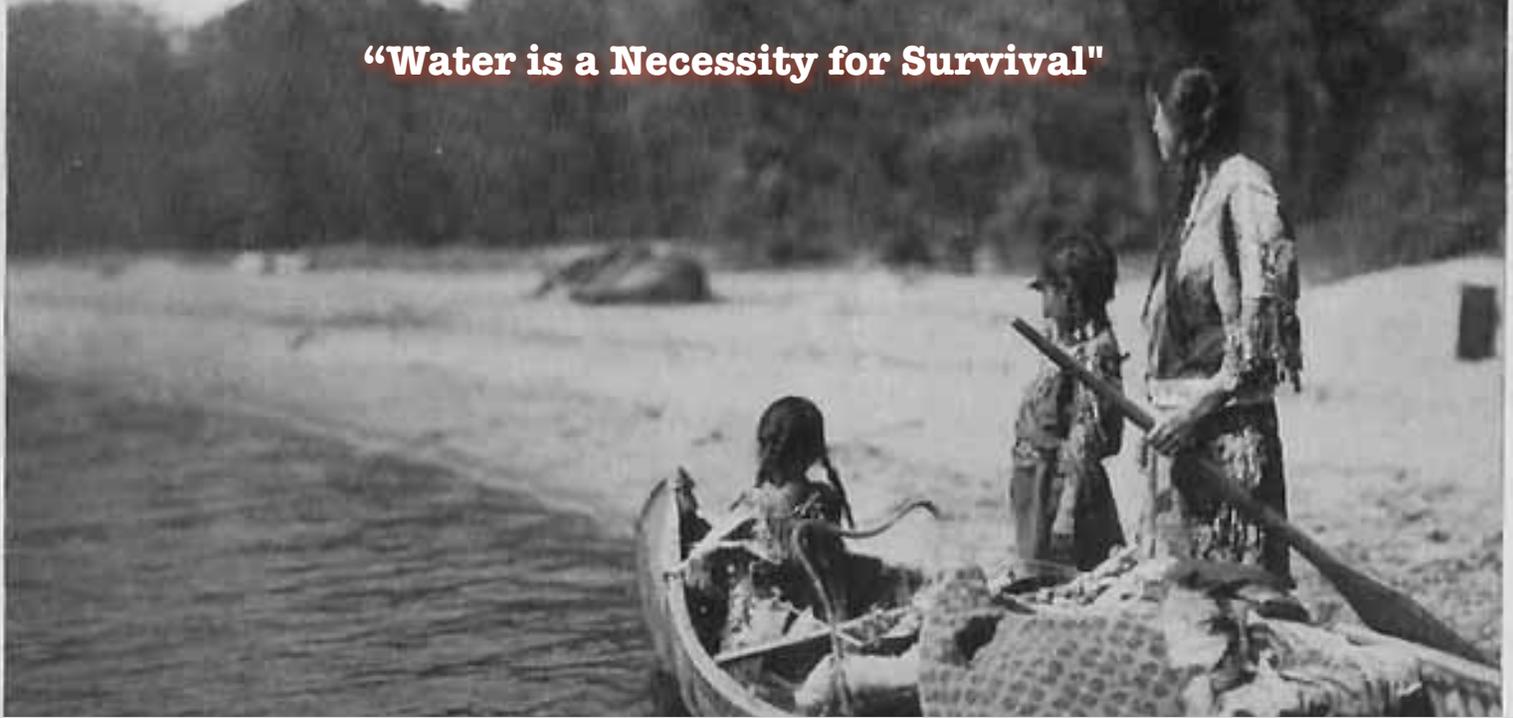


"Water is a Necessity for Survival"



I was raised and have lived at my present address all of my life, (64 years) except for a number of years that I worked in Minneapolis which I returned home most weekends to visit. I moved back permanently in May of 2000. That summer, plus a year, I stayed with my sister on the East end of the village, a half of a mile from here. That was when and where I noticed how close the RDO helicopters came and flew almost within 500 feet from her house. At that time, I did take a picture. That's been 16 years ago and today I can still go outside in the spring/summer months and around 6:30 in the mornings, I can hear them loading up and flying on the north end or wherever they are. I can hear them on the west side later in the afternoons flying. At times, they have been spraying on different days and sometimes every other day and it seems like when it is calm out, no wind blowing, you can smell the chemicals in the air.

We are surrounded on the north, east and west side of the village with the fields that they spray with the helicopters and they all have the water irrigation systems set up. We have three lakes that are within 1/2 to 1 mile of the fields and are the same distance from the village, and those have creeks or river beds

that run through the village going south. One creek runs through the western part of the village and one runs through the center of the village which is starting to flow more east along the main road through the village due to beaver dams. The owner of the land on the south side boundary line of the reservation does not allow anyone to trespass and the beavers keep building up dams.

I have noticed these trees that were planted behind my sister's house. The farmer that owned that quit planting it on regular bases, and he planted many trees. The trees by her house are a lot bigger than the ones that were planted at the same time on the southwest end of that field.

There are many children playing in that river bed on the west side and they are constantly playing outside all summer in the village. I have since developed asthma as well I know my grandniece has and I don't know how many others have. There have been a couple of babies born in this area that have had issues with development, such as lack of brain mass. We have had many members of this community develop cancer and who have passed on. Some of these members are from the younger

generation, in their early 30's. We have about 300 members that live here and every one of them is related to someone that has had cancer or knows someone that did or does.

I have found a couple of dead hawks in my yard. I remember I used to see tons of rabbit tracks around our house. I don't see those anymore.

This past summer I collected rain water for my plants and I have noticed the water has turned to a pinkish color when it settled. I collected it from the runoff from the roof. I do not drink my tap water, although I use it for cooking because it is boiled.

I have studied American Indian History, White Earth History and our Pine Point History. Our ancestors depended on these lakes for fishing and our water for survival and we still do. In the document of the Winters Doctrine; it is clearly stated and acknowledged that water is a necessity for survival. Also, we retained the rights to hunt and fish in the treaties. With the chemicals used in this area, the contamination of our waters is violating these rights along with the health of our people. These are my concerns and experience.

By Evelyn Bellanger