



# CAMP WABUN



## Getting Ready for 2017!!!

Dear Wabun Family:

“To be whole. To be complete. Wilderness reminds us what it means to be human, what we are connected to rather than what we are separate from,” wrote Terry Tempest Williams. What an incredibly reassuring and rejuvenating reminder. No matter our age or experience level, the wilderness offers the same gift to all who are called to it. For those of us fortunate enough to have enjoyed days, weeks, or months immersed in spectacular wilderness in the company of section soul mates sharing the daily adventures of wilderness living, we know the unparalleled feeling of connection and conviviality.

In reviewing and sending out the section pictures and logs, sharing photos and videos online and at Wabun Open Houses across the country, and putting together this newsletter, I have had the pleasure of reliving memories with many of you of campsites past, rapids run, and bannocks baked. It is my hope that this collection of words and images pays homage, in a small way, to the amazing young people who spend or have spent summers in peace and purpose, creating memories and friendships they will enjoy for a lifetime. Perhaps they will kindle sparks of recollection in you, or even fan the flame of an idea for a new adventure.

### INSIDE THE NEWSLETTER:

#### **2017 Bay Trips Announced**

*Worth the Weight: reflections by Jo Moore*

#### **Birch Bark Canoe Build & Film**

**Canoe Anatomy**

**Women @ Wabun celebrating 40 years**

**Truth & Reconciliation: A Temagami Forum**

#### **INTRODUCING FAMILY TRIP!**

**There's Still Time**

In this volume - as **this year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> year of Women at Wabun(!)** - we feature stories of alumnae who have drawn from their roots in wilderness travel to nourish projects strengthening our human connection to one another and to the natural world. A note of thanks to open-minded and open-hearted women and men who expanded access to Wabun's program and introduced generations of women to the soul-shaping power that can be found in wild places. Are you a #Women@Wabun? We would love to hear your story!

I hope that you enjoy the articles, art, and updates. I hope that our shared appreciation for following our hearts out into the wind and water and woods offers you a moment to feel connected and part of a community. Whether you are a current camper, an alum/former staff member, or are new to us and considering whether Wabun is right for you or your child, I welcome you to reach out and get in touch - call, email, or come on up and visit. I would love to hear from you. I wish you the best and look forward to crossing paths or syncing paddles.

Warmly,



## WORTH THE WEIGHT: THE CASE FOR GETTING TEENS OUTDOORS



*Jo Moore, as a camper, (left) and more recently, as a staff (right).*

*This article is authored by accomplished canoe tripper, classics scholar, and long-time Wabun camper and staff Jo Moore. It was published in the [Appalachia Journal](#), America's longest-running journal of mountaineering and conservation. At the date of publication, Jo was 600 miles into the 1,100 mile Wabun Long Trip she was leading. This summer Wabun is fortunate to once again have Jo at the helm of a section of intrepid travelers on the Winisk River (see below).*



Apprehension building, I adjust my grip on the fraying ash-wood shafts of the two canoe paddles I'm balancing. The broad blades dig deeper into my 14-year-old shoulders as the weight shifts overhead.

The paddles are tied to the wooden thwarts of a 17-foot canoe that is resting upside-down on my crown and spine like a giant, red, 100-pound hat. A hat that it is my job to carry from one end of this rocky portage to the other. It's a generous three-quarters of my body weight, and it will require all of my willpower to even consider ascending the hill – no, the *rock face* – before me.

Best-case scenario: I climb the ledge and walk the remaining one-third mile to my destination. Worst-case scenario: I get up this ledge somehow and stagger the remaining one-third mile to my destination. There isn't really another option. Yes, I desperately want out from under this torturous trap, but setting the canoe down will only prolong my suffering. I'll still have to carry it up the trail sooner or later.

Spending time in the backcountry, surrounded by trees and water and sky and not much else, is an intensely transformative experience. Ten irreplaceable summers at camp in northern Ontario taught me this firsthand. There, I faced not only the beauty of the outdoors and a natural coexistence with the land, but also the rawness of its elements. If someone had come to my rescue and carried the canoe for me, I wouldn't have gone through that process of self-doubt, self-recognition, and ultimately, self-confidence.

