

National Healing Forests: A Path to Reconciliation in Canada

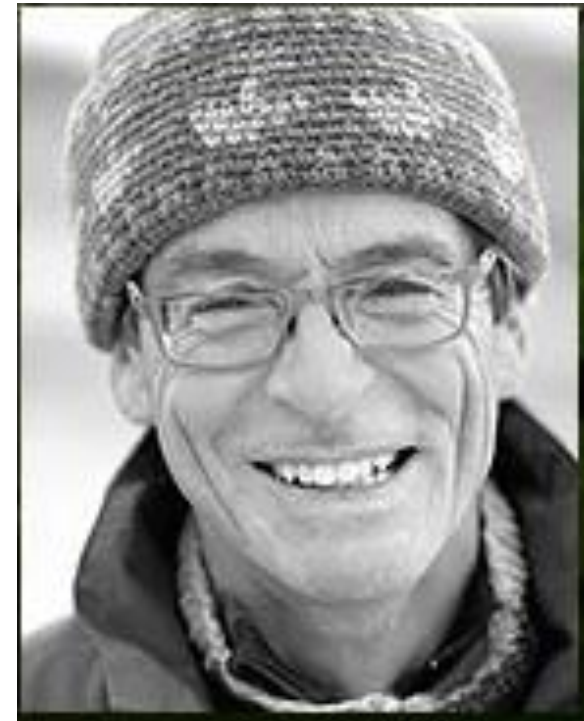


IAIA 26
QUÉBEC CITY, CANADA

Peter Croal

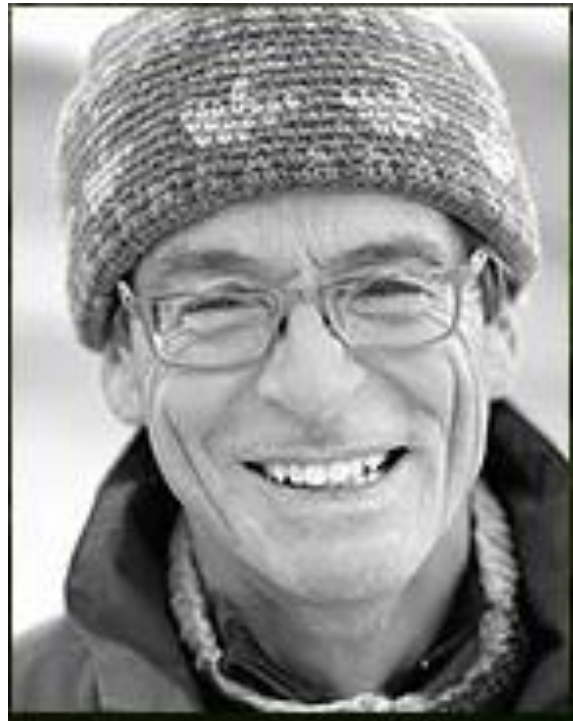
*National Healing Forests Initiative
Canada*

<https://www.nationalhealingforests.ca/>



Patricia & Peter

Our Motivation (Yours?)





Marieval Cowessess Indian Residential School in Elcapo Creek Valley, Saskatchewan, n.d./ St. Boniface Historical Society Archives, 0001/SHSB 1461



A Brief History of Residential School

- ▶ Purpose: learn English, read the bible and convert to Christianity
- *Constitution Act, 1867* - government responsibility over 'Indians'
- *Indian Act, 1876* - education
- Remove children from cultural and family influence

Residential School Objectives

- ▶ Assimilation into white society
- ▶ End the “Indian Problem”

The Goal of Residential School

“We instil in them a pronounced distaste for the native life so that they will be humiliated when reminded of their origin. When they graduate from our institutions, the children have lost everything Native except their blood.”

- Bishop ^(St.) Vital Grandin, 1875



Walk for Reconciliation May 31, 2015

Prior to release of TRC
Report

94 Calls to Action



Murray Sinclair

- ▶ “Reconciliation is not an Indigenous problem: it is a *Canadian* one.”
- ▶ “We are all treaty people”



Healing Forest Respects 12 Calls to Action from the TRC Report

- ▶ Culturally appropriate childhood education
- ▶ Churches and reconciliation
- ▶ Education and reconciliation
- ▶ Missing Children burial information
- ▶ Commemoration
- ▶ Newcomers to Canada education

Dr. David Suzuki said recently:

- ▶ “Reconciliation and Climate Change go together”
- ▶ Therefore, Healing Forests are perfect fit for climate change education, mitigation and adaptation WITH reconciliation
- ▶ Healing Forest can be part of EIA mitigation

National Healing Forests

Create outdoor, green spaces for reconciliation, partnerships, building community and connecting people to nature.



