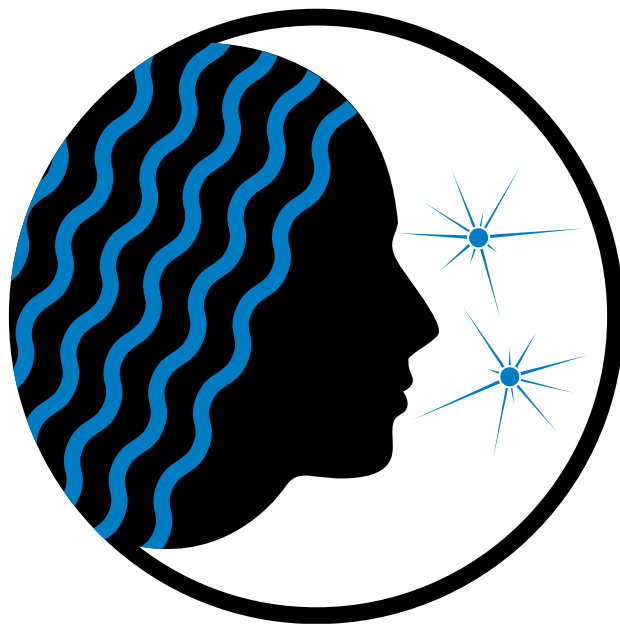


# Manitoba Theatre for Young People

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **Pablo Felices-Luna**



# FROZEN RIVER

## nîkwatin sîpiy

CO-WRITTEN BY Michaela Washburn, Joelle Peters AND Carrie Costello

AN **MTYP** AND **Castlemoon Theatre** PRODUCTION

## STUDY GUIDE

SPONSORED BY



## LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In the spirit of reconciliation, MTYP is committed to respecting and recognizing Indigenous spaces and to honouring those who stewarded the land we now occupy. We would like to acknowledge that we are on Treaty 1 territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Dakota, Cree, Oji-Cree and Dene peoples and the homeland of the Métis nation.



## ABOUT MTYP

Manitoba Theatre for Young People was founded in 1982 and is under the artistic direction of Pablo Felices-Luna.

Each season, MTYP reaches upwards of 90,000 Manitobans through mainstage productions, touring shows, drama workshops, and the 1,600 children and teens who enrol each year in the MTYP Theatre School and Native Youth Theatre.

MTYP is one of the most respected professional theatre companies in Canada, for children or adults. Located today at The Forks in Winnipeg, MTYP's home is a 28,000 square foot performance facility featuring a fully re-configurable theatre, classroom studios, and full production and wardrobe shops. The theatre building has been called "a singular landmark on the Canadian Cultural landscape." (CBC Radio). MTYP operates the facility for use with its own programming while also frequently renting or loaning space to numerous groups, offering a cultural hub for the entire community.

For more information about MTYP, visit [mtyp.ca](http://mtyp.ca)

## Frozen River / nîkwatin sîpiy Study Guide

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MTYP would like to thank Angie Çote, Cameron Robertson and Nova Courchene for their work and input on this guide. Their knowledge and sharing thereof is greatly appreciated.

