

# OPEN SPACE

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*Engaging the Signs of the Times*

**LIVING WATER**

THE SPIRITUAL ECOLOGY OF WATER

## OPENSOURCE

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Mark Hathaway  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Victoria Blanco  
PROGRAM MANAGER

Trevor Scott, sj  
NETWORKING COORDINATOR

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Mary Ward Centre  
70 St. Mary Street  
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1J3

Tel: 416-927-7887

[www.jesuitforum.ca](http://www.jesuitforum.ca)

# FORUMWORD

**G**reetings during this Easter season! We associate water with renewal and rebirth. During the Easter vigil, the baptismal waters are blessed. In the northern hemisphere, Easter coincides with spring—a time when waters thaw and flow, reviving the Earth.

Canada is blessed with 20% of Earth's freshwater. Yet, there are many communities—particularly Indigenous communities—without access to safe drinking water. Globally, 40% of people have inadequate access to clean water.

Mining, deforestation, pipelines, industry, fertilizer and manure runoff, pesticides, plastics, and even road salt are contaminating our waterways. Meanwhile, climate change, shrinking glaciers, and overuse mean that water is under growing stress.

Yet, water is essential to all life. Like most living organisms, we are mainly water—it makes up 2/3 of our body weight. This water is constantly flowing through us. If our water comes from a river or lake, that body of water is within us. Whatever we do to water, we do to ourselves—and to all the living creatures around us.

Water also connects us to our ancient origins. Water's hydrogen was the first element birthed into being 13.8 billion years ago. Water's oxygen was formed when an ancient star went supernova. Together, these elements combined to create the water that rained down on Earth for 300 million years, forming the ancient oceans. This water has since flowed through myriad living creatures, connecting us with all life through time and space.

Harming water not only endangers our bodies, but also our spirits. Most of us have experienced the renewing effects that streams, waterfalls, lakes, and oceans have on us. The scintillating reflections of sunlight on water bring us joy. Swimming in water refreshes and invigorates. We are—in both body and spirit—living, breathing water.

On March 2, the Forum invited three guests to reflect with us on our relationship with water, what we might call “the spiritual ecology” of water:

**Lina Azeez** of Watershed Salmon Watch, which works to defend and rebuild BC's wild salmon and their habitats.

**Jesse Cardinal** of Keepers of the Water, a group of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and local communities working to protect the water, air, land, and creatures of the Arctic Ocean drainage basin.

**Joanie McGuffin** of the Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy, a land trust striving to sustain a healthy Lake Superior watershed.

Together, we spoke of how we are connected to water, how that connection is being endangered, and how our relationship with water might be renewed. With gratitude, we summarize their reflections here. As you read, we invite you to reflect on your own experiences of connection to water and how we might protect water for future generations.

Mark Hathaway, *Executive Director*



# Living Water: The Spiritual Ecology of Water



Image Credit: Gary McGuffin (Detail)



**Lina Azeez**  
Campaign Manager,  
Connected Waters;  
Watershed Watch  
Salmon Society  
(Vancouver, BC)



**Joanie McGuffin**  
Executive Director, Lake  
Superior Watershed  
Conservancy (LSWC);  
Author & Explorer  
(Goulais River, ON)



**Jesse Cardinal**  
Executive Director,  
Keepers of the Water  
(Kikino Métis Settlement, AB)



## ***How are you connected to water?***

**Jesse Cardinal:** I'm from Kikino, a Cree word meaning "our home." Whitefish Lake keeps our entire community alive; that's where we get our drinking water from. I grew up swimming in that lake. So, I'm connected to that lake.

When I was a kid, we didn't have running water. We powered our home with wood heat. We had a well outside. I remember pumping and hauling our water.

The taste of the water will never leave me: It was so clean and cold and refreshing. That must have impacted me. There is nothing that will ever take that memory away from me.