Planning and Partnership in Developing a Healing Forest - Community Level

- ▶ Non Indigenous Communities/people
- ▶ Indigenous partners are a core requirement
 - ▶ First Nation, Métis, Inuit

Core Steps to Creating a Healing Forest

- ▶ Create group
- ▶ Partner with an Indigenous community
- ▶ Find a suitable location E.g., if a city park, obtain permission from city council
- ▶ Hold a ceremony to dedicate the Healing Forest space
- ▶ Become part of Healing Forest community

Healing Forest Possibilities

- Outdoor gathering place - Elder teaching, sharing
- Walking trails and native species
- Tree planting or use of sacred medicines
- Garden memorials with names
- Children's honoring park
- Limitless possibilities

Healing Forest Projects and Progress



Abegweit First Nation (Scotchfort Reserve), PEI



Perth, Ontario



Winnipeg Healing Forest



Photo Winnipeg Free Press

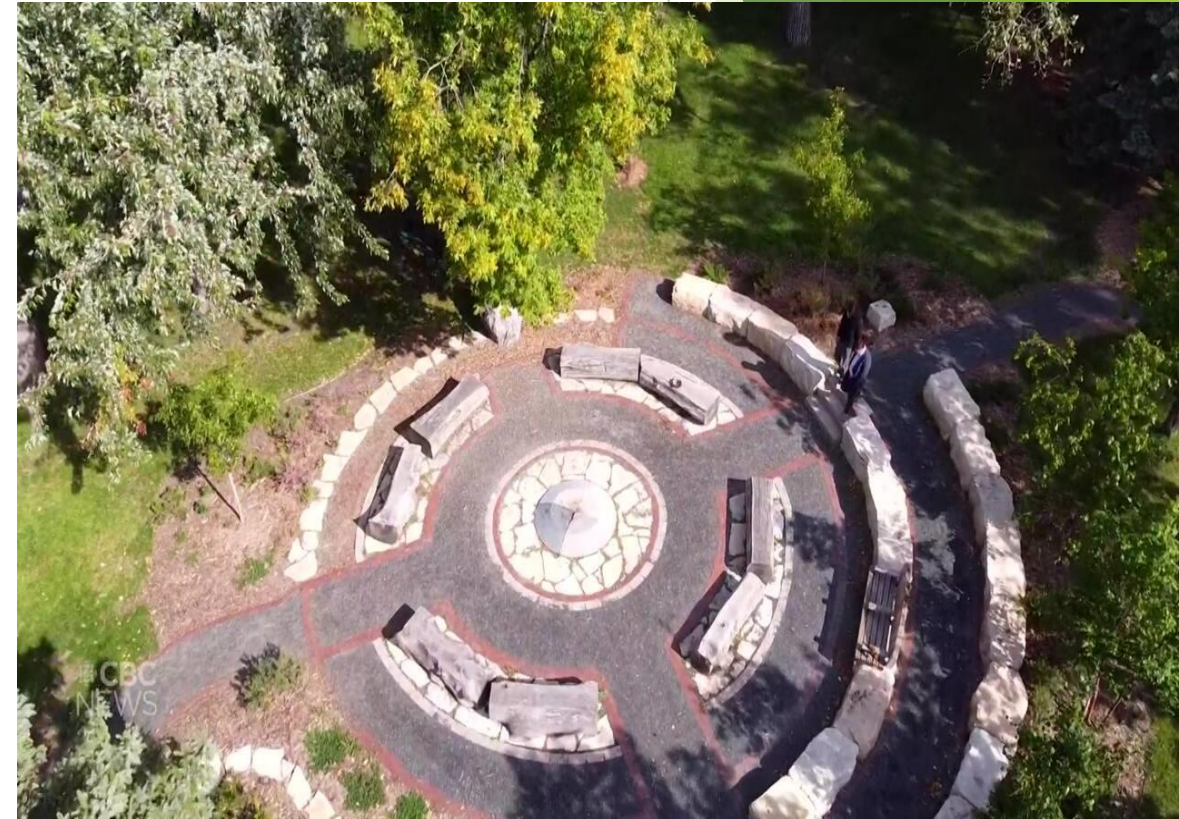


Photo Winnipeg Healing Forest Facebook

Fitch Bay, Quebec



Riverside Public School, Cape Breton Knowledge Path and Healing Forest



St. Matts United Church, Toronto



Cost of a Healing Forest?

- ▶ Extremely variable - all depends on the vision of the community
- ▶ All Saints Anglican Church, Ottawa - \$5,000
- ▶ Riverside Public School, Cape Breton - \$100,000
- ▶ Fitch Bay, Quebec (private land) - \$1000
- ▶ Each Healing Forest is unique - there is no one model, size or design.