# FROZEN RIVER nîkwatin sîpiy

## CAST

GRANDMOTHER MOON **Julia Davis**

OKÂNAWÂPACIKÊW (WÂPAM) **Keely McPeek**

EILIDH **Emily Meadows**

## CREATIVE TEAM

CO-WRITTEN BY **Michaela Washburn, Joelle Peters, AND Carrie Costello**

DIRECTED BY **Katie German**

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR **Julie Lumsden**

SETS AND PROPS DESIGNER **Andrew Morro**

ASSISTANT SET DESIGNER **Shauna Jones**

COSTUME DESIGNER **Jay Havens**

ASSISTANT COSTUME DESIGNER **Amy McPherson**

LIGHTING DESIGNER **Dean Cowieson**

COMPOSER AND SOUND DESIGNER **MJ Dandeneau**

LANGUAGE KEEPER **Cameron Robertson**

DIALECT COACH **Rhea Rodych-Rasidescu**

STAGE MANAGER **Julia Cirillo**

## STUDY GUIDE CONSULTANTS

KNOWLEDGE KEEPER **Angie Çote**

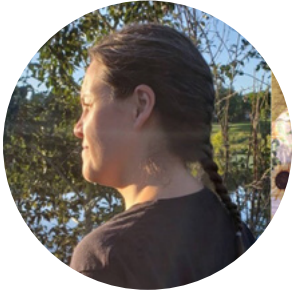
LANGUAGE KEEPER **Cameron Robertson**

ASSISTANT PROGRAM DIRECTOR, NATIVE YOUTH THEATRE **Nova Courchene**

*Frozen River* premiered at  
Manitoba Theatre for Young People in February 2022  
ORIGINALLY DIRECTED BY **Ann Hodges** AND **Tracey Nepinak**

**Synopsis** In *nīkwatin sīpiy*, Grandmother Moon tells the story of two eleven-year-olds, born under the same blood moon, but in different parts of the world. This new play follows their stories as they meet in a forest, and that of their descendants who meet in the present day in what is known as Manitoba. A broken promise from the past can be righted when there is finally an openness to learn from those who have protected and honoured the waterways for centuries.

## The Playwrights



**Co-Playwright Michaela Washburn** She/Her/They/Them | Michaela Washburn hails from Alberta and is a proud Métis artist of Cree, French, Irish, and English descent. Now based in North Bay, she feels blessed to be grounded in ceremony and community based arts in her work with Aanmitaagzi and Big Medicine Studio. An award winning actor and writer, Washburn also has multiple nominations including the Ontario Arts Council Indigenous Arts Award and the K.M. Hunter Artist Award for Theatre. Her work has been shared internationally at festivals and theatres in Wales, Aruba and across Canada and the United States. Michaela's practice spans theatre, film, television, writing, spoken word, clown, improvisation, hosting,

workshop facilitation and stand-up. Proud to be continuing as an Artist in Residence with Necessary Angel Theatre Company and an Associate Artist with the Stratford Festival, Michaela is also honoured to currently be serving as a mentor with Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre's National Mentorship Program.



**Co-Playwright Carrie Costello** She/Her | Carrie loves adapting stories into theatre for young audiences. She is often inspired by a book or a historical event and then figures out the theatrical way in. She has adapted seven children's books into plays for various ages, including *The Paper Bag Princess*, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, *The Snail and the Whale*, and *There's a Mouse in My House*. The latter was produced by Carousel Players in 2009 and toured Niagara schools. In 2010 the play was remounted and brought to Young Peoples Theatre and Theatre Direct in Toronto. Carrie's next play, *Water Under the Bridge* was her first historically inspired work, which she co-wrote with Michaela Washburn. This play was produced in 2012

and toured for 2 years throughout Southern Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan. Carrie's most recent project *Torn Through Time*, co-written with Frances Koncan and Cherissa Richards, was about forgotten Canadian female heroines and was produced by MTYP in 2019. She is so grateful to finally see *Frozen River* come to life. Co-writing with Michaela Washburn and Joelle Peters has been a beautiful experience and thank you to all the artists and funders who have supported this play. Finally, thank you to her amazing family who inspire her everyday with their hope, joy, love and kindness.



**Co-Playwright Joelle Peters** She/Her | Joelle Peters is an Anishinaabe actor/playwright from Walpole Island First Nation in Southwestern Ontario. She is a graduate of Seneca College's Acting for Camera and Voice program. Some recent theatre performance credits include: *Embodying Power and Place* (New Harlem/Native Earth/Nightwood), *Queenie's Castle* (Women at Plays Festival), *The Election* (Nightwood/Theatre Direct/Commonboots/Theatre Passe Muraille), *Two Odysseys: Pimootewin* (Signal/Soundstreams). In 2020, Joelle was selected as the Siminovitch Prize Protégée by her mentor and dear friend Tara Beagan.