Factor in being a young teen in a highly formative stage of development, and the evolution is even more dramatic. When going to school becomes a complicated social experiment, when who your friends are and who you text the most become the key markers of your social strata, not to mention how you measure your personal worth, going to the woods and lakes and rivers of the Northeast provides more than simply a pause, a breath of fresh air. Coming to terms with nature offers teens an incredibly valuable opportunity to define themselves – not in relation to others but in relation to the real world, where they can overcome challenges with the strength of their own minds and bodies.

Fast-forward six years, and on my summer breaks from Amherst College, in Massachusetts, I'm a counselor at the same camp. Same canoe trips, same trails littered with slippery rock climbs. At 20, I can easily flip a canoe up onto my head and swing my legs over just about any log. I know I'm capable, but I had to come to that knowledge on my own. No matter how many times a counselor told me, "You can do it! I know you can!" I couldn't surmount an obstacle until I believed it to be true for myself.

Now I'm the one who teaches kids how to paddle and the one who, somehow, has to step back when it's time to let them struggle with heavy loads. I've heard myself saying the very same encouraging words over and over to my own campers, but they, too, have to overcome their own obstacles.

Once a camper has lit a campfire in the dark after a long day or has paddled 20 miles in a rainstorm, she knows she can handle anything life back in school – a different sort of obstacle course – throws at her. She has proven to herself how strong she is.



## Wabun Long Trips **WINISK RIVER** 2017



It is with great pleasure that we announce that this year, both of the Long Trip sections will traverse the lakes and rivers of Western Ontario and on to the breath-taking scenery of the Winisk River.

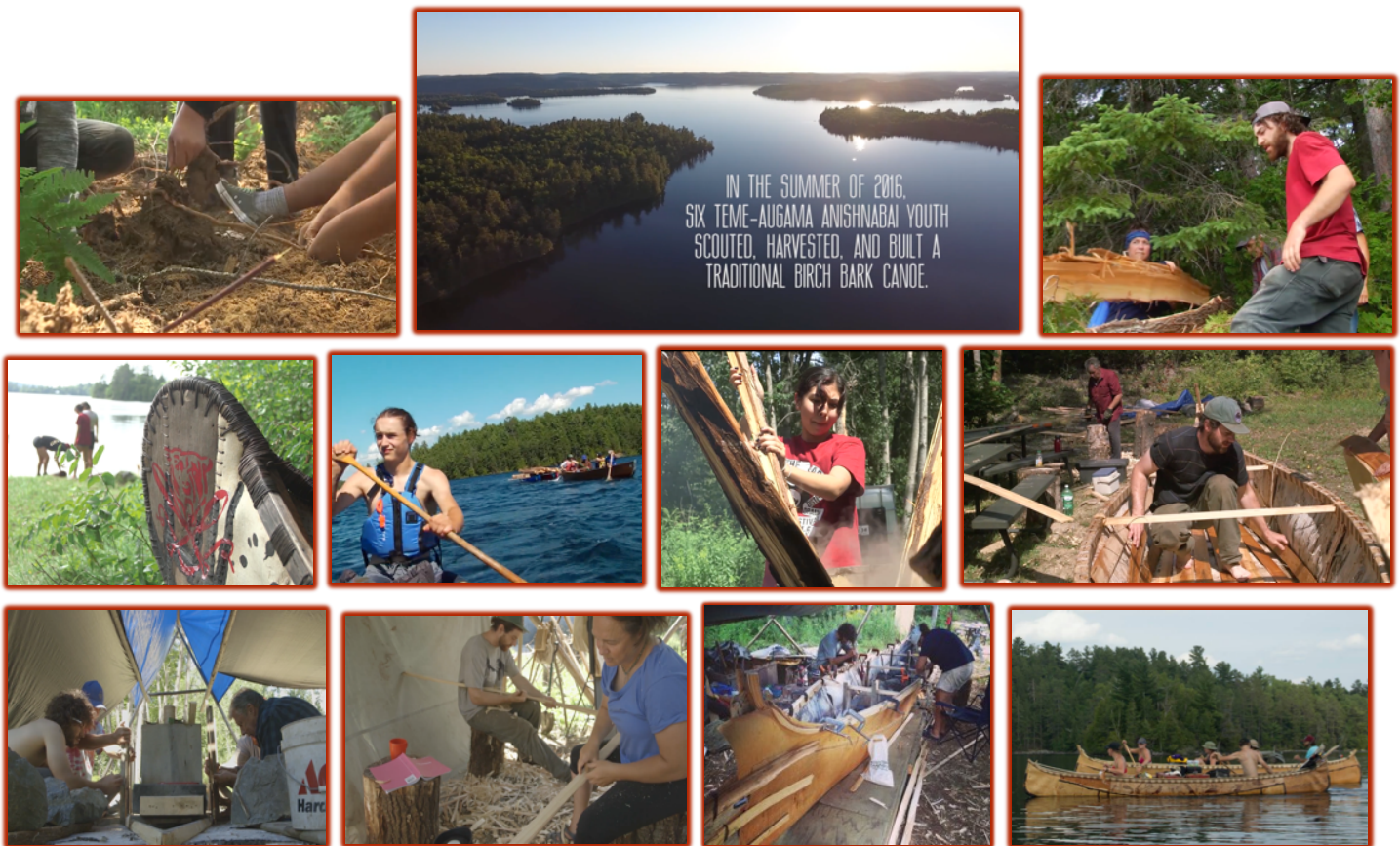
The routes each section will travel take them through the lands and community centers several First Nation communities united under the territorial organization of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation. The privilege of traveling through such stunning wilderness is a direct result of the stewardship of the people of these communities and their ancestors. We offer our deepest thanks.



