Cultural Ties

Canoeing:
The role of canoeing in connecting Indigenous youths with cultural traditions and the environment

INTRODUCTION

• Interactions with the natural world, through various social, cultural and historical lenses, frame views, respect and actions towards the environment

• In many Indigenous cultures, canoes are seen as living beings that shape relations to others, ones self and the natural world

• The dispossession of traditional lands has slowed the transmission of teachings on cultural practices including on canoeing and treatment of the natural world

• Organizations are working to strengthen and revitalize relationships with the land & cultural traditions through canoeing. This work focuses on one operating in Manitoba - Waterways

AIM

• Gather perceived benefits of connecting Indigenous youths to cultural traditions and the environment

• Assess changes in youths physical, mental and spiritual states, and sense of awareness and curiosity for the environment following canoe programs

• Evaluate the ability of canoeing and land-based learning in reframing interactions with the natural world

METHODS

• Interviews were conducted with 10 staff who facilitated canoe programs for Indigenous youths

• Interview responses were compared with previous work in the field of land-based learning, de-colonizing education and human-nature relations

• Responses were thematized, as displayed here

CONCLUSION

• Many Indigenous communities health, identity, and overall community relations and operations are influenced by the natural world

• Interviews found that canoeing can facilitate a reconnection with ancestral and cultural ties, improve self-confidence, and deepen understanding and appreciation for nature

REFERENCES