Joelle's plays include *Frozen River* (co-written by Carrie Costello and Michaela Washburn, winner of the 2021 Sharon Enkin Plays for Young People Award), *Niizh* (in development with Native Earth's Animikiig Creator's Unit and commissioned by the Blyth Festival), and *Do you remember?* (an audio play commissioned by Burnt Thicket Theatre, supported by the Pemmican Collective & Punctuate! Theatre Playwrights' Unit). She has also written a short film called *Where Would You Go?*, a commission by Bad Hats Theatre.



# Q&A

with Artistic Director  
**PABLO FELICES LUNA**

## ***Frozen River* is a world premiere produced at MTYP. What are some of the most rewarding and challenging aspects of bringing a world premiere to the stage?**

New work is exciting because it takes you from something that is mostly unknown to something that is better known. Ideally, in the end, any play should remain a bit of a mystery, but the process of building a play helps you understand its polemic better. That process involves growth and contraction; you expand your exploration and then strip away any unnecessary noise from the story. Think of it as sculpting something out of clay, letting it cure, and then chiseling away entire sections that will be rebuilt. And sometimes, you have to chuck the whole thing and start again. The other exciting thing about new work is that by creating original work, you can respond to the specific realities you are living in, whether they are a result of time, location, culture or anything else. And not to be cute or anything, but all those exciting things are also the scary and challenging aspects of creating a brand new work.

## **What conversations do you hope *Frozen River* encourages?**

Whenever we celebrate any kind of an anniversary (say, the 150 years of our province), we have an opportunity to reflect on what it is that we are celebrating, to think about how we got to where we are and where do we hope to go from here. While it is easy to look at mistakes of the past (and present) and feel powerless, there is hope. *Frozen River* may center around a broken promise, but it also gives us hope for the future. Promises can be honoured, amends can be made. I'm curious to find out what audiences think they can do to restore trust. I am also hoping we will be talking about what it truly means to help, to listen, to make space for those who have been relegated, to truly be friends working towards a common goal.

## **Why is it so important to have Indigenous/IBPOC content on MTYP'S stage?**

One of our core organizational values at MTYP is a commitment to reflect our communities. Historically, that has meant reflecting the stories and experiences of those who have felt welcome coming to the theatre or creating theatre. But our goal is to reach beyond those boundaries, to empower all young people, so we must work diligently to ensure that our work is reflective of a more comprehensive set of experiences. Collectively, we have a lot of learning to do and the opportunity to do that through art is very exciting.

## **In *Frozen River*, a promise is made and broken between Wâpam and Eilidh. What does a promise mean to you? And what does it mean to the characters?**

The moment when I make a promise to you is the moment when I make myself fully accountable to you. I am saying please trust me, I will honour your trust through my actions. In making this promise, I am bound to you. One of the delightful things about exploring the world through different perspectives in a play is that characters interpret things from their own perspectives. In *Frozen River*, Eilidh has a very functional understanding of what a promise is. She says it is "something you must do. Something you cannot break," but she learns later that there is a cost to any commitment. Wâpam, on the other hand, thinks the idea of a promise is a bit silly because if you say you're going to do something, you should do it. The promise itself is a construct and Wâpam learns through the play that the formality of a promise means nothing if both sides are not prepared to bear the cost.

## **What is the significance of the title of the play?**

The playwrights have woven images of the river in various forms throughout the play. There is a real sense of poetry in the way connections are drawn between the state of the river and the state of the relationship between these two friends. And it is not always what you think it is; a frozen river can evoke feelings of stillness or danger, but it can also be a means of crossing from one shore to another.

# BEFORE THE SHOW

## Words to Consider: Swampy Cree

While you are watching *Frozen River*, you will be hearing Swampy Cree being spoken. Here are some words to keep in mind and listen for!

