



# Indigenous Sustainability Resources

The purpose of this document is to provide teachers with a collection of resources focused around Saskatchewan and Canada, that connect Indigenous cultures with sustainability practice.

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## ENERGY

### [Video: Renewables in the Heart of the Tar Sands](#)

(Climate Atlas of Canada, 2019)

5 minutes

“The Lubicon Cree Nation of northern Alberta are leading the low-carbon energy transition. Community member Melina Laboucan-Massimo witnessed the changing landscape from industrial development in her territory, and she decided to take action. As part of her Masters Thesis, she fundraised and coordinated the construction of 20KW solar energy system. Melina calls the project “a beacon of what is possible in our communities” and her perspective shows how renewable energy aligns with Indigenous philosophies of reciprocity, relationship, and reconnection with the land.”

### [Video: T'sou-ke Nation solar community](#)

T'Sou-ke First Nation and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

3 minutes

T'sou-ke First Nation: First Nation that has installed substantive solar PV and thermal infrastructure. They integrate culture, electricity, and self-sufficiency by having these facilities in their community.

### [Videos channel: Indigenous Clean Energy Social Enterprise](#)

(Indigenous Clean Energy)

A YouTube channel with relevant video playlists:

- [Efficiency 101](#): a playlist that suggests simple home improvements to reduce energy and water waste
- [Kohkom's House](#): house energy audits at Kohkoms houses



- [Indigenous-led clean energy Projects](#): “[The videos] share the stories of Indigenous communities across Canada who have developed their own clean energy projects.”

[Web page: Fort Chipewyan's remote solar community](#)

Additional: [CBC article about the project](#) (2020)

Details and the background of the largest remote solar installation of its kind in Canada (2020). The articles provide information about the solar facility and its benefits to the community.



## WATER

### [Article with videos: Water is Knowledge – Water Teachings](#)

(Decolonizing Water, 2020)

Videos (2): 1 minute, 1 minute

Teaching summary based on a journal article from The International Indigenous Policy Journal.  
With 2 short videos

“This article addresses the role of Traditional Knowledge (TK) in protecting water in Ontario. At the same time, it highlights the need for mutually respectful collaboration between TK and Western science in resolving the water crisis primarily experienced in small, usually Indigenous, communities in Canada. The insights shared in this paper provide an overview of what water means to the Anishinabek in Ontario as gathered from the lessons and teachings of Elders, knowledge holders, practitioners, Anishinabe thinkers and scholars, amongst others.”

### [Video: Water: the sacred relationship documentary](#)

(Native Counselling Services of Alberta, 2015)

53 minutes

“Water is sacred in Aboriginal culture. It is in our stories, it is in our ceremonies and it gives us life. In The Sacred Relationship, Elders from across Alberta teach us that water must be respected, because, what we do to the water, we do to ourselves.”

### [Videos: Water – the sacred relationship](#)

A series of videos including an 8-min abbreviated version of the above documentary. Other videos (between 3 and 12 minutes) include: Creation Story, People of the Land, Eco-Despair, Tea of Life, My Rubber Boots, Two Sciences, Wetland Odyssey, Return to the Source, The H Factor, A Beautiful World, Mirror Lake, Water Spirit, and Wind Spirit.



[Video: Autumn Peltier, Water protector, speech to UN Sept 2019](#)

(CBC News, 2019)

6 minutes

“Canadian water protector and activist Autumn Peltier from Wiikwemkoong First Nation on Manitoulin Island addresses the UN for the 2019 Global Landscapes Forum.” She speaks about water security and the lack of clean drinking water for Canadian communities.

[Video: The River is Hungry: When North America's largest inland delta withers](#)

(The Local Journalism Initiative funded by the Government of Canada, 2021)

6 minutes

Personal accounts of the impacts being felt by the changes to the Saskatchewan River Delta. Surrounding communities and their activities are changing with the delta.

[Video: Bottle – Grand Prize Winner – 2021 Let's Talk About Water Youth Film Awards](#)

(What About Water, 2021)

2 minutes

Created by Saskatoon students in Heather Reid's class at John G. Egnatoff Elementary School for this youth film competition for grades 5-8 students. “A person wasting and mistreating water travels up the stream of time, later getting caught up in their wasting ways.”

What About Water [video page](#)

[Video: Waterborne: A Story of Broken Water - Second Prize - Let's Talk About Water International Film Prize](#)

(What About Water, 2020)



2 minutes

“Captures of the history of harm to indigenous lands and water and how these changes continue to manifest today in the situations of long term boil water advisories in Indigenous communities.”