The Winisk is the southernmost of Ontario's mighty rivers to empty into Hudson Bay proper and easily spotted on maps for the peculiar 90° turn the river abruptly takes as it makes its final run to the Bay. Amazing in its beauty, the river flows from the familiar rocky-pine forested land of the Canadian Shield through a corridor of incredible limestone cliffs majestically delivering paddlers into one of the southernmost extensions of Arctic Tundra in the world. The opportunities to see mink, otter, moose, caribou and eagle are enriched with the possibilities to see seals, arctic birds, and even beluga whales on the Bay. The adventures culminate as the sections arrive at the small Cree community of Peawanuck on the shores of salty Hudson Bay. This trip is a journey like no other.



# BIRCH BARK CANOE BUILD



For a long time, birch bark canoes were the primary means of travel through the bush. For hundreds, maybe thousands of years, birch bark canoes were built on Lake Temagami, specifically Bear Island. This summer Bear Island was once again home to creation of a birch bark canoe through a project developed, and organized by illustrious Wabun staff, parent, and alumna, Robin Potts (pictured at left with son Brian Burns).

Robin envisioned and executed a canoe build in which a core team of youth; Selena Bobb, Brian Burns (Wabun alumnus), Jessica Frappier, Noah Saville (Wabun alumnus), Aleria McKay, and Matthew Peshabo worked alongside community members to see each step of the project through - from the locating and harvesting of all materials from N'Dakimennan (the homeland of the Teme-Augama Anishnabe (TAA) people) to gathering the knowledge and practicing the skills (and patience!) needed to

hand-plane cedar planking and lash gunwales with spruce root lacing, to honoring the process and the completed craft with a ceremony and a canoe trip back out on N'Dakimennan.

Robin, invited two additional Wabun alumni, Isa and John Zinser, to assist with the build. The Zinser brothers are no strangers to building traditional canoes. John and friends built their first canoe out in the bush near Ferim Lake and then two more (a 23 footer and a 13 footer) the next Fall in the shop at Wabun. John, who participated in a similar project on Bear Island four years ago, has spent the intervening years partnering with first nation communities across the US and Canada to help build dugout and birch bark canoes and guide trips in those canoes to raise awareness of environmental and human rights causes.