English	Swampy Cree Written	Phonetics
Grandmother Moon	kohkôminaniwipîsim	koh-koo-mi-nani-wi pee-sim
Ôkânawâpacikêw	Ôkânawâpacikêw	o-kaa-na-waa-pa-tsi-kew
Water	nipîy	ni-pee
My family	ni wahkômâkânak	ni-wah-koo-maa-kaa-nak
Family	ô wahkomakanâk	Oo wah-ko-ma-ka-nak
Your family	ki wahkomakanâk	ki ti-pi-na-wey wah-ko-ma-ka-naak

**If you and your class would like to know more about reading Swampy Cree:**

please take a look at the guide created by Language Keeper Cameron Robertson provided on the page 12-13.

We would like to thank Language Keeper Cameron Robertson for his time, translations and knowledge.

## Theatre Etiquette

Here are a few theatre etiquette tips for whether you see this show at our theatre or if we are touring to your school:

- Make sure **cell phones and alarms are turned off** before and during the performance.
- **Photography, audio and video recording during a performance** is prohibited by the agreements under which we contract the performers so please do not take recordings of any kind.
- Please ensure to **listen closely** to any instructions or information coming from our house manager.
- **Appropriate audience interaction** (clapping, laughing etc...) **is encouraged.**
- **Staying seated during the performance**, and if it is absolutely necessary to get up, to do so in a quiet and respectful manner.
- Remember, you are watching a live performance! Talking, whispering and excessive movement is distracting for the actors, and disruptive for other audience members. We appreciate you **being as quiet and still as possible.**

## AFTER THE SHOW **Activities and discussions**



### The Moon in Frozen River

In *Frozen River*, the moon plays a large part in the telling of the story. Grandmother Moon is the narrator of the play and also takes on other characters throughout, ever-present and watching.

Ask your students which characters Grandmother Moon took on during the play.

In many Indigenous nations such as Cree, Mohawk and Ojibway, the calendar is built around the cycles of the moon, and it is therefore a lunar calendar. Depending on which nation and dialect that is spoken, the months and what happens during that part of the cycle differs slightly. In these calendars, there are thirteen months instead of the usual twelve found in the Western calendar.

### Moon/Months: The Swampy Swampy Cree Calendar

**JANUARY** is **kisepisim** (kis-e-pee-sim) which means **Old moon**.

**FEBRUARY** is **mikisiwi-pisim** (mi-ki-siwi-pee-sim) which means **Eagle moon**.

**MARCH** is **niskapisim** (ni-ska-pee-sim) which means **Goose moon**.

**APRIL** is **anikispisim** (a-nee-kis-pee-sim) which means **Frog moon**.

**MAY** is **opiniyawewopisim** (o-pini-ya-wewo-pee-sim) which means **Egg Laying moon**.

**JUNE** is **opaskawewopisim** (o-pa-ska-wew-o-pee-sim) which means **Egg Hatching moon**.

**JULY** is **opaskowipsim** (o-pa-sko-wi-pee-sim) which means **Molting moon**.

**AUGUST** is **ohpahowipisim** (oh-pa-ho-wi-pee-sim) which means **Flying Up moon**.

**SEPTEMBER** is **onochitowipisim** (o-no-tsi-he-to-wi-pee-sim) which means **Mating moon**.

**OCTOBER** is **kaskatinowipisim** (kas-ka-tin-o-wi-pee-sim) which means **Freezing month**.

**NOVEMBER** is **nikwatinipisim** (nik-wa-tin-ee-pee-sim) which means **Frost moon**.

**DECEMBER** is **pawacakinasisipisim** (pa-wa-tsa-ki-na-see-si-pee-sim) which means **tree exploding from the Frost moon**.

When it comes to the thirteenth month in the calendar, there are different theories about when and what the thirteenth month would be called. Language Keeper Cameron Robertson says there is confusion surrounding when and what the thirteenth month/moon is named, *“The thirteenth moon is a tough one, some years we truly have thirteen moons and I’ve researched and researched only to find certain months with a different name.”* Cameron continued that it is different depending on which area you come from. *“...some tribes call it the Frog Moon and others call it the Goose Moon; again, it depends what region you are from...”*



Also differing depending on the region is when the thirteenth month occurs. Cameron concludes it would be sometime in the spring around April.

