

The Manomin Project's 2024 Summer Solstice Newsletter



**Niibin! It is Summer!
Happy Indigenous Peoples' Day!**

Updates

PhD defense of Manomin research - success!

We congratulate Dr. Samantha Mehlretter on her completion of the Doctor of Engineering program! In May, she successfully defended her thesis, 'Weaving Anishinaabe and Western Knowledge to Restore Ancestral Manomin Stands on the Upper Winnipeg River'.



Dr. Andrea Bradford and Prof. Ping Wu celebrate the newly graduated Dr. Samantha Mehlretter at her convocation.

Sam's years of transdisciplinary research dedicated to answering community questions are a tremendous contribution to the wellbeing of the Winnipeg River, Manomin and all connected relations. We extend our gratitude and congratulations! *Gimaamiikwenimigo!*



Laura Legzdins shares her talk, *Listen(ing) to the Waters: Visions for Crop Restoration on the Winnipeg River*, at IAGLR 2024. Photo: Stephany Hildebrand

The Manomin Project makes a splash at large lakes research conference in Windsor, ON

Communications Coordinator Laura Legzdins shared the stories of Manomin, the Winnipeg River and Niisaachewan at the 2024 International Association of Great Lakes Research conference held May 20-24. IAGLR gathered 800+ individuals from multiple continents to connect over our shared waters and guide better ways forward.



Laura describes Anishinaabeg Manomin care practices rooted in reciprocity and respect. Photo: Stephany Hildebrand

Invited by the Healthy Headwaters Lab of the University of Windsor, Laura learned lessons on collaborative water stewardship, environmental injustices and freshwater restoration. The Manomin Project was one of many partnerships represented in the 'Shared Visions for Holistic and Indigenous-Led Stewardship in the Great Lakes' session chaired by Dr. Catherine Febria, Alexander Duncan and Janessa Esquible. Presenters repeated the importance of community-led and accessible research, intergenerational work, data sovereignty and emphasized that partnerships 'move at the speed of trust'. Speakers were gifted *semaa*, tobacco, for sharing, and elders, audience and presenters reflected on the session in a shared discussion afterwards. Numerous opportunities for collaboration, funding and connection arose.

We are incredibly honoured that Dr. Mona Stonefish, Anishinaabe international activist for peace, Indigenous, women's and disability rights, Water Walker and Doctor of Traditional Medicine, expressed her appreciation for Laura's talk and the work of The Manomin Project in a letter of commendation. Dr. Stonefish's affirmations motivate us to continue stewarding Manomin, water and communities in a good way.

The Manomin Project was also represented at the Indigenous Great Lakes Networking Meeting held by the Indigenous Environmental Institute at Trent University. Representatives of communities and organizations gathered in round-table discussions on needs, issues and paths forward in the Great Lakes. A report with key themes and opportunities will be available to read soon.



Incredible connections, discussions and food awaited iGLN participants at the Ojibway Nature Center in Windsor, ON

The Gift of Mnoomin's message of reciprocity the focus of elementary school learning

Students of Robert Baldwin Public School in Milton, Ontario have spent this month learning about Manomin and all its relations. All classes have been reading and discussing Brittany Luby's *The Gift of Mnoomin*, leading up to a reading by Gr. 4 students to the school and community members at an assembly to recognize and celebrate National Indigenous Peoples' Day.

On June 20th, Laura Legzdins visited classes of Gr. 4 students to reinforce the book's teachings with hands-on activities. Britt greeted students online, treating them to an engaging reading and Q&A session. Laura then led students to explore Manomin's environmental needs and parts of the plant by drawing and interacting with seeds.



Laura Legzdins stands with Dr. Mona Stonefish, holding Britt Luby's books *Dammed* and *The Gift of Mnoomin*.
Photo: Stephany Hildebrand

The Manomin Project is a cooperative research program led by the University of Guelph and Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation. This newsletter reflects our responsibility and commitment to knowledge sharing.