In speaking with Robin, Brian, and John, they each mentioned how each step of the build and the time they have spent reflecting on the experience offered them different opportunities for learning and growth. John spoke of the search for materials and the outpouring of support from TAA community members who held knowledge of the resources available and where to find them. These folks then helped the builders observe and become more in touch with the land - to let the signs they saw guide them to the right trees, and how to thank and acknowledge the spirit of the tree as it was felled and transformed from a living tree to a living canoe. When preparing the materials, Brian spoke of the repetition involved in splitting hundreds of feet of spruce root and carving endless pieces of planking. He noted that while immersed in the experience, he wasn't consciously thinking of how he was developing patience, upon reflection in the months following the build, he has been able to recognize that development and has spoken with other youth builders who have expressed a similar ability to draw on reserves of patience and perseverance gained throughout the building process. Robin spoke of creativity brought about by the challenges that came up - in particular boiling countless batches of bear fat and spruce gum sealant in search of the proper consistency. She spoke of how different each batch of spruce gum was different from another because they were gathered from different trees. The winters the tree had endured, the soil in which it grew, the amount of sun or shade imparted qualities that required a recipe and ratio of gum to fat that was unique to each batch. This in turn required curiosity, attention, and resourcefulness in the builders in order to brew up consistent batches of sealant.

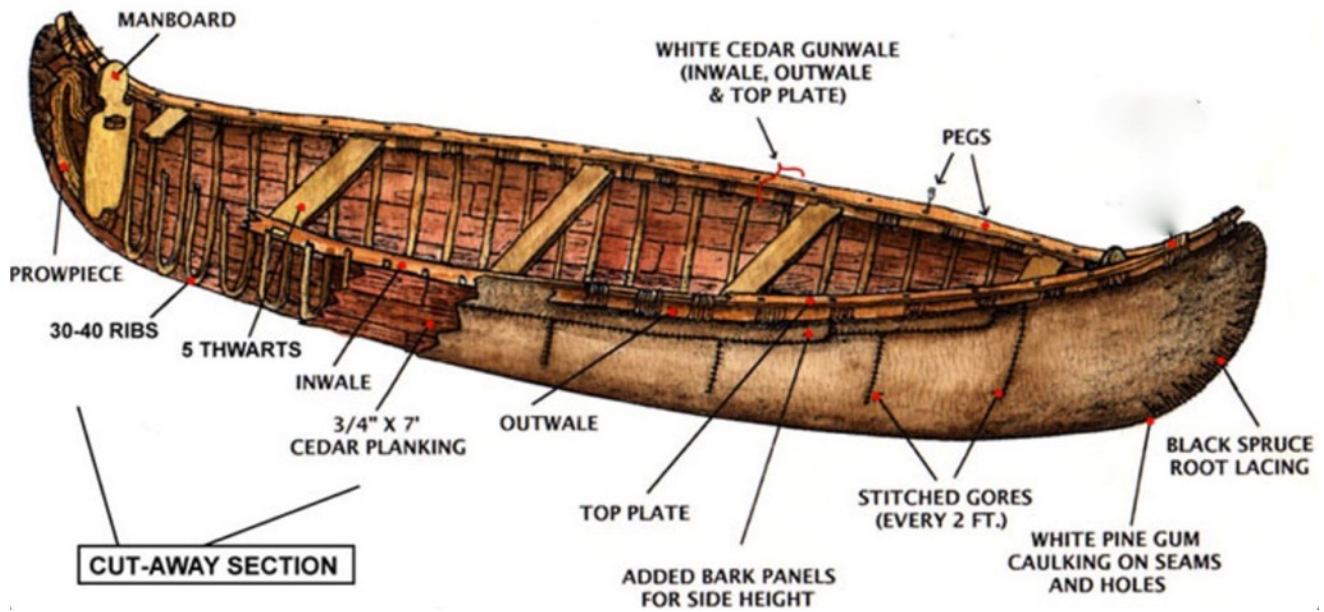
The canoe build's impact on the lives of the builders is a compelling and important story. TAA community members, lake residents, tourists, and canoe trippers - camp Wabun campers, staff, and parents among them - stopped by throughout the summer to check out the progress and lend a hand when they could. It was an amazing process to witness and, fortunately, it is now able to be shared more broadly thanks to the effort and artistry of film maker Derrick Lamere of War Pony Pictures. Derick met John at a build in the Pacific Northwest, and when he heard about Robin's project, he made his way north to document the process. Since its premier showing on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017 on Bear Island, the resulting film, [Makwaa Jiimaan Deep Water Roots](#), has been screened in cities across Ontario including a showing at the Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough, a showing in Toronto, and in March, a US debut screening at Princeton University's Environmental Film Festival in Princeton, New Jersey. An article in the March 2017 issue of the Bear Island Blast had this to say about the impact the project and the film has had on the community: "Sharing our story of the canoe build is sharing our story of survival, tenacity, and ingenuity. The birch bark canoe as a vessel is a tangible object, a symbol, and a rich metaphor for carrying Teme-Augama Anishnabe peoples into the future on our own terms."