The translations and descriptions of the Swampy Cree Calendar were kindly provided by Cameron Robertson.

**i Fun Fact** The Indigenous peoples of North America are not the only cultures to use a lunar thirteen month calendar. Other cultures include Egyptian, Chinese, Maya, Inca, Lakota and Cherokee. Druids used a Tree Calendar, which was also a 13 month, 28 day calendar. Astronomy and nature has been helping humans keep track of time and cycles for millennia.

To learn more about First Nations Astronomy and other resources, please visit Manitoba First Nations Education Centre's website: <https://mfnerc.org/resources/first-nations-astronomy/>

## The Cycles of Seasons and the Turtle

When we meet Eilidh and Wâpam's descendants in the present day, they have a classroom turtle. Wâpam calls this turtle Wîtimikwânisiw (we-ti-mi-kwa-ni-siw) which means "Turtle" in Swampy Cree.

For First Peoples of Canada, the turtle has strong cultural significance. In some First Nations beliefs, the turtle carries the land upon its shell. In other creation stories, like in the *Earth Diver* story, the Great Spirit dives into the water, or asks other animals to dive into the water, and bring clay or mud from the bottom to create the Earth. In some versions of the creation myth, the Earth is built and formed on the back of a turtle. This is where the popular name for North America came from, Turtle Island.

### **i Turtle Fun Facts: Lunar Calendar**

Find a photo of a sea turtle online. Count how many scales it has on its shell.

There are usually twenty eight small scales that surround the shell. Twenty eight is the number of days that comprise a lunar cycle, or, how many days it takes for the moon to orbit the Earth. Count the larger scales; what number do you get?

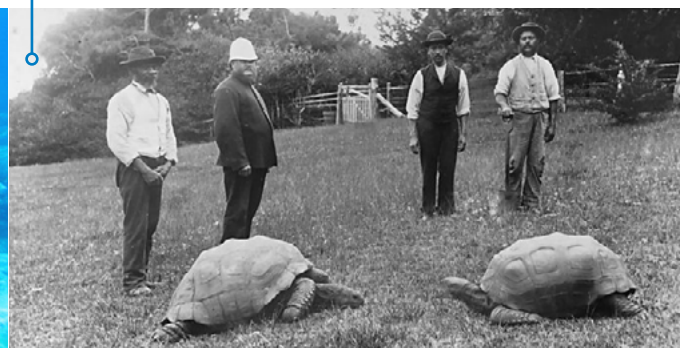
Thirteen! There are usually thirteen large scales on a turtles shell; that is the same number of months and moons in the Indigenous Lunar Calendar.

Just when you thought turtles couldn't be any cooler!

In the wild, sea turtles can live for 20-30 years, some can even live for 50 years or more.



World's oldest animal in recorded history is a tortoise named Jonathan (pictured on the left).







## Exploring the Theme of Broken Promises in Frozen River

“As I look down on the world today, I see promises being made, promises being kept, promises being broken. Surrounding all of these, I see choices: your choices that can help us today, and the choices that can help our world seven generations from now.”

–*Frozen River*, By Michaela Washburn, Carrie Costello and Joelle Peters.

Early in the play, Eilidh breaks a promise made to Wâpam to go and live with her family, learn from them and learn their language. The breaking of this promise acts as a ripple effect that travels all the way to Wâpam and Eilidh's descendants and affected generations of people. The breaking of this promise is in part a representation to how Canada broke its promise to the First Nations Peoples.

Please see the below questions regarding the breaking of promises for grades N/K- 9, as well as links to Under One Sun and Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba as guides on more information and resources surrounding Truth and Reconciliation.

