



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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MKO Statement on Earth Day: Grand Chief Settee Urges Culture and Language Revitalization as One Step in Protecting Mother Earth

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is issuing this statement to acknowledge Earth Day, which takes place on April 22 every year.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee states:

“Although April 22 is officially known as Earth Day, the cultures of First Nations people teach us that every day is Earth Day. Those of us who grew up spending time on the land have learned from our parents, relatives, and other teachers that it is our duty to protect Mother Earth and all her inhabitants.

The theme for this year’s Earth Day is ‘restore our earth.’ This theme reminds us that much environmental degradation has happened over the last one hundred and fifty years, but there is still hope that we can work to rebuild and restore health to the land. Although we have hope, it’s important to note that the only way we can restore our earth is by ensuring that governments and corporations listen and work closely with First Nations people, the original stewards and protectors of the land. We willingly share our cultural knowledge and teachings with those who seek it out in a good way.

As First Nations people, it is essential that we continue to speak and learn our languages. We are fortunate to have rich languages that tie us to the land. Our languages are sacred, just as the land is sacred.

For those who haven’t been able to learn their ancestral language or culture, I urge you to seek out ways in which you can receive lessons. I urge parents, grandparents, aunties, and uncles to make significant efforts to pass on cultural and language lessons to the younger ones. Knowing our cultures and languages will help us continue to stand strong in protecting Mother Earth.

I want to send a happy Earth Day wish to all MKO citizens. We have been through a challenging year with this COVID-19 pandemic, however, being out on the land gives us hope and healing. Being on the land helps us to maintain our mental and spiritual wellness. I urge you to continue to connect with the land and waterways as much as you are able. Take care of yourselves, take care of others in your community, and continue to take care of the land and the water.”

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