At our final Wabun Open House of the season, held at camp on Lake Temagami, Robin generously presented Wabun with a copy of the film. We are beyond thrilled to offer a screening at camp this summer. Camp Wabun is able to offer the program we do because of the generosity of the TAA and other First Nations people, past and present, who shared and continue to share the technology of the canoe and the lands and waters that are its source and destination. Congratulations and *meegwitch* to Robin and all the builders and participants in the canoe build- thank you for sharing its story!

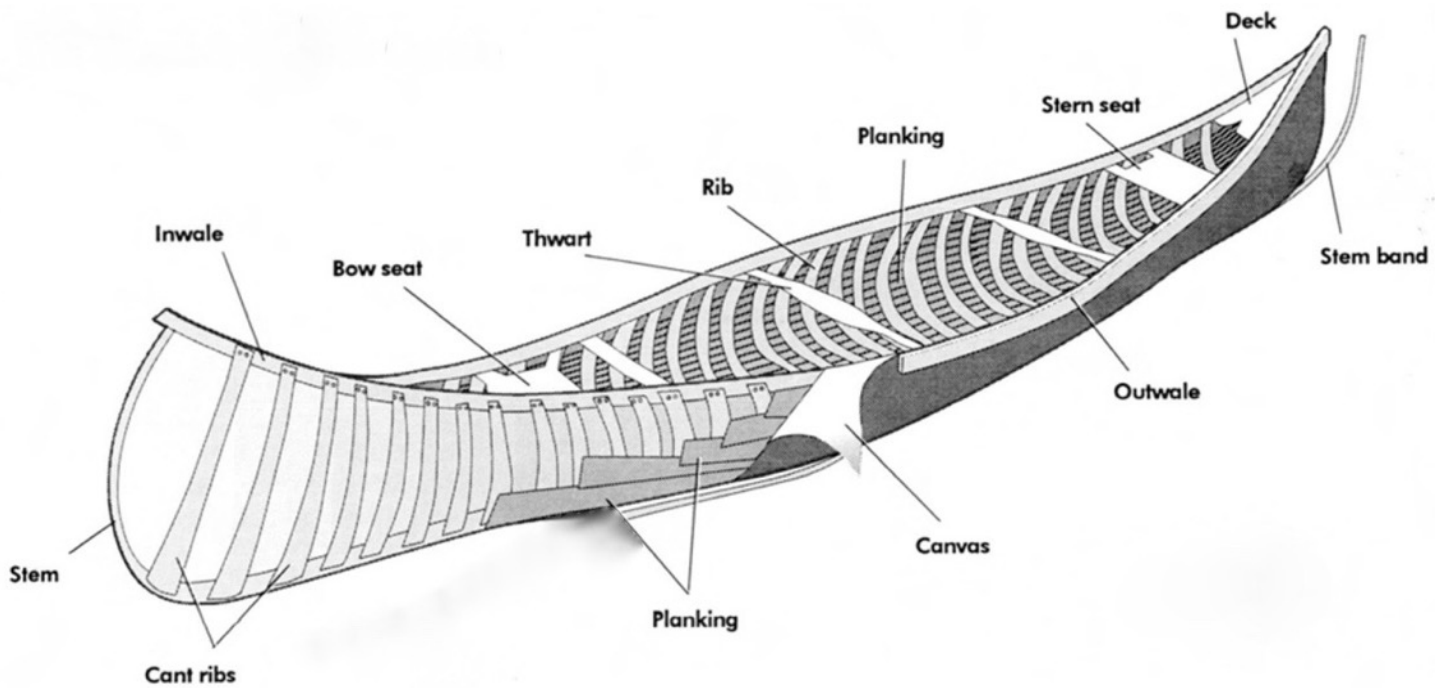


# ~ ANATOMY OF A CANOE ~

## The Birch Bark Canoe



## The Wood & Canvas Canoe



# FAMILY TRIP!

**JULY 30<sup>TH</sup> - AUGUST 5<sup>TH</sup> 2017**



**WHO:** Individuals and families who have always wanted to experience the Wabun Way for