

# INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

## WAHBANUNG CALLS TO ACTION 2020

### CLEARING THE PATH FOR OUR SURVIVAL

**WRITTEN BY KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS** Dr. David Courchene, Jr., Chief Dr. Harry Bone, Florence Paynter, Philip Paynter, Chief Katherine Whitecloud, Chief Robert Maytwayashing, Mary Maytwayashing and Gordon Walker at the Turtle Lodge Central House of Knowledge. With Contributions from the late Orianna Courchene.

*“ For the Indian People to gain themselves they must return to the traditional ways in regards to language, to their spirituality. It must be a part of the future. That is if we are able to be the true nation of our culture. ”*

- THE LATE DAVID COURCHENE, SR.  
GRAND CHIEF OF THE PROVINCE OF MANITOBA  
OCTOBER 3, 1971



## **WAHBANUNG CALLS TO ACTION 2020**

These Wahbanung Calls to Action come from an Indigenous strength-based approach of being proactive rather than reactionary, as the Original free and independent, autonomous, sovereign and self-determining Peoples of our homeland. They are based on our identity as a People who know and love the spirit and the land.

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 1**

**Reposition the Knowledge Keepers in their role of influence in our communities and Nations, to lead all our processes through a ceremonial context.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 2**

**Prioritize and support the role of the mothers, the Ogimaakwe, in teaching, loving and caring for the children of our Nations.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 3**

**Make spiritual healing, restoring our identity, and rites of passage to adulthood a priority in our communities.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 4**

**Build sacred fire arbours in our communities and light the sacred fires.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 5**

**Build sacred teaching and healing lodges in our communities so our community members can access healing and education from our Indigenous perspective, and for us to have our places from which to practice our sovereignty and governance.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 6**

**Practice our ceremonies and bring our children and families to the ceremonies.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 7**

**Prioritize revamping our education system. Develop our own Indigenous models of education and implement them in our communities. Prioritize Indigenous education as the first education for our children, teaching our way of life, language, kindness, our values, duties and responsibilities, and connection to ceremony and the land.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 8**

**Develop ceremonially-led, land-centred approaches to teaching our languages. Encourage full immersion approaches.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 9**

**Make our survival in times of climate change a priority, and focus on preparing our communities and families for our spiritual, emotional, physical and mental survival.**

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### **Wahbanung Call to Action 10**

**Establish Indigenous ceremonial environments for the women and men of our communities to heal and learn about their duties and responsibilities and Indigenous methods of parenting.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 11**

**Focus on Indigenous wellness promotion activities in our communities such as being in ceremony, on the land, medicines and food sovereignty. Empower our People to be responsible for themselves and to make their own choices for wellness.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 12**

**Focus on youth as a target group for teaching about our way of life. Ensure youth receive mentorship from female (Ogimaakwe) and male (Ogichita) mentors knowledgeable about our way of life.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 13**

**Seek support and resources to support our resurgence, our sacred lodges, and ancestral centres of knowledge, but do not make our resurgence dependent upon their support. Take the initiative to do what is needed and have faith that the Spirit will provide for us.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 14**

**Reprioritize resources within our communities to resource our sacred lodges of Indigenous knowledge. Make major investments to support autonomous sacred lodges and centres, such as the Turtle Lodge.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 15**

**Establish regional networks, e.g. interconnected ancestral centres of knowledge, where Indigenous ceremonial and land-based knowledge can be shared, and to create unity and collaboration among our Nations.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 16**

**Develop our communities' and Nations' initiatives based on ceremonial guidance, as interpreted by our Knowledge Keepers.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 17**

**Utilize our sacred lodges as meeting places both with our own membership as well as with non-Indigenous partners to restore our ancestral governance and to keep us rooted in our Indigenous paradigm.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 18**

**Create relationships with our Treaty partners, based in our lodges, and following a ceremonial context.**

### **Wahbanung Call to Action 19**

**Utilize our land and traditional territories for ceremonial activities.**

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### Wahbanung Call to Action 20

Work with our Knowledge Keepers to create positive public education about Indigenous knowledge, laws, teachings and the code of conduct based on spiritual and natural laws in our homeland.

### Wahbanung Call to Action 21

Encourage our political leaders and advocacy organizations to shift focus from a reactionary approach to colonial efforts of keeping us under their domination to proactively seeking support for the restoration of our identity and way of life.

### Wahbanung Call to Action 22

Make creating the spirit of unity amongst our People a priority. Be kind to each other.

### Wahbanung Call to Action 23

Encourage partnerships that support the creation of Indigenous-led ceremonial spaces and natural spaces for healing and education, such as in partnership with hospitals and clinics, ensuring that these partnerships reflect our autonomy and independence, rather than taking an approach of integration into a colonial system. Giigewigamig First Nation Health Authority created a Traditional Healing Centre at the Pine Falls Hospital as one example of an Indigenous-led health care partnership.<sup>1</sup>

### Wahbanung Call to Action 24

Commission a document and pilot process to implement the Wahbanung Calls to Action, through the leadership of the Knowledge Keepers who developed Wahbanung | The Resurgence of a People – Clearing the Path for our Survival.

### Wahbanung Call to Action 25

Make a personal commitment to the Highest Power in ceremony to follow the spiritual and natural laws in our lives. Wherever we make a commitment, we must have actionable work attached to it.



*“ Our health and wellness – our destiny – rests in our hands.  
It does not rest outside of ourselves, in the government.  
It is in each of us. ”*

- FLORENCE PAYNTER  
(ANISHINAABE)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cmaj.ca/content/192/9/E208>