**I was taught on my journeys that every body of water has a water spirit or protector that takes care of that water. When you go to that water, you give that water an offering, or give that spirit being an offering.**

Water is living. When you talk to water, it's in our spirit that those conversations happen, in our heart. When you're talking to

water, you're not only talking to water, you're talking to everything that's in the water and everything that's around the water.

**Lina Azeez:** I was born in Sri Lanka, a beautiful, very wet island in the Indian Ocean. I grew up in awe of the massive thunderstorms that we had and the amount of water that would come through.

Yet, I grew up in Dubai, in a desert in the Middle East. It was super dry, and we celebrated water. It used to rain maybe two or three times a year.

I remember the smell of water in the air before it would rain. When



Camping on Lake Superior  
Image Credit: Gary McGuffin

I was in school and it started to rain, we would remove our socks and shoes and run out into the concrete playground which was suddenly full of water. We were wading through it, splashing about. We celebrated it the whole time. It was just wonderful.

When my family migrated to Vancouver, to this emerald city, I remember being blown away by the lushness and appreciating the rain in a whole different way than I did in Dubai.

I went to the University of British Columbia and trained in human and environmental geography. Water conservation is what I wanted to do, and soon I fell in with the salmon crowd. Salmon are an incredible species—their life cycles, their diversity.

Five years ago, I got the chance to travel with seven women down the 1400-km long Fraser River from source to sea.

As a first-generation immigrant to this country, it was amazing to learn about the water, to see it from the perspective of the salmon and sturgeon, and to learn about the often very traumatic history of this place as we moved towards the ocean.

**Joanie McGuffin:** I grew up near Georgian Bay. The waters were very clear in the lake I spent my childhood in. I remember the taste and the coldness of the water and how beautiful that was and having the sounds of water and the beings that live with the water. The loons were always part of my childhood.

Forty years ago, after meeting my husband, Gary, we set off in a canoe from the salt water on the Atlantic side and paddled the canoe up the St. Lawrence and through the Great Lakes. We went upstream and downstream, across watersheds, to take us all the way to the salt water up in the northwest.

Journeying on water connected us to the flow of the land and to the people who lived in many different places. Having this time to journey, gave me a very “in my bones” connection to water as a flowing being on the land that the water connects. As you cross watersheds, you’re flowing with the water down into the next lake.

Lake Superior has become a big part of my life. Here, in the heart of Turtle Island, lies the greatest expanse of freshwater on Earth. Spending three months circling this great body of water [by canoe], I was able to experience it as a whole being.

When you paddle it, you see all these 200 rivers, and all the little streams that feed the rivers. It’s a watershed! Everything that is affecting every single one of those rivers is affecting the lake, which in turn affects all the lower Great Lakes.



Swimming in water has always been a friendly experience to me. This precious gift of immersing yourself in water that you can drink is not something everybody gets to experience. But it should be an experience of every life being. It is a gift of life.

To catch your food from the water! There are some 80 species of fish in Lake Superior, whether it's the rivers or the waters of the lakes. Several generations ago, there were villages all around every river mouth because there were fish in abundance.

Yet, this abundance was harvested to the extent that it is now no longer supporting whole villages. There have also been huge impacts from the sea lampreys and other species that have come through the canals and the locks that have changed the composition of the Great Lakes forever.



**How has water been a source of meaning and sustenance?**

**Jesse:** In Kikino, I grew up going to church. I also grew up with my papa and grandma. Both of my grandfathers are First Nations. We used to go to Saddle Lake and were around all kinds of different ceremonies.

My mom allowed us to do that. I know that for some Christian families, through colonization, that's considered evil. So, I'm very thankful to my mom for giving me that freedom to go with my grandparents to be around ceremony.

That is where I'm connecting now on a very deep and spiritual level with water. I find in the churches I've been to, we don't take the time

to talk about water and pray about water. We're also taught that these things don't have spirits.

I had to seek out deeper connection to water and to all the living things. So, I have been reconnecting to my family in Saddle Lake and going to ceremony.

