Gikinoo’wizhiwe Onji Waaban
(Guiding for Tomorrow)

or

“G-WOW” Changing Climate, Changing Culture Initiative
A New Model for Climate Change Literacy & Action

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G-WOW Team Partners

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- UW Extension
- Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission
- Visitor Center
- National Park Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Great Lakes Restoration
- Wisconsin Coastal Management Program
- NOAA
- National Park Foundation
Additional technical support and resources

Wisconsin climate science research, mapping tools

Climate science for northern Wisconsin forests

Multi-cultural place-based stories of climate change
Project Location:

In the heart of the Lake Superior Ojibwe Country, based at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center Ashland, WI

This region includes 11 Ojibwe Tribes living within the “Ceded Territory” of northern WI, MN, and MI.

Applicable to other locations & cultures
G-WOW Roots (2007)

- Increasing evidence that climate change is affecting the sustainability of Lake Superior coastal resources, communities, and cultures

- Concern about climate change impacts to Ojibwe treaty rights and traditional cultural practices within the Ceded Territory

- “Traditional” climate literacy models were not resonating with audiences

Diverse project partners came together as the G-WOW Team to develop a new climate change educational outreach strategy
“…local, place-based evidence of climate change gained through experiential learning is as, or more effective than, simply studying analytical climate change data to increasing climate change literacy.”

The Lake Superior Ojibwe have relied on the sustainability of key plant and animal species for generations to support subsistence, cultural, and spiritual practices or “lifeways”

Their traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) of natural systems provides place-based indicators of climate change for people of all cultures
G-WOW Key Principles

• Climate change is real
• Humans contribute to climate change
• Weather and climate are different
• Climate affects culture
• We can make a difference!

Projected change in Wisconsin’s annual average temperatures in °F 1980-2055

Harvesting birch bark- a boreal species that relies on a cool climate
Why Is the G-WOW Model Unique?

It based on evaluating climate change impacts on the habitat conditions needed for the sustainability of plant or animal species that support a cultural practice through integration of place-based with scientific evidence

- Creates a culturally relevant climate change perspective
- Links cultural, place-based evidence with scientific climate research
- Makes the model transferrable to other cultures
- Promotes action through service learning

The G-WOW model uses impacts on Ojibwe cultural practices as an indicator of a changing climate for all cultures
The Ojibwe lifeway of wild rice harvesting depends on the sustainability of manoomin.

The sustainability of manoomin depends on habitats with:

- shallow water
- moderate water level fluctuations
- cool growing season temperatures
Is there place-based evidence of climate change impacts on manoomin?

2007 - 2012: *Unprecedented disruptions in tribal wild rice harvests and yields due to drought, fungal disease, storms*

Is there scientific evidence that climate change will affect manoomin?

**HEAT**
Annual average temperatures in °F, 1980-2055

**DROUGHT**
Frequency of 90-degree days

**GUSHER**
Change in frequency of 2” + precip
Cultural Practice Key Species Place-based & Scientific Evidence

Example: G-WOW application

Requires cool moist forest habitats, cold winters for sugar production

What does this mean for sustainability of sugar maple trees?
Cultural practices & businesses that rely on sugar maple?
Cultural Practice

Key Species

Place-based and Scientific Evidence

Requires cold water habitats with high oxygen levels

Climate models predict up to 95% of Wisconsin’s brook trout habitat across could be lost if the average annual summer air temperature increased just over 5 ° F.
Example: applying the G-WOW model to a “non-species” dependent cultural practice

**Cultural Practice**

**Key “condition”**

**Place-based and Scientific Evidence**

What do these changes mean for species and cultural practices and species that depend on cold and snow?

*Projected change in Wisconsin’s winter average temperatures in °F, 1980-2055*
What Can We Do?
Taking action through climate service learning projects

Talking Circle
Sharing climate service learning projects and results

Ojibwe Lifeways- Connect With Culture
Place-based evidence of climate impacts on 4-seasonal Ojibwe cultural practices and the key species supporting them

Investigate the Science
Integration of climate science with place-based evidence to evaluate if culture and science agree.
G-WOW Outreach Tools

Web Curriculum
www.g-wow.org

Cultural Connection: Ojibwe language, TEK, and cultural elements infused

Integration of climate science

Taking action on climate change and sharing results
TARGET AUDIENCES

Learners (middle school & above)

Teachers-Educators

General Public
The Ojibwe believe that we must think seven generations ahead when making decisions today. All cultures share responsibility for protecting their home, the Earth. We cannot eliminate all the risks that climate change presents, but we can make a difference in slowing its impacts. The culture and lifeways of future generations will be affected by the choices we make.

We invite you to use and expand the G-WOW model to increase climate change literacy based on the unique lifeways of your culture.

www.g-wow.org
On Behalf of the G-WOW Team

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