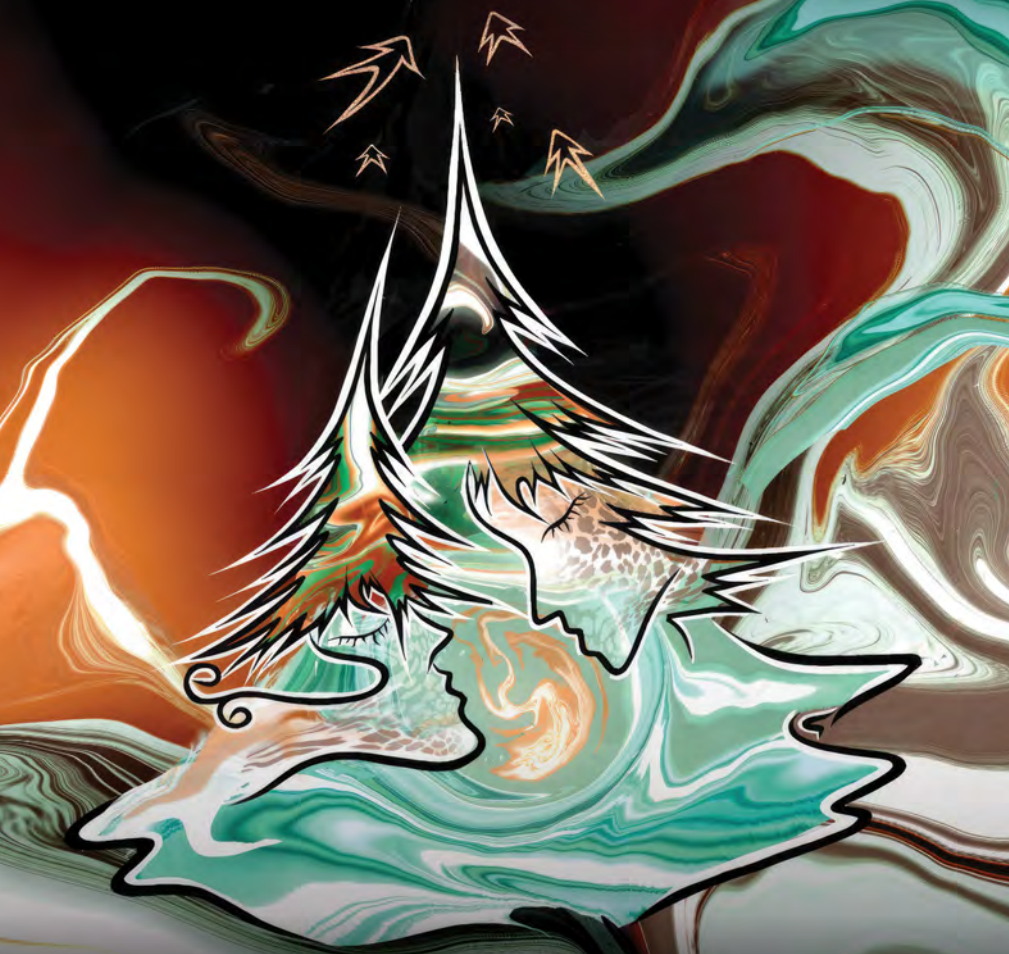


TRUTH BEFORE RECONCILIATION



INDIGENOUS
LAW
AND LEGAL ORDERS

CANADA'S
HISTORY



National Centre for
Truth and Reconciliation
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

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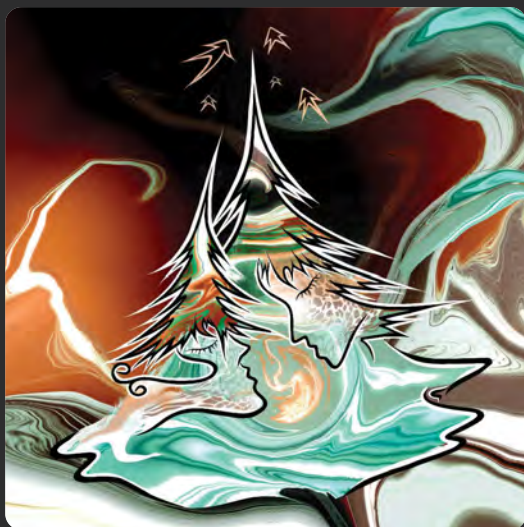
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From a Mi'kmaw Two-Spirit perspective, much of Indigenous law, natural governance and ways of doing and living alongside one another are connected to our relationships to the natural world. Each one of us has a gift, role and responsibility to contribute to the greater good.
—Ceilidh Pitaw, *Illustrator*



Canada is home to many people from all across the world.