**It's amazing how water is the centre of the ceremony, but it's not a standalone thing. We are reminded of the spirit of water and how it is connected to everything.**

Keepers of the Water is doing more ceremony. Before, we would plan an event and do it, not taking the time to pray about it; but now we're actually incorporating ceremony: We will go to a sweat lodge or take the time to pray for an event.

**Lina:** I come from a Muslim background. In Islamic tradition, water has a huge role to play.

We, as humans, have a responsibility to share and take care of water because there is a finite amount of it on Earth.

The Qur'an talks about the foundations of water conservation by laying out the rights and responsibilities of people.

During Ramadan, when we break our fast, we break it in meditation and with water, because when we fast, we don't drink water either. That brings back life and energy.

**Joanie:** Being able to be by water with our child, to look out on water so vast that it brings tears to visitors' eyes who've never seen this much freshwater, has been an amazing experience.

In the practices and teachings that helped me connect more deeply with water, I've been very fortunate to live amongst many Indigenous Nations and have been to many circles and ceremonies in the recent past.



The Fraser River  
Image Credit: Wiki Commons (Detail)

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### What threats do you see to water?

**Jesse:** In my community in Kikino, I started to see more land being cleared and more gas wells. I was so upset by it. I would cry and feel angst about it.

I remember one time there was an oil well put up on my grandfather's land. I said, "Papa, why did you let them come on our land?" I could see the sadness, or maybe the sorrow or the regret about it; but that is what they were doing to all our people. They were coming and offering money.

I felt very lonely because I would go to community meetings and talk about our lake and about the

water. People would look at me like I had ten heads; and I would look at them and think, this is our drinking water! That was twenty years ago.

When I went to the Keepers of the Water gathering in 2008 or 2009, it was so overwhelming for me that I cried because there were people from all over the world that were there to talk about water. It set the path for where I am today to connect with people that have that connection to and concern for water.

Now, it's a beautiful thing because, in our communities, there's more and more people—especially the younger generation—that are awake. They know. They see. Water is important. The corporations are killing everything, and we need to stop this.

**Lina:** The Lower Mainland is probably the most diked jurisdiction in Canada. It's also

where juvenile salmon come through on their way out of the Fraser River into the Salish Sea. They need the small side channels, tributaries, and sluices along the Fraser to over-winter in and to learn how to hunt and feed, so that when they get to the ocean, they have the best possible chance of life.

When I did the Fraser River trip, especially where it goes through the canyon, it's quite wild; but when the river splayed out through the Lower Mainland, you start to see more embankments, to smell the manure put on the fields, to see a sheen on the water from a runoff.

You start to see how slowly, over time, we have degraded this waterway. We never think about it as a whole—we break it into pieces. We give permits for this or licenses for that: "Let's remove some trees here. It's not a big deal."

## SALMON, THE LIFE SOURCE OF THE FOREST

Pacific salmon are essential to the well-being of human and ecological communities on the northwest coast of Turtle Island. Salmon have been a key food source for Indigenous Peoples for millennia. Salmon also feed the vast temperate rainforests, bringing nutrients from the sea.

Bears, eagles, and other creatures leave the carcasses of dead salmon on the forest floor, fertilizing rainforest plants and trees. Over the past century, however, as salmon runs have fallen drastically, the growth of trees has also slowed dramatically, as evidenced by the shrinking size of tree rings.

Today, many species of salmon are in decline due to commercial fishing, dams, flood control structures, fish farming, climate change, and water pollution. By some estimates, 75% of sockeye have been wiped out in Canada.

The film *Salmon Confidential* documents biologist Alexandra Morton's journey as she attempts to overcome government and industry roadblocks thrown in her path and works to bring critical information to the public to save BC's wild salmon.



Image Credit: Wiki Commons (Detail)



Image Credit: Wiki Commons (Detail)



Image Credit: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Image Credit: Wiki Commons  
An aerial view showing the St. Marys River control structures.  
Fishing at Saint Mary's River, Sault-Sainte Marie, Michigan, 1901



Watershed Salmon Watch is trying to address these issues through work on flood control infrastructure and on the fish farming issue.

