## Lo. manâcihtâwin

"It is critical that we respect the land. If we do not disturb the land and the creatures living on the land, so much good can come of it. For example, it is important that the habitat of the caribou be protected for this animal's survival."

## Tom McDonald, July 23, 2018<sup>1</sup>

 $L_{\Omega} \cap \Delta^{D}$  manâcihtâwin encompasses the principle and related doctrines of respectful relationships between all beings, animate and inanimate. It may be defined as "civility, showing respect to all of creation" (Jobin, 2018).<sup>2</sup> Respect and reciprocity guide the relationship that Cree people hold with the land; natural laws dictate that there are consequences to the treatment of the land which may have an impact on future generations (Makokis 2009).<sup>3</sup> Maintaining a good relationship with the land is considered by many interviewees as being a critical responsibility in order to ensure the survival and continued well-being of their family and the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation as a whole.<sup>4</sup> They understand that the relationship to the land is reciprocal. As explained by a knowledge keeper, if humans treat the land in the right way, in turn the land will provide for humans and uphold their well-being.<sup>5</sup> Lo. C<sup>III</sup>DA<sup>.</sup> manâcihtâwin may also be demonstrated, according to some interviewees, by showing respect toward certain persons such as Elders <sup>6</sup> as well the youth.<sup>7</sup> It may also be shown in the respect and special attention extended to visitors.<sup>8</sup> Another meaning attached to  $Lo \cap DA^{,2}$  manâcihtâwin refers to the caring and attentive manner with which one handles relationships. One Elder explained this interpretation of the principle by comparing it to the gentle and delicate way one handles a newborn baby.<sup>9</sup>

> Living according to the principle of Lo. (IDA) manâcihtâwin entails responsibilities and obligations related to the respect, care and attention toward all of creation. The economic benefits offered to the Nation by resource development are measured against their impact on their territory. Programs aligned

with Lo. (PDA-) manâcihtâwin are being enacted, including a strategy for traditional land use (TLU) in which Elders play an active role in consultation sessions with industry to document and protect traditional lands, waters, animals and their habitats as well as place-names of significance. The establishment of Aseniwuche Environmental Corporation (AEC) in 2011 is an additional step in fulfilling the Nation's obligations. With AEC, the Nation developed a means to be directly involved in controlling the effects of industry by providing services that monitor environmental impacts.<sup>10</sup>

## Endnotes

1 See interview with Tom McDonald, July 23, 2018.

2 Jobin S. (2018). *Nehiyawak narratives: Upholding Indigenous economic relationships.* [Unpublished manuscript]. Faculty of Native Studies, University of Alberta.

3 Makokis, L. (2009). *Leadership teachings from Cree Elders: A grounded theory study.* Lambert Academic.

4 From interviews with Elder Adelaide McDonald, April 24, 2018; Tom McDonald, July 23, 2018; Elder Philomene Moberly, April 26, 2018 and Elder Russell Wanyandie & Carol Wanyandie, April 25, 2018.

5 From interview with Tom McDonald, July 23, 2018.

6 From interview with Elder Mary Delorme, August 24, 2018.

7 From interview with Tom McDonald, July 23, 2018.

8 From interviews with Elder Jane McDonald, July 11, 2018 and Elder Mabel Wanyandie, April 24, 2018.

9 From interview with Elder Jane McDonald, July 11, 2018

10 For more information on Aseniwuche Environmental Corporation (AEC), see <u>www.aecalberta.com</u>.

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