in assessing and restoring their waterways and the species that live in them.

Access their recent quarterly newsletter [here](#). To learn more, visit their website. (Thank you, Mary Mae Schwartzentruber.)

## 5. An Occasional Arts Section - The Arts: theatre, exhibits, films etc.

- a. **Mar. 1-June 20** [Body Beautiful](#) at Kitchener Waterloo Art Gallery, curated by Bangishimo.
- b. **Mar. 13, 6:30-9 p.m.** [Got Land? Indigenous Comedy Show](#) at L.R. Wilson Hall, Concert Hall, McMaster University, 1280 Main Street W Hamilton.
- c. **Mar. 19. 7 p.m.** Film Screening at Zion United Church, 215 Peel St., New Hamburg. Sponsored by the Ecumenical Working Group. Three short films that highlight a variety of contributions to our national identity made by Indigenous individuals and communities. See poster attached to email for details.
- d. **To Mar. 22** [We Remain Certain Arenhátyen tsi ní:tsi teyottenyohátye' kwató:ken tsi ní:tsi yonkwa'nikonhrayén:ta's](#) “explores Haudenosaunee land tenure and the complex history, treaty agreements, and displacements along the Grand.” Includes a beaded map of the Haldimand Tract. Curated by [Protect the Tract](#) at McMaster Museum of Art. Related news articles [here](#).
- e. **To May 26** [Shelley Niro: 500 Year Itch](#) Art Gallery of Hamilton. Photography, film, painting, printmaking, sculpture. Themes of Matriarchy, Past is Present, Actors, and Family Relations are addressed through lenses of parody, feminism and spirituality. Plan 2 hours to absorb the stories and beauty of these works. Thanks Bev McNabb.

## 6. Learning at home and connecting in person - includes water-related offerings.

[Crow Shield Lodge](#) in Waterloo Region has a range of events related to education, healing, land stewardship and reconciliation. This includes men's nights, women's full moon ceremony, cedar baths and a variety of workshops. See the events listing [here](#).

- a. **Mar. 8, noon - 1 p.m.** [Women and Water](#) Virtual panel discussion hosted by [Water First Education & Training Inc.](#) (See 4. above.) Thank you, Heather Power.
- b. **Mar. 9, 10 a.m. - 12 noon.** [3rd Annual Sugar Bush Adventure](#) hosted by [Feather and Cross](#) and led by Nathan Mantey and Indigenous Educator Dave Skene from White Owl Native Ancestry. Sign up via [Eventbrite](#) or email [admin@featherandcross.org](mailto:admin@featherandcross.org).
- c. **Mar. 9** [Grand River Water Ceremony](#), at [Schneider Park](#), Kitchener, parking off King St, across from Freeport Hospital.
- d. **Mar. 13, 12-1 p.m** [Six Nations Polytechnic](#) Lunch & Learn [Seed Exchange and Planting](#). To register contact Heather Bomberry at 519-445-0023, ext 6700. 2160. 4th Line Road, Ohsweken.
- e. **Mar. 13**, Registration opens for [Two Row on the Grand](#), an intercultural paddle down the Grand River from Cambridge to Port Maitland, a “reconciliation project”, a relationship-building experience, with ourselves, each other and with the river. [CBC article 2023](#). Registration info on their [website](#).
- f. **Mar. 14&15** [Two-Eyed Seeing & Ethical Space Training, Indigenous Climate Change Action](#) The Gathering Place, 2593 Chiefswood Rd, Ohsweken.
- g. **Mar. 16, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.** [14th Annual Pow Wow at Conestoga College](#).

- h. **Mar. 20, 6-7:30 p.m.** [Public Virtual Tour of Mohawk Institute](#).
- i. **Mar. 22** [United Nations World Water Day](#). Theme for 2024: Leveraging Water for Peace. Background info here: [Water and Peace](#). Resources, including resources for school aged children [here](#). Kairos materials coming soon: [here](#).
- j. **Mar. 27, 1:30-3:30** [Nations Uniting](#) Sharing Circle - To join this event and be part of their mailing list contact Rhonda Johns at [nations.uniting@gmail.com](mailto:nations.uniting@gmail.com).
- k. **Mar. 29, 12-2** Grandmothers' Tea Potluck lunch and sharing time. Contact Rhonda Johns at [nations.uniting@gmail.com](mailto:nations.uniting@gmail.com) for more information.
- l. **April 6, 10-3** [Mini Spring Market](#), Willow River Centre, 243 King St E, Kitchener.

## 7. Good Reads, News and Views

### a. Reads

- i. [Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice](#) by Ched Myers. Thanks, Henriëtte Thompson.
- ii. [Decolonizing Climate Policy in Canada](#) Report from Phase 2 from [Indigenous Climate Action](#) Thanks, Henriëtte Thompson.
- iii. [Bad Cree : A Novel](#) by Jessica Johns. On the Canada Reads list for 2024.
- iv. [An Indigenous Therapeutic | Do Justice](#) Thank you, Henriëtte Thompson.

### b. News

- i. [C-61 \(44-1\) - First Nations Clean Water Act](#) Tabled on Dec 11, 2023, Currently at second reading. Related news articles:
  - [Canada Introduces Bill C-61: First Nations Clean Water Act - JFK Law](#) JFK Law.
  - [Feds introduce bill to set drinking water standards in First Nations](#) CBC.
  - [‘Not true reconciliation.’ FSIN reacts to federal bill on water](#) northeastNOW.
  - [Prairie First Nations call on Ottawa to rewrite clean water bill](#) CBC.
  - [Pursuit of clean water is just a start for Indigenous communities](#). Ken Coates, McDonald-Laurier Institute, published in the Toronto Star.

### c. Views

- i. [Speaking to the Water](#) On our relationship with water. From Woman Stands Shining, [Pat McCab.net](#). Thank you, Janet Baine.
- ii. **From Fall 2023 TIFF:** [New doc “Boil Alert” shines spotlight on clean water inequities faced by First Nations](#) Windspeaker.com. Layla Staats from Six Nations of the Grand River visited Indigenous communities that have boil water advisories to gain a better understanding of the challenges. [BOIL ALERT TRAILER](#) here. Interview with Pam Palmater: [Layla Staats on her new documentary: Boil Alert](#).
- iii. [This pristine Canadian river has legal personhood, a new approach to conserving nature](#) CBC Nature of Things. Also on CBC GEM. Interview with filmmaker Susan Fleming [here](#).
- iv. Abrahamic Faith Forum, 2024, [Decolonizing](#) Laurier. Conversation with Dr. Darren Thomas, hosted by Dr. Allen Jorgenson. Martin Luther University/WLU.