With my work, I focus on the impacts of flood control structures: Dikes, pump stations, and gates. These structures block off tributaries, side channels, and sluices where the river would have naturally flowed during a flood event; but now, because of the blockages, the waters rush down the main stem of the river.

The communities that are at greatest risk of flooding are the Indigenous communities along the lower Fraser, which were systematically built or placed where dikes were built to not protect them. So, an incredible injustice was done right there.

During the summertime, there's much less water in the channels, tributaries, and sluices. The water becomes so warm that salmon literally cook in them; but these warm waters are fantastic for all kinds of invasive species that outcompete salmon and other native species that would otherwise use these waterways.

**Joanie:** The St. Mary's River, the only outflow of Lake Superior, was completely transformed at the end of the 19th century when the locks were put in. The water was diverted.

Now, almost all the water is diverted for hydroelectric generation, leaving only 5% to cascade down the original rapids of the once thundering St. Mary's, which was a tremendous source of food and a gathering place for the Batchewana since time immemorial.

We formed the Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy a few years ago to support the vitality of the watershed. We wanted to do this, bringing communities together around active participation, conservation, and education.

All twenty Islands off Lake Superior Provincial Park—Nanaboozhung, the ancestral spiritual birthplace of Nanabijou and the traditional unceded territory of the Anishinaabe—are a very important

cultural place for Indigenous nations. This is where there were villages.

When the park was established, the people of Batchewana First Nation and the Métis Nation were evicted, and their homes and villages were burned.

People are now coming back to the land and to these places and telling their stories. We have to know the truth before we can have reconciliation. These are some of the hard truths of the stories about our protected lands, be they National or Provincial Parks.

**Jesse:** In 2006, Keepers of the Water was formed. A lot of our focus is on the Athabasca, Slave, and Peace rivers, which all flow into the Deh-Cho (Mackenzie) River, then into the Arctic Ocean.

The tar sands, one of the biggest industrial projects on the planet, is in this massive Arctic watershed. At that time, communities were noticing drastic changes in the quality and quantity of the water.

In the Northwest Territories, the Dene people gathered with others on the banks of the river and

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Image Credit: Christ Belcourt

Tailings pond from the Syncrude mine in Wood Buffalo, near Fort McMurray, Alberta. (Detail)  
Image Credit: Alex Abboud, Creative Commons



declared that water is sacred, and we must work to protect it. That kicked off Keepers of the Water. The people that have been involved have been water keepers, or water protectors.

As Indigenous people, that’s part of our natural law and our teachings from Creator—from the beginning of time—that we need to live in harmony with creation.

We started having annual gatherings in different Indigenous communities to talk about water: in northern BC, the Northwest Territories, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. We hear from the communities: What are the concerns with the water?

In 2015, we had a Keepers of the Water gathering in Bushe River, in Treaty 8 territory in northern Alberta, which had a massive oil spill.

The people said, “We could not even go out onto our land to hunt, fish, and trap because of this spill, because it’s toxic. We don’t

know how it’s going to affect us.

The Alberta Energy Regulator [falsely] said this spill was cleaned up.” So, the community is now left with this mess to clean up at their own cost.

We partnered with that community and brought in Kevin Timoney, an independent scientist. We did studies to prove that the land is not cleaned up and we shared that information. Kevin has documented this and other spills in *The Hidden Scourge: Exposing the Truth About Fossil Fuel Industry Spills*.

There are 19 toxic tailing ponds in the Alberta Tar Sands: Anything that lands on these ponds will die. On a blue, sunny day, the ponds look like a lake. I have a picture of a mountain lake in Montana that’s so blue and crisp and clean. The tailings ponds look the same, so lots of the birds will land on them. As soon as they do, they die.

As of 2018, there were 125 trillion litres of toxic tailings in northern Alberta.<sup>1</sup> That would be enough

drinking water for a million people for 1700 years.