yourselves, we are excited to invite you to join us for a family trip! Children and adults of all experience levels are welcome. Spots available on a first-come-first served basis.

**WHAT:** A five-day canoe trip guided by expert Wabun staff, will take you through some of Temagami's most scenic highlights including a hike in an old-growth pine forest, viewing of ancient petroglyphs, and much more as you paddle, fish, and swim your way to each evening's campsite. Hear the sizzle of trip bacon, sample endless varieties of bannock, and take in a spectacular sunset while you relax fireside and await the sparkle of stars like you have never seen them and, perhaps, a northern lights show.

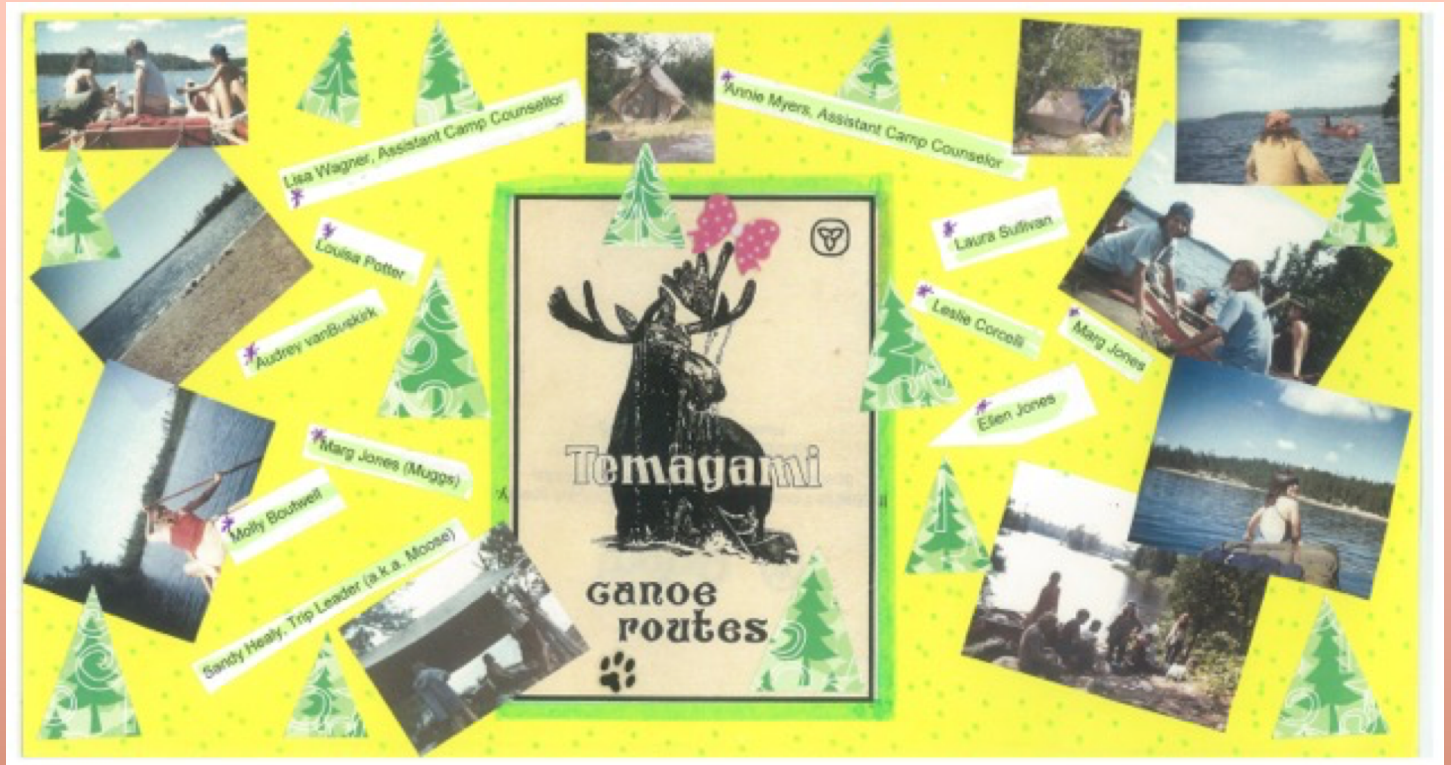
**WHERE:** Just as 4,000+ alumni/ae have done, you will push off right from the Wabun dock into the stunning scenery of Temagami's wilderness corridors.

