

AKWESASNE NRDA CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

CULTURAL RESTORATION PLAN



Public Information Session

Feb 28, 2011



WHY WE ARE HERE

- ◉ Update the community
- ◉ Feedback
- ◉ Settlement offer discussion



ST. LAWRENCE ENVIRONMENTAL TRUSTEE COUNCIL (SLETC)



- The Trustee council is comprised of:
 - ❖ Department of the Interior (DOI)
 - ❖ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
 - ❖ U.S Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS)
 - ❖ NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
 - ❖ St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Environment Division Natural Resource Damage Assessment Program (NRDA)



NRDA

PURPOSE:

- ◉ Identify and restore injured natural resources to their condition prior to contamination
- ◉ Seeks compensation \$ for injured resources

INJURY:

- ◉ Cause death; cause biological harm such as reproduction, behavioral affects; or cause resources to become unavailable for human use.

RESTORATION

- ◉ NRDA results in \$ or action from polluter
- ◉ Compensation dollars must be used to restore, replace, or acquire the equivalent of injured resources
- ◉ AND; reimburse Trustee costs of assessing the damages

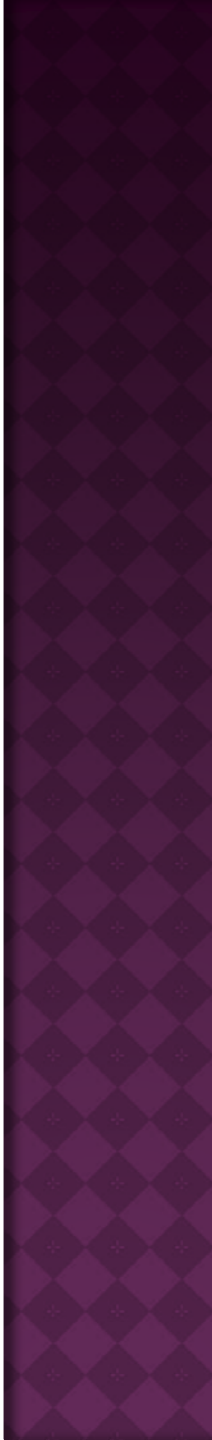


DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RESTORATION & REMEDIATION

NRD claims compensate the public for past, present & future injuries to natural resources

Remediation is USEPA's efforts to reduce risk to human health

Remediation/Clean-Up reduces environmental risk but does not restore natural resource losses.





ASSESSMENT WORK

Ecological

Assessed ecological injury; evaluated biological data, quantified injury to birds, fish, sediment, mammals, amphibians & reptiles

Recreational

Preliminary assessment of water-based recreational behavior in the Northern New York area. This assessment DOES NOT include Tribal losses.

Cultural

Determine how and to what extent the culture of Mohawk people have been affected by injuries to the natural resources.



ECO RESTORATION

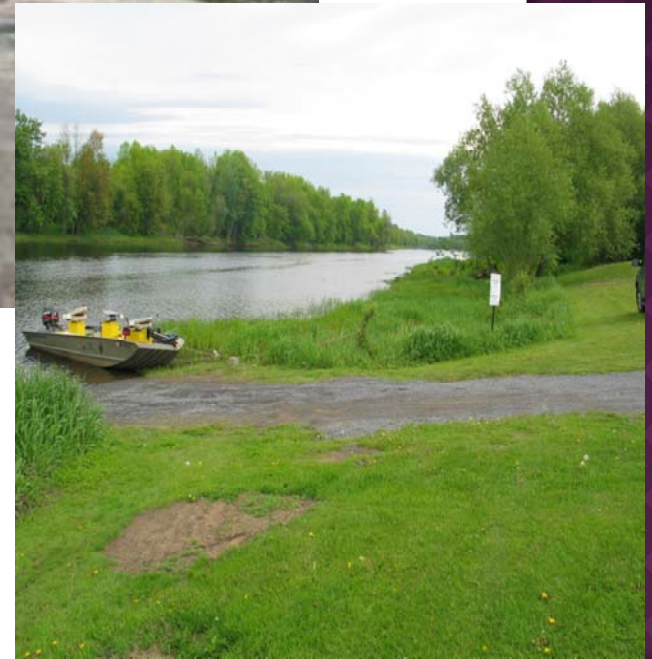
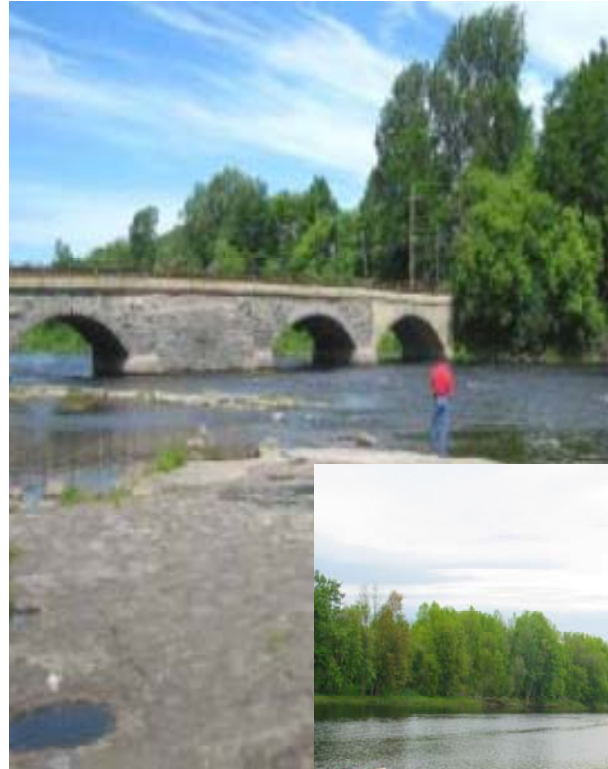
Potential categories

- ◉ Freshwater mussel restoration
- ◉ Wetland enhancement: for northern pike spawning
- ◉ Avian Improvements: nesting habitat, grassland restoration
- ◉ Fisheries improvements: spawning/nursery habitats (sturgeon beds); fish passage (dam removal)
- ◉ Sweetgrass planting
- ◉ Conservation easements



LOST HUMAN USE RESTORATION (NON-TRIBAL)

- ◉ Fish Consumption Advisories
- ◉ Recreational fishing and access projects





CULTURAL IMPACT RESEARCH





AKWESASNE'S APPROACH

Years of work...