Now, the Alberta government wants to start dumping these tailings into the Athabasca River. They are saying that they can treat them; they are not saying that they are safe to drink.

But what we know, through both Western and traditional science, is that it is not safe. There are high levels of saline, there is naphthenic acid, which is a cancer-causing chemical. Many people question if these, as well as mercury and all kinds of major toxins, are actually being removed from the treated water.



### How can we act to protect water?

Joanie: First and foremost, we need to right our relationship with water and all the more-than-human world—from every small thing that lives, to the wisdom within Indigenous nations.

I grew up to see water as a commodity, something that came out of a tap. Yet, water is not an object; it is a flowing, living being, and our relationship with water must change.

Recently, a contract was signed with a huge corporation in southern Ontario to draw bottled water from groundwater. When you fill all the bottles, you can encircle Mother Earth, seven times, with plastic bottles full of water. Commodifying the greatest source of life, water, is a criminal act.

We need to refrain from buying drinking water in plastic bottles; we need to make water available, clean, accessible. Drinking water is a basic right for all life. In Indigenous communities, it’s

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## MOTHER EARTH WATER WALKERS JOSEPHINE MANDAMIN (1942-2019)

Josephine Mandamin was an Anishinaabe Elder from Wiikwemikoong Unceded Territory, Manitoulin Island Ontario. Known as the “Grandmother Water Walker,” she and the Mother Earth Water Walkers walked an estimated 17,000 km around the Great Lakes from 2003-17, inspiring thousands to participate in water walks in communities across Turtle Island.



Image Credit: Ayse Gursoz, <https://indigenouising.org/josephine-mandamin/>

women, we are life givers. As Mother Earth is a woman, ... she is also the Life Giver... What happens to her happens to me.

As you can see now, women are going through the same thing that she’s going through: She’s being prostituted, polluted, abused, all kinds of things that are happening to her are happening to women...

***Is there one story that stands out for you from all your walks around all the lakes and along the rivers that stays with you?***

I think of [Lake Superior] as a very powerful water. She’s very strong. She can be very gentle, [yet] very strong. Boats or ships have fallen [because] she’s unpredictable....

When I think of that, I think of women, as she’s also a woman. Women are very unpredictable; we don’t know what to expect from us. That’s my interpretation of the greatest achievement.... I regard her as a woman.

***You’ve helped to create a community of others with whom you’re walking, and others who have been inspired. Do you see the next generation coming to help you in your work?***

I certainly hope that there will be others who will pick up the torch and start walking for and with the water.

Mother Nature really needs us, the animals need us.... I think about how our next generations are not going to be able to afford the water... At the grassroots level, we need to start thinking about what we can do.

My dream is that we can work together as humans, not just as Indian people, but people from all walks—the churches, the four colours, the whites, the blacks, the yellow, [the reds].

***How can people start to work together and really motivate themselves to think about water and how can they take care of it?***

I think that we really need to teach our leadership to really respect what it is that we respect.

This article draws on Josephine Mandamin’s words found in videos by [Historica Canada](#) and the [Centre for Humans and Nature](#).<sup>2</sup>

A wise Ogimaa told us in the lodge that an ounce of water would cost more than an ounce of gold by 2030. The grand chief asked the audience, “What are you going to do about it?”

I wondered, how can I get people to stop polluting the water and start respecting her? I had to speak up for the water. So, I began walking around the five Great Lakes with women from the four directions of North America. We used copper pails to carry the water—they can clean, heal, and amplify our prayers for the water.

Over time, I just joined a walk. When we got tired, we said “Nga-zhidchige onji Nibi”—I will do it for the water. It’s our responsibility to raise awareness, so we can turn things around. The generations to come will ask, what did my grandparents do? You’ve heard of walk the talk. This is why I walk.

***Can you tell us about Water Keepers in Ojibwa tradition?***

Water Keepers have always been women who are keepers of the water because they carry life within their bodies. As

### RIVERS AS LIVING PERSONS

Around the globe, the “Rights to Nature” movement—led by Indigenous Peoples and grassroots environmentalists—is seeking legal personhood for rivers, bodies of water, and other ecological entities.