**WHEN:** **July 30<sup>th</sup>:** Arrive at Wabun and settle in. **July 31<sup>st</sup>:** Outfit equipment and food, pack up and prepare for departure. **August 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>:** Out on trip. **August 5<sup>th</sup>:** Return to Wabun to enjoy a celebratory local-food feast and rest up for the season's end celebrations. **August 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>:** End of season celebrations.

**WHY** not give Jess a call if this sounds like something you and/or your family would enjoy?  
**Phone:** (573) 355-3720 **-or- Email:** [jess@wabun.com](mailto:jess@wabun.com)



# WOMEN OF WABUN 40 YEARS!



W@W! We at Wabun note with great delight, that this year marks 40 years of Women Of Wabun - Wabun's wilderness canoe-tripping program for girls and young women. Truth be told - it is with much more than delight. Since 1977, Wabun campers have benefited immeasurably from what women have brought to what we had done for 44 years without them - women of Wabun have explored rugged new routes ranging from the Temagami region to the Hudson Bay coast, integrated leave-no-trace systems seamlessly into the "Wabun Way," and have generated and grown a relational subtlety and gender equity not even part of our lexicon in 1933. Brava!

Thank you, Sandy Healy, for sending us this collage of your 1980 season at Wabun. We'd love to see/read about other folks' memories, too - better yet, we'd love to see you! How about a visit to Wabun!

**SHARE YOUR #WOMEN@WABUN PICTURE/VIDEO/POST!**





**TEMAGAMI HOSTS COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ABOUT TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION** by *Victoria Grant*, Board Chair with Community Foundations of Canada and founding Chair of the [Temagami Community Foundation](#)

We all know what happens when family and friends get together around the dinner table or campfire. Stories are shared, relationships are built, wisdom is imparted, and people feel a sense of connectivity to each other and their environment. When a community gets together the impact on our shared sense of belonging is equally powerful.

On a pristine afternoon in mid-August, more than 60 members of the Temagami community gathered in the Welcome Centre Bunny Miller Theatre to engage in a conversation about Truth and Reconciliation.

A five-member panel, reflecting a diverse cross-section of native and non-native perspectives from Robin Potts, Walter Ross, Jessica Lewis, Patsy Neu and Bill Kitts, contributed to a discussion about the impact of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's final report, and what Reconciliation means individually and collectively.

I also shared my experiences as a Teme-Augama Anishnabai-qway woman from Temagami, along with some personal reflections about how Canada's laws and politics have defined my identity, and how in contrast I might choose to define myself – a contradiction I share with most Indigenous people across Canada.

For more than two hours, the group discussion centered on a range of topics: the personal experiences of being a survivor of the residential school system and its intergenerational impacts; the importance of revitalizing traditional knowledge, culture and practices; how to strengthen relationships and co-existence with the Indigenous community in the Temagami area. The stories and perspectives we shared gave rise to questions, comments and participation from audience members from all walks of life. It was an extraordinary and healthy dialogue.

After the event, many friends sent me emails offering their support and thanks for the opportunity to come together. "Many thanks for bringing this brave initiative to Temagami. It was a gentle beginning to a community discussion and awareness raising that will lead to a greater understanding of the experiences of Indigenous people in the Temagami area," shared Kathy Hokola who grew up on Obabika Lake and is now a community leader and Board member with the Temiskaming Art Gallery.