### [Movie: One River Many Relations](#)

(2015)

62 minutes (\$6 rental)

Movie: explores the perspective of marginalized First Nation and Métis communities around the Athabasca Soil Sands.

““One River Many Relations” explores the Athabasca Oil Sands from a marginalized and often silenced perspective: Communities that live downstream. The film is a collaborative community effort featuring interviews with local Cree, Dene and Métis members from Fort Chipewyan. It gets to the heart of their concerns for their families, traditional ways and territories as the Oil Sands encroach closer and closer.”

### [Movie: There's Something in the Water](#)

(2020)

71 mins (TV-14) available on Netflix

“Born and raised in Nova Scotia, Oscar and Emmy award-nominated actor-director Elliot Page and co-director Ian Daniel engage in deeply personal and political dialogue with women at the forefront of some of Nova Scotia's most urgent environmental crises. Based on the book of the same name by Ingrid Waldron, There's Something in the Water explores the topic of environmental racism, poignantly shining a light on the Canadian government's current and historical decisions to prioritize the profits of large corporations over the health of indigenous and black communities.”



### [Website: Keepers of the Water](#)

Keepers of the water: “We are First Nations, Métis, Inuit, environmental groups, concerned citizens, and communities working together for the protection of Water, air, land, and all living things, today and tomorrow, in the Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin.”

Currently, Keepers of the Water (KOW) runs classroom workshops teaching about water and in the 2020-21 school year, they organized an art project for participating schools to answer the question “What does Water mean to you?”





## FOOD

[Video: The askîy project](#) (Saskatoon community garden project)

(CHEP Good Food, 2016)

5 minutes

A video describing the askîy garden project: the people and Indigenous connections involved.

“The askîy project is an **urban agriculture** internship that engages both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth to learn together about growing, harvesting, and selling food through an innovative model. Its five key focus areas are: growing food and food skills, enhancing cultural connections, promoting environmental sustainability, creating social enterprise, and engaging youth.”

[Video: Meechim Project – Food Sovereignty in northern Manitoba](#)

(Climate Atlas of Canada, 2018)

11 minutes

“The Meechim project follows the story of Garden Hill First Nation – a northern Manitoba community that is only accessible via air and ice roads – and its journey to build a self-sustaining farm. Through a combination of both Indigenous and farm knowledge, the community’s efforts to attain food sovereignty show that climate resilience can lead to better social, economic, health and environmental outcomes for all.”



## BIODIVERSITY

### [Lesson: Plant a Three Sisters garden](#)

(KidsGardening.org)

Curriculum: Junior elementary years

Outdoor activity, 3 months to complete

This resource provides instruction for planting a “Three Sisters” garden, along with an explanation of the Three Sisters plants and their connection with Indigenous peoples.

### [Video: Bison return to traditional land in Saskatchewan](#)

(CBC News, 2020)

2 minutes

“Saskatchewan First Nations are working together to restore the bison population on traditional lands after more than a century.” Zagime Anishinabek First Nation received 22 bison onto their land.

### [Article: Free-ranging Sask. Bison herd begins to make comeback](#)

(CBC News, 2021)

This article covers a resurgent bison herd in the Prince Albert National Park.

### [Video: Bringing Back the Buffalo](#)

(Climate Atlas, 2019)

““The buffalo is the best environmentalist you can have,” Dr. Leroy Little Bear of Kainai First Nation says. In the Prairies, the buffalo is not only a keystone species, but a critical part of Blackfoot culture. A professor at the University of Lethbridge, Dr. Little Bear is a strong advocate for why it's crucial to include Indigenous worldviews in environmental management. In this video, he discusses the environmental change he's witnesses, and why buffalo restoration is critical for restoring ecological balance.”



[Article: Muskeg under threat](#)

(CBC News, 2021)

“Indigenous land users, scientists and youth rally to protect northern Saskatchewan’s peatlands from harvest.”

[Article: Medicine in your backyard: How Indigenous peoples have used medicinal plants](#)

(Wanuskewin Heritage Park, via CBC News, 2017)

The article presents how various Saskatchewan plants can be used as medicine.



## CLIMATE CHANGE

[Website: Inquiry project guide: Climate Action and Decolonization: Indigenous Perspectives](#)

(Learning for a Sustainable Future, 2020)

A guide for leading students through an inquiry-based project that investigates how Indigenous peoples are leaders in climate action in Canada and how climate changes is impacting their lives.