While granting personhood to rivers aims to provide them with legal protections, the movement goes further to affirm that natural entities like rivers, mountains, and forests have value beyond their utility humans. Rather than “natural resources,” they are living persons with rights.

Indigenous Peoples throughout Turtle Island, and many other places, recognize water as a living entity that is cherished and protected in traditional law.

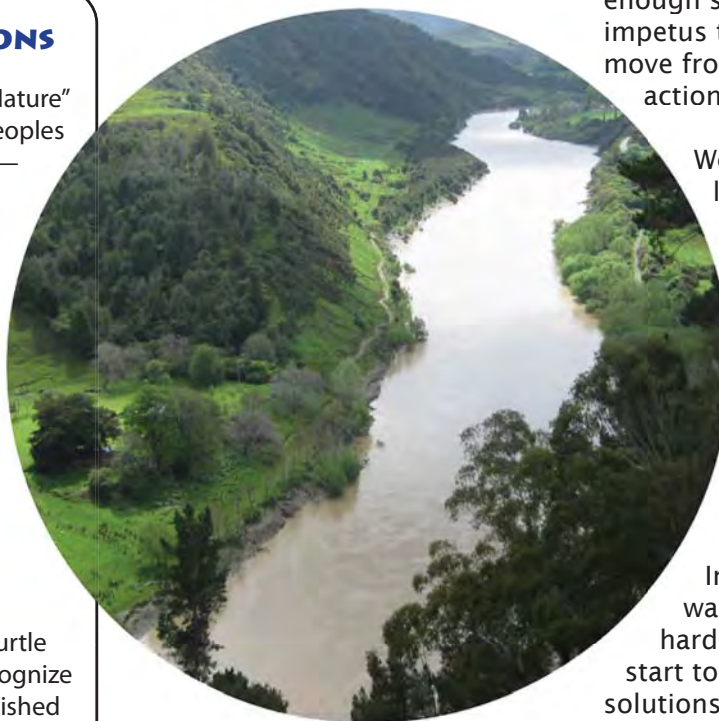
Recognizing the personhood of rivers like the Deh-Cho could both serve to provide much stronger legal protections and broaden our understanding of rivers as having life that needs to be protected for its own sake and the sake of all living beings.

an absolute priority to get clean drinking water.

**Jesse:** Keepers of the Water is working to have the personhood of rivers recognized. Corporations have legal personhood status. McDonalds is considered a person. They have rights in court.

Rivers don't have rights. The animals don't have rights. The land doesn't have rights. The air doesn't have rights. So, there's this movement happening globally where people are starting to say the water is a living being. It's alive. It needs to have rights, to have a voice.

People are trying to get personhood for rivers and watersheds—as is the case with the Magpie River in Quebec and the Whanganui River in New Zealand where they've been given personhood.



The Whanganui River, New Zealand  
Image Credit: Jason Pratt, Wiki Commons (Detail)

Does that mean the river will be protected? I don't know, but maybe they will have the same rights as McDonalds in court.

On a more personal level, whatever you put down your drain goes back into the water. So, I started in my home. I don't use bleach or laundry soap. I only use baking soda. I don't use Bounce, which has formaldehyde in it. I'm trying to figure out what kind of dish soap, shampoo, and even lotions I can use. As you start to get more on the journey, you start to realize that everything goes back into our water.

**Lina:** When it comes to our relationship with freshwater and salmon, nothing is more powerful than speaking and lobbying. Getting to know your local decision-makers is an incredibly important tool; making sure that they understand your concerns about water, or salmon, or caribou, or any of the species in your communities and watersheds. I've often heard this from elected officials and senior government bureaucrats: They need to know that the public interest is great

enough so that they have the impetus to take it forward and move from theoretical plans to action.