### Theme: Broken Promises (Treaties & Reconciliation)

Thank you to Nova Courchene for providing these questions and further resources regarding Truth and Reconciliation

#### Pre-School: N/K to 3

1. What does “breaking a promise” mean?
2. Has anyone ever broken a promise to you?
3. How did it make you feel?
4. Can you give me an example of a broken promise from the play “*Frozen River*”?
5. How do you think it made Wâpam feel?
6. How do you think it made Eilidh feel when she broke her promise?

#### Middle Years: Grades 4 to 6

1. Can you give me an example of when Eilidh broke her promise?
2. How do you think breaking her promise to Wâpam affected their relationship?
3. Why did Eilidh say to her little sister Struana, she doesn't need to “learn anything from the land”?
4. Do you think Eilidh and Wâpam had different ideas of what a promise means?
5. Can you name some of the groups of original people who used to live and thrive on the land that we are located on right now?
6. What do you think would happen if Eilidh kept her promise?
7. What is a treaty?

## Middle Years: Grades 7 to 9

1. The play shows us that there are consequences when a promise is broken. Can you name consequences that have occurred as a result of broken promises to Indigenous Canadians?
2. In the second half of the play, we learn about the unsafe water on the reserve. How have broken promises caused there to be a lack of clean water on the reserve?
3. Do you think broken promises have affected health and education for all Canadians? Why?
4. Can you name some reasons why Eilidh might not have known about Autumn Peltier or the water crisis on Wâpam's reserve?
5. In the end, Eilidh decides to visit Wâpam and her family and finally honours her ancestor's promise. What are some examples that Canada is working towards reconciliation and honouring treaties?
6. What are some examples that you can come up with where Canada can continue to work towards reconciliation and honouring treaties?

### Resources to supplement "Treaty Education" and themes from Broken Promises:

Under one Sun: <https://school.nelson.com/under-one-sun/>

Learn about, and learn from, Indigenous experiences, culture, and perspectives through contemporary content offered in a blended format to support balanced literacy learning.

Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba: <http://www.trcm.ca/>

Provides teachers with training & resources on how to bring Treaty Education into classrooms.

## Autumn Peltier: Water Warrior

PHOTO: Linda Roy. Ireva Photography



“Water is really sacred. Water is life. Mother Earth doesn't need us...we need her...We shouldn't have to fight for our water, we should just be able to have clean water.” - Autumn Peltier

In *Frozen River*, Wâpam and Eilidh are discussing ways in which Eilidh can educate themselves on the lack of safe drinkable water in many of Canada's Indigenous communities. Wâpam mentions Autumn Peltier, who is an Indigenous water protector.

Autumn Peltier is a clean water advocate and has also been hailed a water warrior. Autumn is an Anishinaabe-kwe and a member of the Wiikwemkoong First Nation in Ontario.

Since the age of 8, Autumn has been attending water ceremonies in many First Nations communities. She would attend these ceremonies with her mother and Aunt, Elder Josephine Mandamin, who was an advocate for clean water and water protection. Mandamin was the founder of Mother

Earth Water Walkers in 2003. Mother Earth Water Walkers consisted of a group of people who walked around bodies of water to raise awareness of water pollution and the action we must all take to protect the water. Since Josephine's passing on February 22nd, 2019, her niece Autumn, has continued her legacy in water conservation and awareness.

When Autumn was only thirteen-years-old, she gained international notice at a meeting of the Assembly of First Nations. There, she spoke directly to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and presented him with a copper water pot. Peltier confronted Trudeau on his record of water protection and support of pipelines.

In conjunction with all of Autumn's work, she has been nominated for countless accolades including the Children's Nobel Peace Prize.



The Powerpuff Girls: Created by Craig McCracken, Produced by Hanna-Barbera. Published "Oct 14, 2020" Autumn Peltier: Water Protector <https://www.facebook.com/ThePowerpuffGirls/>

#### Links and resources about Autumn Peltier:

Autumn Speaks at the UN:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0usN4mWmDKQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zg60sr38oic>

CBC interview:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqdE\\_70ZaqE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqdE_70ZaqE)

True Calling:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7XY0UA0eRc>

There are many websites about Autumn and her advocacy, as well as videos of her speeches and inspiring interviews. Peltier makes it clear that water advocacy is the job of all humans, as we all come from water, and are kept alive by water. Autumn is only 17 years old and has many years ahead of her to create awareness and educate.