"I'm glad so many attended. Community building efforts are never wasted," offered Linda and Ron Cunningham. "The crowd was well informed and the event raised a heartfelt, emotional discussion. It was wonderful to see such a diverse representation of people in the room," said Danae Hawkins.

These kinds of sentiments are encouraging and suggest that we are on the right track, but really this is only the beginning. When we look at how we can strengthen our sense of belonging to each other and our communities, it's really a two-way street. Communities need to send signals of acceptance and inclusion; and individuals need to



cultivate connection with other people and engagement in the community. This interdependence is an important aspect of what it means to belong.

It's probably not surprising, given my own history, that Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and the opportunity to redefine the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, is important to me. A sense of belonging to community and an opportunity to redefine the relationship is how we at the Temagami Community Foundation first came into being. We were looking for vehicle to link the three sectors within our community – Temagami First Nation, permanent residents and summer cottagers – who have shared this region for more than a century.

When we started, we didn't use words like Reconciliation or Reciprocity, we spoke instead about building relationships and working together in the interest of the whole community. We talked about making sure we were honest, respectful and truthful in the difficult conversations we were to have with one another. We understood that there would be difficult conversations.

But over the years, through the diversity of our Board, Summer Art Camp, and public events, the Temagami Community Foundation has come to live and practice the ingredients of Reconciliation and Reciprocity in all aspects of our work. Because of this approach, our story has been told in different ways at events across the country, and I think it would be fair to say that we have been an early advocate for the inclusion of Indigenous peoples at both a local and national level.

As fellow panelist and foundation co-founder Walter Ross shared so eloquently: "The opportunity for us all, and for the Temagami Community Foundation in particular, is to find ways to expand the discussion beyond those who were in attendance." And of course we want to do this in a way that is full of Manajiwinn and respect. "When people are treated with respect they act respectfully. When people's opinions are valued they become engaged in the conversation. Differing opinions are not wrong opinions; they are as diverse as we all are, and it is in seeking opinions

that we become a successful and evolving community," highlighted Ron Prefasi in a Facebook post about the event.

We at the Temagami Community Foundation, and indeed as a community, believe Reconciliation within Canada can happen. It's a process that has begun and will continue over generations. We have an opportunity here and now, within this political time, to create a foundation for Reconciliation. But this cannot happen at a national level without it happening at a local level and by shining a light on what's most important.

The more we get involved in the community, the more we feel we belong. The stronger our sense of belonging, the more willing we are to contribute to the community because we feel responsible for its well-being.

*Victoria Grant is of the Loon Clan, Teme-Augama Anishnabai, and a member of the Temagami First Nation. President and owner of Moving Red Canoe, Victoria operates a unique professional services firm focused on Aboriginal affairs. She is an avid volunteer and a passionate voice for a more robust Aboriginal presence within the foundation and philanthropic world. Victoria is founding Chair of the Temagami Community Foundation, Chair of The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, and a member of the Advisory Committee of the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award. Victoria is also an experienced canoe tripper and the parent of three Wabun alumni.*

**The Truth and Reconciliation Commission** The TRC hopes to guide and inspire Aboriginal peoples and Canadians in a process of reconciliation and renewed relationships that are based on mutual understanding and respect. Its mandate is to inform all Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential Schools (IRS). The Commission will document the truth of survivors, families, communities and anyone personally affected by the IRS experience. This includes First Nations, Inuit and Métis former Indian Residential School students, their families, communities, the Churches, former school employees, Government and other Canadians. The Commission has a five-year mandate and is supported by a TRC Secretariat, which is a federal government department. Learn more about the TRC [here](#).



**Sections are filling up fast - reserve your spot now!**



*Looking for an amazing opportunity this summer? There is still time to apply to Wabun for the 2017 summer. Visit [www.Wabun.com](http://www.Wabun.com) or email [info@wabun.com](mailto:info@wabun.com) for more information! Want to keep up-to-date with Wabun happenings? Make [sure we have your email address.](#)*