We do a lot of work with local First Nations in and around the lower Fraser. There is a lot of alignment between what organizations like ours are calling for and what these Nations want. It's an incredibly powerful collaboration, to work as allies with Indigenous communities.

In the lower Fraser, we want to move away from hard, built infrastructure and start to look at nature-based solutions and green infrastructure. We can't control water, but we can control our actions on it.

We can build back better, but to be more than a slogan, we need to build back better together with Indigenous communities.

Knowing that there is public support for this kind of work gives us the added energy to keep going, to keep pushing, and know that we are pushing in the right direction.

At the same time, I take time for myself. I go into nature. I remind myself why I'm doing what I'm doing. I take a bike ride. Self-care is so incredibly important in doing this work. I really urge anyone who is inspired, or wants to get involved in some way, to do the work; but also take time for yourself.

**Jessie:** I'm wearing this orange shirt because of the recent discovery of the children in Kapawe'no, in northern Alberta in Treaty 8. We show up in spaces and we carry that grief with us. Both of my grandfathers attended residential school. We're almost at 10,000 children. I don't even know if they've done a quarter of the schools yet.



## LAND BACK

"To us, it's the same thing that it's meant since basically after contact. That it's land back. Actual land back. It's actual resources back. It's respect for our right to be self-determining. It's our children back. Our women back. All of the things that Canada has tried to take from us, we just want that back.

"Does it mean that non-native people are kicked out of their homes? Absolutely not. Because of the majority of lands in Canada are held by governments...

"(This) is a good thing in so many ways. First of all it's not taking their (non-Indigenous) land or or property away from them. Governments can compensate us from lands that we can't have.

"But it's about things like joint governance. It's about community building. It's about sharing the resources.

"It's also about addressing climate change. If you think about Indigenous people who are on the front line, trying to protect the lands from contamination, and waters from being poisoned, that benefits everyone. The way to do that is to respect and honour land back for Indigenous peoples."

*Pamela Palmater,  
Chair of Indigenous Governance,  
Ryerson University.  
From TVO's 'The Agenda'*

The colonizers came with the Doctrine of Discovery, which said that the people on these lands weren't even human. We are seeing that today with the bodies that we are digging up.

I know there's a lot of people who have come to these lands that are working to right those wrongs; but how do you right those wrongs?

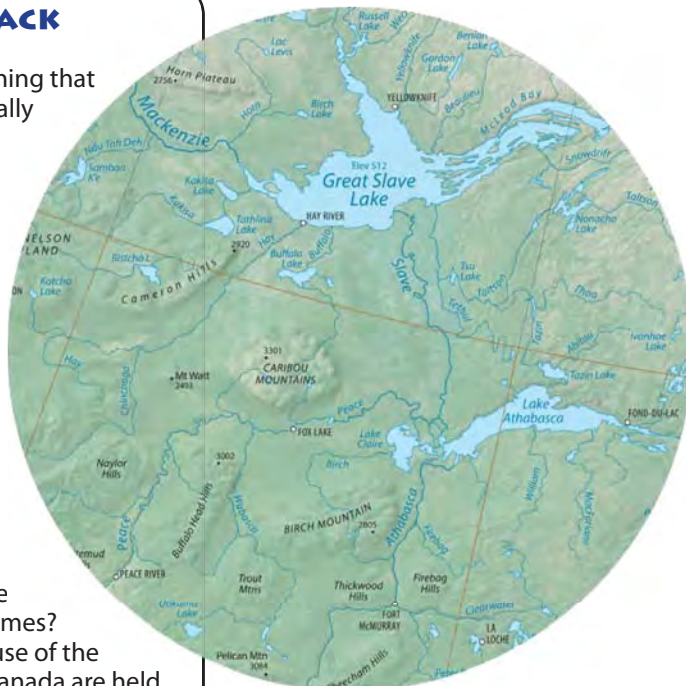


Image Credit: Tom Patterson, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons (Detail)

It comes down to "Land Back." What does that mean?

