

Meeting summary for MCT Constitution Convention (06/21/2024)

Roll Call: GP, FDL, LL, ML, WE present, BF absent

Quick recap

The team discussed the formation of an Alliance among Ojibwe people, focusing on the importance of honoring the Alliance, protecting governance, and asserting the rights of nature. They also deliberated on the legal identity of nature, the erosion of traditional rights, and the importance of treating land and animals with respect. Lastly, they addressed personal experiences, work-related issues, and environmental sustainability while also discussing the upcoming annual meetings, proposed changes to the constitution, and scheduling challenges with the Bush Foundation.

Next steps

- Each reservation to provide a written statement on removing the secretarial election requirement to Cheryl by July 5th.
- Finance Committee to reschedule meeting with Bush Foundation after resolving scheduling conflicts.
- Education Committee to work on completing elder videos.
- Drafting Committee to continue editing and refining the Alliance document based on discussions.
- Cheryl to compile reservation statements into a report for the July 8th TEC meeting.

Summary

Maamaawino Anishinaabe Nation's Alliance and Sovereignty

Michele, Sandra, Carol, Marcie, Laduke, and Ray B. discussed the wording of a statement expressing the Maamaawino Anishinaabe nation's alliance and protection of their sovereignty. They agreed on the importance of honoring the alliance and protecting governance, with Sandra suggesting the use of a verb for the series. Carol J. then suggested simplifying the sentence further by omitting unnecessary words. The group also shared the Ojibwe creation story, emphasizing humankind's role as caretakers of the environment. The group emphasized the importance of preserving and respecting the natural world, including all living beings and the environment. They also discussed the use of Ojibwe words in their document, the concept of "adjacent areas," and the Anishinabek philosophy of respect and stewardship. The team agreed to revisit the discussion if needed and decided to continue with their overall goal of preserving their distinct cultural values and traditions.

Ojibwe Alliance, Rights of Nature, and Cultural Preservation

The group discussed the formation of an Alliance among Ojibwe people, focusing on the need for an inclusive approach and the importance of clearly outlining the Alliance's purpose and participants. They also debated the concept of the rights of nature and their interconnection with indigenous traditions, agreeing on the strategy to assert these rights in various situations, such as preventing mining companies from bulldozing sacred sites. The discussion further touched on the significance of cultivating positive character traits and balancing inner peace with external action. The team also considered the creation of a document to preserve their Anishinaabe culture for future generations, debating the meaning of certain terms and the importance of clarifying their intent.

Discussing Sustainability Treaties and Rights

The group discussed the legal identity of nature and its implications for sustainability. They also reviewed various treaties and agreements affecting sustainability, focusing on those impacting the Chippewa and the White Earth Nation. The team deliberated on the specifics of these treaties, including hunting, fishing, and gathering rights, and the erosion of such rights due to their language. Carol J proposed adding a statement to clarify that unexpressed extinguished rights remain rights, while Ray B suggested that county lines should have been removed when the reservation was established.

Treaties, Sovereignty, and Nature's Rights

The group discussed the erosion of traditional rights to fishing, hunting, and gathering, and the importance of treaties in their government-to-government relationship. They debated the formatting of their document, the use of terminology, and the concept of nature's inherent rights. The team agreed on the need to reassert sovereignty as a recognized separate nation and discussed the relevance of treaties in contemporary times. They also explored the idea that nature has the right to exist and should not be completely destroyed, with this concept potentially gaining recognition in future court decisions.

Treaty Rights, Sovereignty, and Land Stewardship

The group discussed the importance of treating land and animals with respect as part of a larger ecosystem, emphasizing the concept of the Anishinaabe clan system. They also debated the meaning of 'retain' and 'inherent rights' in the context of their treaties with the US government, agreeing to refine the wording to affirm their inherent rights. The team also discussed the concept of reserved rights in relation to their sovereignty and land ownership, agreeing to explain reserved rights in their glossary and adjust the document accordingly if definitions change. They also addressed the challenges posed

by Federal statutes and treaties, questioning their legitimacy over a sovereign people and proposing to use the Constitution of the United States to challenge their constitutionality.

Annual Meetings and Constitution Changes

The team discussed the upcoming TEC meetings, emphasizing the importance of prepared statements and timely submission of reports. They also deliberated on proposed changes to the constitution, including the removal of the secretarial election, the role of the Secretary of Interior in the election process, and the approval of amendments. Concerns were raised about potential impacts on the referendum process and the need for safeguards against unfettered changes. The team agreed to seek further legal clarification on these matters and to review committee reports on elections, amendments, ordinances, and resolutions.

Committee Reports

Finance-

Scheduling Challenges and Alliance Document

The group discussed scheduling challenges with the Bush Foundation and the Finance Committee, highlighting the need for flexibility to accommodate the Bush Foundation's schedule. The group debated the terminology used in the document, particularly the reference to "tribal nations," and ultimately decided to declare their sovereignty as distinct, independent, and political, while acknowledging the existence of traditional tribal governments in the past.

Education-

The community education sessions were discussed. It was agreed that Michele would work on recording Grand Portage's video segment with Marci M. Leech Lake is having scheduling conflicts which has slowed things down.

Alliance Document Terminology and Relationships

The group deliberated on the terminology used in their Alliance document. They also discussed the arrangement of sections in the document, the use of legal terminology, and the right of citizens to govern themselves. The discussion further touched on the legal relationships between their Alliance, the United States, and other sovereign nations, including the potential for the Alliance to enter into treaties with other tribes or nations. The conversation ended with a collective effort to revise the document, with Carol J. appreciating the educational value of the session.