But Canada is also a young country. Indigenous Peoples have called these lands and waters home since time immemorial. About 55 Indigenous societies continue to exist here today.

An important question in Canada is how we are all going to live together, not only with each other as people and societies, but also with all of the animals, land, air and water.

In Canada as in many other countries, Truth and Reconciliation Commissions have been used to help promote healing and peace. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada said the goal of reconciliation is to live together in a respectful way, and that Indigenous law and legal orders are an important tool to achieve this.

Law is part of the bigger system of legal orders. It helps resolve problems and prevents them from occurring in the first place.

Law helps all Canadians understand what it means to live together in a community and where to turn and what to do when something goes wrong.

Law is not perfect. It always has promise. And it also has the chance it will fail. People are important in helping law be the best it can be.



MESSAGE FROM THE MATRIARCHS

By Barbara Cameron and Elder Florence Paynter

BOOZHOO ANIIN ...

In our Anishinaabe creation story, Creator lowered four colours of men to the earth and gifted them language, beliefs, traditions and a place to live on earth. Like the gifts given to us, Creator also gave us universal instructions and responsibilities that cannot be given up, denied or taken away.

We have a responsibility not only to the land we live, work and play on but also to live harmoniously with and care for all creation. Creation is not a resource; it is what gives us life and if we destroy creation, we destroy ourselves.

To be accountable to our responsibilities, we must think about ourselves and the relationships we have with our family, friends, community and the world. We must also think of how we relate to the spirit, animal, insect, plant, water and sky worlds.

We wish to share four questions that the Honourable Murray Sinclair, Mazina Giizhik-iban, gave us to think about:

Where do I come from?

Where am I going?

Why am I here?

Who am I?

Exploring these questions can help us better understand who



Elder Florence Paynter

Ozhoshko Binesi Kwe is a fourth-degree Mide Anishinabekwe to Minweyweywigaaan Midewiwin Lodge in Roseau River, Manitoba. She is from Sandy Bay First Nation and a member of Norway House Cree Nation. She is fluent in Anishinaabemowin and is a strong advocate for language and cultural initiatives, generously sharing the spiritual knowledge and traditions of the Anishinaabe people. As a Residential School Survivor, Elder Paynter passionately educates about its history and lasting impact, emphasizing the importance of knowing one's heritage and language for self-pride.



Barbara Cameron

Neegaunibinessikwe Begonegeezhig belongs to the Wolf Clan and is fourth-degree Midewiwin Shk-abehekwe to Minweyweywigaaan Midewiwin Lodge in Roseau River, Manitoba. She is a member of Long Plain First Nation, a well-respected Knowledge Keeper and is a third-generation Indian Residential School Survivor. She remains a fluent Anishinaabemowin speaker despite the challenges faced during Barb's attendance at the Brandon Indian Residential School. She is active in reconnecting, learning, assisting and maintaining the Traditional Knowledges and the practices of Midewiwin ceremonial teachings at the Lodge.

we are and how we relate to the world around us, and help guide us in a direction that is fulfilling and meaningful to us.

We thank our Ancestors, like Mazina Giizhik-iban, who have carried this knowledge and shared it with us. The choice of what to do with the knowledge

in this magazine is now in your hands and we ask that you help share and carry it forward like those who have come before us.

We are hopeful and look to a future where we can all live, work and play in harmony and respect for one another guided by the natural laws given to us by Creator.

WHAT IS LAW?

By Val Napoleon

What do you think about when you think about law?
You might think about a judge, or maybe the police. Maybe
you think about speed limits or laws that say you can't take
something that isn't yours. Those are all pieces of law.
But law is actually a lot bigger than all of that!

All types of laws have some important things in common.

The law includes:

- rules that help people understand how they should act in a fair society.
- the process of talking about, figuring out and applying the rules as a community.
- something that people do together.

Rules are only one part of the picture. Law is all about people!



Inuit kids playing during recess
in Arctic Bay, Nunavut.

Think about how things happen in the schoolyard. How do you and your friends make sure it's fun and safe for everyone?

Are there rules that everyone knows about?

Who decides what the rules are?

How do the new kids learn the rules?

How do you know when there is a problem?

Can you think of a time when there was a problem or someone broke the rules? What did you do to deal with the problem?



Indigenous Peoples' ways of life go back long before the arrival of Europeans and continue today.

LEFT: ISTOCK, CENTRE AND RIGHT: CP IMAGES

When they first came to Canada, British settlers brought their laws with them from England (common law) and French settlers arrived with French (civil law) ideas. Together, these legal orders formed the basis for law in Canada when Canada was first founded.

But there were many

Indigenous societies already here.

These Indigenous societies had laws that applied to their own people, and to other Indigenous Peoples around them. These laws also shaped how Indigenous Peoples approached relationships with the newcomers.