**We are not trying to chase people away, but Indigenous people only have 2% of this land known as Canada. We are stewards of the land. We take care of the land and water. For all of us. We want a better world, a better society.**

I see people like Joanie, and a lot of other people, that want to have peace, love, and good relationships with each other.

Part of that is returning land to Indigenous people. We're trying to have economic growth and we can't because our populations are growing. We only have enough room for houses, and we don't even always have room for the houses.

So, for me to teach my children to be stewards of the land, take them to the waters, and help take care of the waters, we need to have those waters to do those teachings.

That's part of building that relationship with water.

We can move forward by having these hard conversations. We can never forget history. We can never rewrite history. We need to acknowledge history. We need to right the wrongs of history.



## RESTORING INDIGENOUS PLACE NAMES

In recent decades, a movement has begun to reclaim and restore Indigenous place names throughout Turtle Island. In Quebec, the Eeyou Istchee (Cree Nation in Quebec) is seeking to restore nearly 20,000 place names throughout their territory.

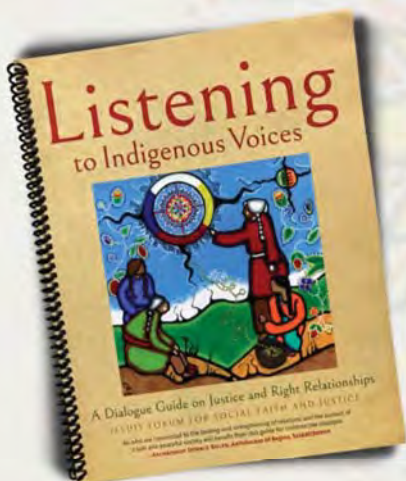
Similarly, names such as Qikiqtaaluk (Baffin Island), Tu'cho (Great Slave Lake), Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands), and the Deh-Cho (MacKenzie) River are being reclaimed.

Canada's Governor General, Mary Simon, (former president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami) has suggested renaming the Northwest Passage as Saniruti Imanga, "the edge of the water."



The Mackenzie (Deh-Cho) River, Inuvik, NWT  
Image Credit: Adam Jones, Wiki Commons (Detail)

# Listening to Indigenous Voices



8 Day Retreat  
Ignatius Jesuit Centre,  
Guelph, ON



Wednesday, May 18 @ 7:30 PM  
to  
Thursday, May 26 @ 1:00 PM



*Join Us  
For an 8-Day Retreat  
Focused On  
Listening to Indigenous Voices*

With guidance from Indigenous Knowledge Carriers, Loyola House Retreat Centre staff, and the Jesuit Forum team, retreatants will explore the diverse Indigenous cultures of this land, unlearn stereotypes and misconceptions, explore the history of colonization that has marked relationships between Settlers and Indigenous Peoples, and examine ways to address this painful legacy by seeking concrete pathways towards right relationships, decolonization, and re-indigenization.

Over the course of the retreat, we will explore these themes through talks, multimedia presentations, time with the land, periods of silent reflection, sharing circles, and group-based activities.

*Facilitated by Shasha Sky & Dave Skene from White Owl Native Ancestry Association & Victoria Blanco, Mark Hathaway, & Trevor Scott, SJ from the Jesuit Forum*

Register at: <http://tiny.cc/ltiv-guelph>

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70 St. Mary Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1J3  
416-927-7887 [www.jesuitforum.ca](http://www.jesuitforum.ca)

*Your contribution is greatly appreciated.*

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## Questions for Small Group Dialogue:

1. What struck you most in this conversation on living water?
2. In your own experience, which bodies of water have nourished and sustained you in body and spirit? How?
3. Do you perceive water as sacred or as deserving of recognition as a person? If so, in what ways?
4. What concerns you most about water in your own community? And further afield?
5. Which actions are you inspired to take to protect or renew water?

For more information about the Forum dialogue process,  
see: [tiny.cc/forumprocess](http://tiny.cc/forumprocess)

For endnote references,  
see: <http://tiny.cc/OS14-3-refs>