[Video: Climate Change in Great Bear Lake](#)

(Déline Renewable Resources Council, 2011)

14 minutes

“This short documentary was produced for the Déline Renewable Resources Council in collaboration with the elders of Déline, NT. It focuses on the elders' traditional ecological knowledge of the impacts of climate change on Great Bear Lake, Canada.”



## CLIMATE ACTIVISM

### [Video: Indigenous Climate Action: Community-based solutions rooted in decolonization](#)

(Climate Atlas of Canada, 2019)

4 minutes

“‘Real climate solutions are rooted in a return to the land - a return to and of the land - and are rooted in decolonization,’ says Eriel Deranger, Executive Director of Indigenous Climate Action (ICA) and member of Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. ICA is a network of Indigenous peoples framing the ideas and actions regarding climate change in traditional knowledge and community-based solutions. These grassroots actions, Eriel explains, will support the transition to renewable energy while also ensuring social and environmental justice by maintaining and strengthening Indigenous peoples’ connections to language, land and culture.”

### [Video: Xiuhtezcatl Martinez, Climate Activist, Earth Guardians](#)

(BigSpeak Speakers Bureau, 2016)

4 minutes

Inspiring compilation of American environmental activist Xiuhtezcatl Martinez speaking about protecting the planet for future generations and about the legacy we are leaving.



## SUSTAINABILITY

### [Website: Acting on Climate Change: Indigenous Innovations](#)

(Dialogues on Sustainability, 2017)

Summary of climate action events that were part of this Canadian program. The program connected climate action and reconciliation in Canada while recognizing the leadership of Indigenous cultures in sustainable practices.

### [Word Document: Ecosystem Legend Project](#)

(shared by Gabby Neiman, Saskatoon)

Research and writing project

(Grade 7 Social Studies [DR7.2](#) and Science [IE7.4](#); Grade 8 Social Studies [RW8.3](#), and Science [WS8.4](#))

This resource includes the reading and discussion of Cherokee Legend *The Little Deer, Awi Usdi*. The theme of the story is the relationship between people and animals.

The project is inquiry based and is guided by research questions. Students are asked to investigate human impact on our ecosystems.

### [PDF document: Lessons of the Birch](#)

(shared by Saskatoon Teacher Lance McQueen)

Curriculum: Science 10

3-page story

A story about the interconnectedness of people and the natural world. Mary Thomas, an Indigenous elder of the Secwepemc Nation (Shuswap, Canada) shares about respecting the gifts of the earth and about the practice of harvesting birch bark to make baskets.

### [PDF document: Lessons of the Birch summary](#)

Activity – 16 questions / two pages

Discussion questions from the Lessons of the Birch story.



### [Video: Two-Eyed Seeing](#)

(USask ENVS 401 Project, 2020)

21 minutes

“A presentation on sustainability issues from Two-eyed Seeing perspectives of local Elders.” The Two-Eyed perspective is an equal acceptance of both Indigenous and Western science. The *Sustainability In Action ENVS 401* students' video consists of discussions around the five pillars of sustainability: traditional, environment, social, economic and sustainability.

### [Article: Preserving Indigenous languages could be good for the planet](#)

(CBC Radio, The Current, 2021)

CBC article featuring Plant medicine educator Joe Pitawanakwat discussing the close tie between species extinction and Indigenous language loss in Canada and around the world; and the need for preservation: “Indigenous languages contain world views that offer solutions to the climate crisis.”

Recording of interviews is also available. (23 minutes)

### [Blog Post: Four Indigenous women to watch in Canada's fight against climate change](#)

(Pembina Institute, 2022)

“[Indigenous] Leaders call for equity, urgency, and sharing of economic benefits in the energy transition”

This post gives readers a background of four women – Jordyn Burnouf, Melina Laboucan-Massimo, Cloy-e-iis Judith Sayers, Larissa Crawford – and their journeys as advocates for climate action.



## COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

### [Ayisinowak, A Communications Guide](#)

(City of Saskatoon, Office of the Treaty Commissioner, Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre, 2018)

56 pages

A guide that covers expectations for meetings and protocols when communicating with Aboriginal Peoples. It is part of Truth and Reconciliation, provided by the City of Saskatoon in partnership with the Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre.

The guide answers questions like "What is smudging?", "What is a tobacco offering?", "What is a Pipe Ceremony?", "Who is an Elder?" and more.