Learning about Indigenous law and legal orders helps us understand how people can live together fairly, making Canada a better place to live for everyone.

A **society** is a group of people who live together in an organized way.

People in a society follow the same laws and often have shared land, languages and histories.

Shared laws are called **legal orders**. Each legal order is made up of the society's law: **norms** (things that are understood to be right or wrong), **principles** (rules and guidelines about how to behave), **actors** (we'll explain), **processes** (the way things work) and **institutions** (organizations that carry out the rules).

Law is all around us!

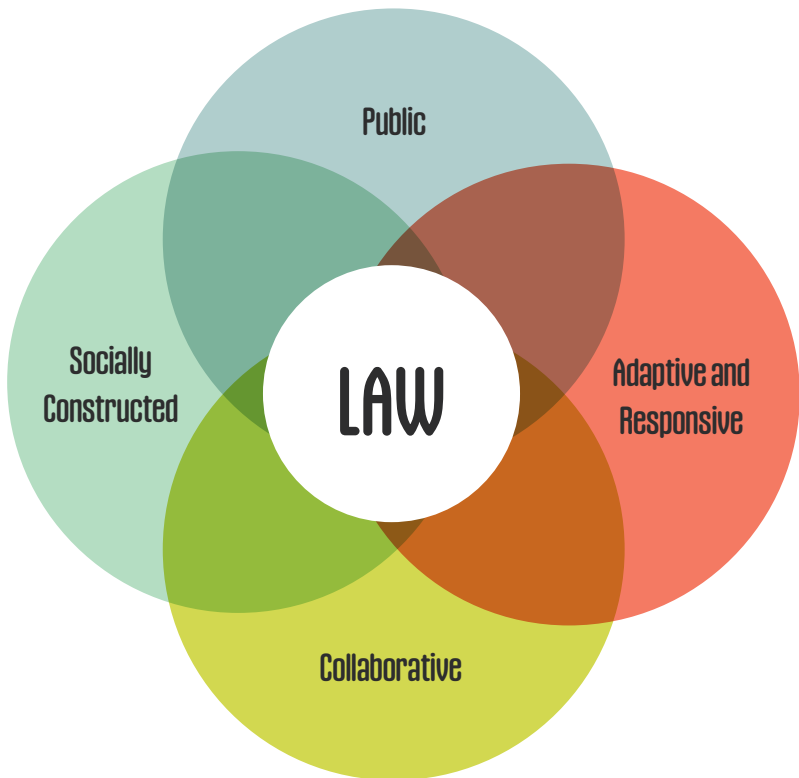
It might not seem like there is law in the schoolyard. But there are actually many layers of law at work all at the same time.

There are rules about how the swings are built, including laws on safety. There are rules about the land the playground is on. Some laws are about the school. Others still are in the ways kids share the space and sort out problems. Some of these laws are written down, and some are not.

Thinking about law allows us to think about how things happen when we come together as people — how we share things and how we deal with problems.

Sometimes things work well. Sometimes things don't work well. Law helps with both.

By now you are probably starting to see that law is a lot more than what we normally think about.



Everyone needs to know the law in order to follow it, use it or challenge it.

People must be able to understand law if they are to live lawfully. Law has to be public to be accepted, meaningful and legal.

This means law cannot be hidden or secret.

Law is public

Ideas of what is right or wrong change over time, so law changes to keep up.

Sometimes we need new ideas to deal with new challenges. The old ideas no longer fit.

Sometimes, societies make unfair laws that hurt certain groups of people. But unjust laws can be changed. And you can be part of that change!

Law is adaptive and responsive

Law is made by groups of people.

How we see the world changes when we learn new things, hear new ideas or meet new people. This can change our understanding of law, too.

Stories and examples from the past help us learn how decisions were made, who made them and the reasons for them.

Law is socially constructed

The law is meant to protect and help everyone.

Sometimes people don't agree about what is right or wrong. That is why people must work together to interpret law — to figure out what it means.

Law is not just a list of rules. Law is about how people share their thoughts, ask questions and solve problems together.

Law is collaborative

WHAT IS INDIGENOUS LAW?

Each Indigenous society has its own law and legal order, as well as languages, histories and lands. These lands are sometimes called a society's historic territories – lands where Indigenous People have lived and continue to live today.

Indigenous law comes from each society's different land, history, language, beliefs and way of life.

Indigenous societies are unique and distinct from one another, just like France is different from Brazil, or Burkina Faso is different from Thailand.

Kwakwaka'wakw law in British Columbia is different from Inuvialuit law in the Northwest Territories. Nêhiyawak (Cree) law is different from Naskapi law.

While some Indigenous societies may have laws that are alike, each society's legal order is distinct.

Indigenous law is diverse, just like Indigenous Peoples are diverse.