On October 14th, 2020, Autumn was celebrated by having her likeness turned into a Powerpuff Girl. October 14th has traditionally been celebrated as Columbus Day in the United States, however, many states have evolved to celebrate the date as Indigenous Peoples Day instead.

Autumn is Anishinaabe-kwe, however Language Keeper Cameron Robertson kindly translated Autumn's title of "Water Warrior" to the equivalent in Swampy Cree.

nipîy kâ sîtoskâmakêt iskinîkoskwêsis, roughly translated to "The little girl/Woman who stands up for Water".

:

## News Articles and Interviews

CBC Article:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/i-am-indigenous-2017/peltier.html>

About Josephine Mandamin:

<https://www.thunderbay.ca/en/city-hall/grandmother-josephine-mandamin.aspx>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/josephine-mandamin-water-walk-activist-obit-1.5032535>

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/josephine-mandamin>

About Mother Earth Water Walkers:

[http://www.motherearthwaterwalk.com/?page\\_id=11](http://www.motherearthwaterwalk.com/?page_id=11)

<http://www.motherearthwaterwalk.com/>

## Water Access in Indigenous Communities

In a country like Canada, you would expect all of its residents to have access to clean drinkable water. Most of us take access to clean water for granted. Did you know many First Nation communities do not have clean drinkable water? Some cannot cook with the water or even bathe in it. In Frozen River, Wâpam lives on a reserve that has not had clean drinkable water in 18 years.

### What do you use water for?

Ask your students to write down or say what they use water for in their day to day life. How much water do they think they use?

### Examples on water usages by litres:

- Flushing a toilet: Dual flush toilet uses 3 litres for a half flush and 6 litres for a full flush. A single flush uses 5 to 11 litres per flush.
- The bathtub uses 50 to 500 litres of water, depending on the size of the tub.
- A 5 minute shower with an old style showerhead, uses around 36,500 litres of water a year.
- Handwashing, brushing your teeth, household cleaning and cooking can use 18 litres per person a day.

Think through all of the ways and uses of water during your day to day life. Then think about how difficult simple things like brushing your teeth could be if you can't just turn on the tap.

There are many factors in play that can cause water pollution in lakes, rivers and ground water: water line breaks, poor water filtration and disinfection, run off from farms and other industrial sites, equipment failure, lack of access and infrastructure like pipes.

Since 2015, some long-term advisories have been lifted in First Nations communities, however the work is not done. On the Government of Canada's website it details that by March of 2021, all long-term drinking water advisories will be lifted. As of February 15, 2022 (last updated) 127 long-term advisories have been lifted, 61 long-term advisories are still in effect. For more details on the progress, please visit the following websites:

Government of Canada:

<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1506514143353/1533317130660#dataset-filter>

Human Rights Watch:

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/06/07/make-it-safe/canadas-obligation-end-first-nations-water-crisis>

Let's all think about how we can be water advocates like Autumn. We can all make a difference, empathize, educate ourselves, and join together to protect our Earth and the water that sustains all of us and all things.

“For the children that want to speak up but maybe they're too afraid, I'm speaking up for them. And maybe the work I'm doing will encourage them to do the work I'm doing” –Autumn Peltier

## A Simple Guide on How to Read Swampy Cree

This guide was provided to us by Language Keeper Cameron Robertson. If you are interested in getting in touch with Cameron for translations or have questions, please reach out to him via email at: [ocrobertson@gmail.com](mailto:ocrobertson@gmail.com)

### I. PRONUNCIATION

#### 1. CONSONANTS

There are ten consonants used to write Swampy Cree in the Roman Orthography.