Some Key Challenges

- ▶ **Gaining trust and cooperation**
- ▶ **Funding**
- ▶ **Momentum**
- ▶ **Relationship-building with Indigenous communities**

Progress to date

- ▶ Now 31 Healing Forests in Canada
- ▶ Thesis done on Healing Forest
- ▶ **Royal Canadian Geographical Society** is using the Healing Forest to teach about reconciliation (teaching module available)
- ▶ **David Suzuki Foundation**
- ▶ **Network of Nature Partner**
- ▶ **University of Waterloo** - course curriculum

Logo (created by Marcoon Design)

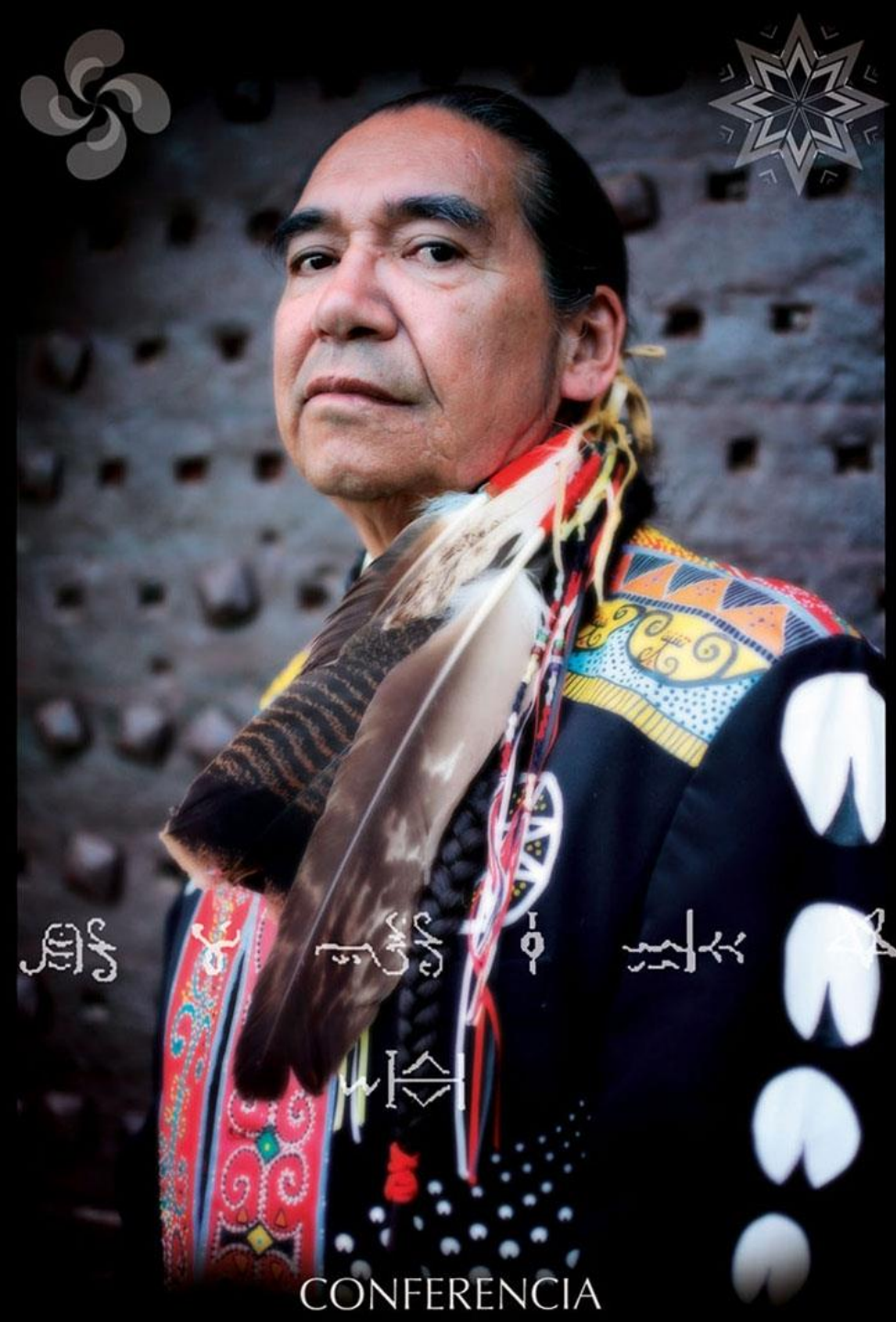


Partnership & Reconciliation

- Develop a Healing Forest as you wish as long as its in the spirit of Reconciliation and Respect
- The creation of a Healing Forest in partnership builds long-term friendships, respect, community understanding.

Is the NHFI working?

- ▶ **YES. “ The NHFI is reconciliation in action”**
- ▶ **Stephen Augustine, a Mi'Kmaq Hereditary Chief and Associate Vice-President at Cape Breton University**



Our invitation to you: create your own Healing Forest to aid in reconciliation and healing across Canada, and expand the Healing Forest community.

At the same time:

- connect people to nature
- address climate change
- respect two ways of knowing
- build community
- strengthen IA reach



Let's continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA26 app.

#iaia26



NationalHealingForests.ca

email: HealingForestsCanada@gmail.ca

“It’s the Nature of a Forest to Heal”