



Ontario Native Women's Association

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Ontario Native Women's Association Honours Mother Earth

In honour of Earth Day, the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) held an Earth Day Clean-Up Walk around Boulevard Lake on Friday, April 20th, 2012 to demonstrate our respect for Mother Earth. ONWA walkers were dedicated to picking up litter as they walked the perimeter of the lake.

Isabelle Mercier, an Elder from Michkeegogamang, was honoured to walk with the women of the Ontario Native Women's Association as they recognize and honour Mother Earth's gifts. "Earth provides everything we need to survive and live here," she explains. "When we look at things honestly, we as people have placed our personal wants, needs and desires ahead of everything else. We have created a situation where the Earth can no longer sustain or provide a stable environment for everything the Creator has put here."

ONWA's Earth Day Clean-Up Walk took place around Boulevard Lake as a way to honour and raise awareness regarding the significance of water to Aboriginal cultures. According to Traditional teachings, Indigenous women in particular were tasked with the responsibility of ensuring the protection of water, conveying its importance and significance among their people and ensuring water resources were not exploited. Earth Day is an opportunity for Aboriginal women to uphold their responsibilities and preserve their place of importance within their cultures.

ONWA recognizes the importance of Mother Earth and all the gifts the Creator has put here and is taking responsibility for the task of protecting it. In addition to the Earth day Clean-Up Walk taking place in Thunder Bay, ONWA Locals and community partners across the province have been encouraged to hold their own Clean-Up Walks.

"Earth Day is a time of reflection and opportunity to honour our responsibilities to do better," says Mercier. "We must not only be responsible for ourselves, but work together as a community to minimize our environmental footprint."

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