They are; **c, h, k, m, n, p, s, t, w, y**

All except four are spoken similar to their English counterparts.

The four that will and might give problems are:

**c, k, p, and t.**

#### *Case in Point:*

A) c–is like the “ts” in lets, like in cello (violin).

i) cêskwa – tse-s-kwa [wait].

ii) âcimiw – aa-tsi-miw [tell a story]. (AIV)

iii) mêkwâc – may-kwa-ats [presently].

B) k–is unaspirated\* as the “k” in skin

i) kîyâm – kee-yam [It does not matter].

ii) okôt – o-koot [his/her nose]. (I)

iii) kiskîsik – kis-kee-sik [your eye]. (I)

C) p–is unaspirated as the “p” in spit

i) pînisk – pee-nisk [eventually].

ii) apoy – a-poy [a paddle]. (A)

iii) akohp – a-kohp [a blanket]. (A)

D) t–is unaspirated as the “t” in Stan

i) timîwan – ti-mee-wan [It is deep]. (IIV)

ii) mistik – mi-stik [(a log (I) / a tree). (A)

iii) âtiht – aa-tiht [(some, a few)].

(AIV) refers to Animate Intransitive Verb

(IIV) refers to Intransitive Inanimate Verb

(I) refers to Inanimate noun

(A) refers to Animate noun

\* unaspirated means making a consonant sound without a slight puff of air as in pronouncing the “k” in “kin”, the “p” in “pit” or the “t” in “tan”



Note: In D(i) previous page, the whole word is printed but in speaking one tends to drop the first “l”. So rather than “tânisi” we have in normal speech “tân’si”. Since this program is designed for speech all possible elisions will be marked by an “’”. Another aspect of phonetics is the combination of two vowels to make one vowel sound. For example, we have:

## 2. VOWELS

1. nika-apin ôta—I will sit here.

nika-apin ôtais written as the above but upon speaking we combine the short “a’s” to make a long “â” sound so in speaking we have the same sentence:

2. nikâpin ôta—I will sit here.

All vowel sounds below will refer to nikâpin ôta.

Swampy Cree Standard Roman Orthography (SRO) uses four English vowels to make seven vowel sounds. There are four long vowels and three short vowel sounds.

Short Vowels: These are the three short vowels used in the SRO.

A) a–pronounced as the “u” in but

- i) apisîs – api-sees [a little].
- ii) capasîs – tsa-pa-sees [lower].
- iii) pôna – poo-na [feed the fire]. (AIV)

B) i–pronounced as the “i” in pit

- i) iskwêw – is-kwew [a woman]. (A)
- ii) tipiskâw – ti-pi-skaaw [it is night]. (IIV)
- iii) api – a-pi [sit]. (AIV)

C) ô–pronounced as the “oo” in “book”

- i) omisi – o-mi-si [this way (showing one how)].
- ii) wâpos – waa-pos [a rabbit]. (A)
- iii) mîciso – mee-tsi-so [eat]. (AIV)

## 3. LONG VOWELS

To make vowels long in written Cree, a bar (macron) or a circumflex ^ is added above the vowel.

A) â–pronounced as the “a” in father

- i) âmôw – aa-moow [a bee]. (A)
- ii) nâpêw – naa-pew [a man]. (A)
- iii) pâtimâ – paa-ti-maa [later].

B) î–pronounced as the “ee” in feet

- i) îyâpew ee-yaa-pew [a buck (deer or moose)]. (A)
- ii) mînis – mee-nis [a berry]. (I)
- iii) cîmanis – tsee-ma-nis [small boat].

C) ô–pronounced as the “oo” in ore or the “oo” in tool

- i) ôta – oo-ta [here]
- ii) nitôtêm – ni-too-tame [my friend] (A)
- iii) âhpô – aah-poo or

D) ê–pronounced as the “ay” in day

- i) êkosî – ay-ko-say [there]!
- ii) pêyak – pay-ak [one].
- iii) tâpwê – taa-pwey [true, truly].

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