- ◉ Cultural Impact Assessment:

Anthropological approach; collection of all existing information; database developed; research parameters defined

- ◉ Community Advisory Committee:

Ensure research was proceeding in an appropriate manner

- ◉ Oral History Project:

Focused interviews to fill data gaps

- ◉ Community Outreach:

Public meetings, government meetings, radio, video

- ◉ Focused Traditional Activities Survey

Assessment of current practitioners

RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

Four Areas of Natural Resource based Traditional Practices injured:

- ◉ Water, Fishing, and Use of the River
- ◉ Medicine Plants and Healing
- ◉ Hunting and Trapping
- ◉ Horticulture, Farming, and Basket-making



CULTURAL RESTORATION PLAN

- ◉ Promotes the restoration of natural resource based cultural and traditional economic activities within the community
 - Support long-term mentoring relationships
 - Support existing organizations' projects
- ◉ Limited by the findings of *Anthropological Report*
 - Plan reflects scale of cultural practices harmed only by release of contaminants, not overall cultural loss suffered by community.

ELEMENTS OF THE RESTORATION PLAN



- ❖ Apprenticeship Program
- ❖ Language Program
- ❖ Institutional Funding
- ❖ Access to Natural Resources





APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

- ◉ “Masters” holding traditional knowledge in the community were identified and will be recruited as teachers- Most likely elders
- ◉ “Apprentices” are a group of younger individuals expressing interest and commitment to learning and then teaching cultural practices
- ◉ Several Year Program -comparable to NYS job training programs
- ◉ Potential for partnerships with existing programs in Akwesasne



APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

- ◉ Learning and teaching through direct experience in the natural environment and the passing of knowledge to younger generations
- ◉ Indigenous Approach:
 - Listening
 - Watching
 - Doing
- ◉ Goal: Apprentices would reach a point where they possess the skills of a master and can then, in turn, take on a teaching role.



LANGUAGE PROMOTION

- ◉ Core element of entire Restoration Plan
- ◉ Language specialists will assist and support all project participants
 - Document and produce teaching materials
 - Spiritual and ceremonial practices
 - Holistic Haudenosaunee perspective
- ◉ Saturate Akwesasne with Kanienkeha
 - Radio, newspapers, print, video, street signs, education materials, etc.
- ◉ Goal: strengthen the use of Kanienkeha associated with traditional cultural practices



INSTITUTIONAL FUNDING

- ◉ Financing the stability of existing culturally based programs to continue restoring natural resource based cultural practices
- ◉ Public Solicitation:
 - Cultural Restoration Suggestion Forms; DVD; radio show
- ◉ Project Screening Process:
 - Cultural Evaluation Tool (criteria developed)
 - Reviewers
 - Scores averaged
 - Balance of project's nexus to injury, scale, and community demographics



ACCESS TO RESOURCES





GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION

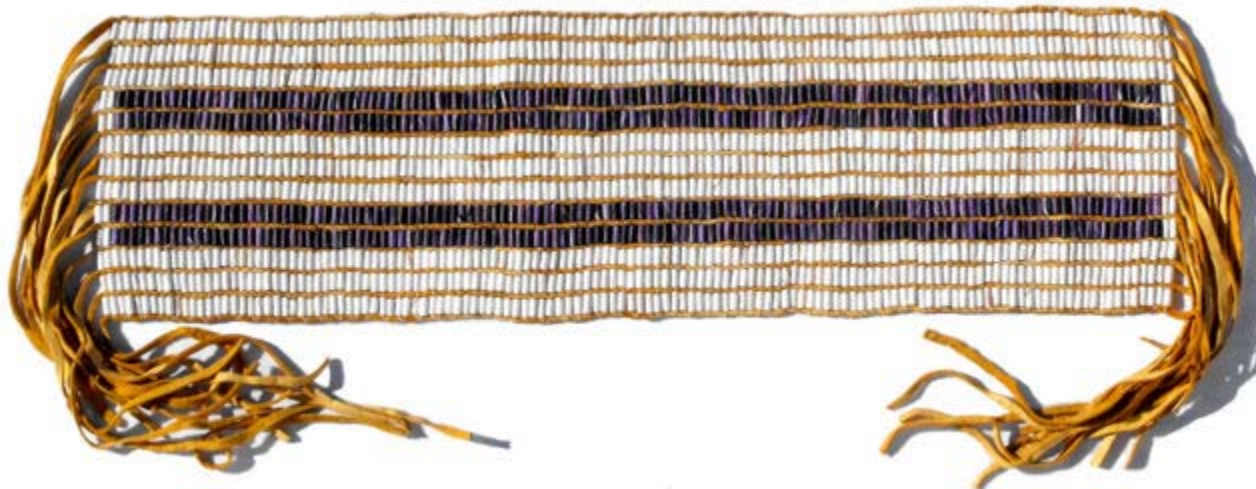
- ◉ Restoration Commission: non-governmental authoritative body, accountability structure, oversee implementation.
- ◉ 2007 Tri-Council MOU





SETTLEMENT

- ◉ ALCOA
- ◉ GM Bankruptcy



NIA:WEN