Indigenous societies are made up of smaller communities.

The Gitksan society in northwestern British Columbia has six smaller communities: Gitanmaax, Gitwangak, Gitsegukla, Gitanyow, Anspay'axw and Sik-e-dahk.

Anishinaabe society is made up

of many different communities, stretching across the borders of many provinces.

These smaller communities can be distinct from one another, but share the wider land, language, beliefs and ways of life.

We need the right words to talk about something in the right way. Languages help us understand each other, our relationships and how we see the world. Indigenous languages give Indigenous societies the best ways to express themselves. This is why it is so important that Indigenous languages are seen, heard and spoken in Canada.

Different Indigenous societies have

different names for their law in their own language.

The Gitksan use the word **ayook**, which means law, custom or precedent (past decisions or actions).

The Hul'qumi'num Mustimuhw is a smaller community from the Coast Salish society farther south in British Columbia. Its members use **snuw'uyulh** to refer to their law. It means "our way of life" or "our way of being on Mother Earth".



The United Nations said 2022 to 2032 is the Decade of Indigenous Languages.

There are more than 4,000 Indigenous languages spoken in the world — more than 70 in Canada.

Try to use the word for “law” that each Indigenous group uses in their language. This shows respect for how each Indigenous society’s law is unique. Even though they are different, each legal order still has to do the work of law — helping people live together and solving problems when they happen.



Inuvik Delta Dancers and Drummers, 1991



Nisga'a Nation festival, Vancouver, 2018

Indigenous legal orders are made up of:

Principles:
guide people how to act and live based on their society's values.

Legal processes:
help people decide who should make decisions and what steps must be followed for a fair outcome. Legal processes must include people in discussing, understanding, questioning and solving problems using law.

Indigenous law:
helps societies organize themselves, solve problems and live together as a community.

Norms:
qualities the society believes are good or important, such as kindness, respect or honesty.

Rules:
tell people what is okay to do based on the society's principles.

Legal actors:
the people who help make, interpret, understand and apply the law. In many Indigenous societies, everyone is a legal actor, because everyone helps carry out the law in everyday life.

If Canada is to transform its relationship with Indigenous peoples, Canadians must understand and respect First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples own concepts of reconciliation. Many of these concepts are found in Indigenous law.

- *The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Volume 6*

Not all law is Indigenous law.

Indigenous laws and legal orders have been around since long before Canada existed. Early settlers and the Canadian government have tried to ignore and erase Indigenous law.

Residential Schools were one of the ways Canada tried to erase Indigenous laws. By creating Residential Schools and forcing children to attend them, Canada tried to take culture, language and identity away from Indigenous children. These things are the very foundations of Indigenous law.

Though Residential Schools focused on children, the real goal was to attack Indigenous ways of life, including Indigenous laws and legal orders.

Indigenous societies were forced to live under and with Canadian laws and systems that did not match their norms, principles, legal processes, legal actors and law. As a result, many Indigenous societies have not been able to live according to their laws and legal orders, either inside of their societies and in their relationships with Canada as a whole.

Aboriginal law *refers to Canadian laws that deal with Indigenous people.* Aboriginal law is **not** Indigenous law. Aboriginal law explains how Canada's laws apply to Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous law *comes from Indigenous Peoples themselves* and is based on their own culture, values, histories, principles and ways of living.

Because Indigenous law is based on Indigenous societies' norms, principles and ways of living, it can have a different approach than Aboriginal law and Canadian law. It is about much more than rules.

Indigenous law is important

because it teaches us how to take care of each other and everything else – the land, water and all living creatures around us. These teachings come from the people who have lived on this land the longest and know it best.

For a very long time, Indigenous People were not allowed to help make Canadian law. Under the *Indian Act*, First Nations people could not vote until 1960, and Inuit until 1962. Louis Riel, the Métis leader, was elected to federal office but was never able to take his seat in Parliament in Ottawa.

Because Canada did not include Indigenous Peoples when Canada's laws were being written, much of Canadian law cannot properly help

Indigenous Peoples.

For Indigenous societies to care for their people, lands, air and waters in the best way, they need to be able to use their own law and legal orders.

Making sure there is space for Indigenous law is important to create respectful relationships. That is why the Truth and Reconciliation Commission said law schools must teach more about Indigenous law in Canada.

We call upon law schools in Canada to require all law students to take a course in Indigenous people and the law, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations.

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Call to Action 28



Provisional Government
of the Métis Nation,
Red River, 1870.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

Because societies have different histories, beliefs and ideas, they will also have different ways of thinking about fairness, legal processes, legal actors, principles and rules.

That means that sources of law differ for each society. Where the law comes from is known as a source of law.

John Borrows, an Indigenous law teacher, says there are five main sources of Indigenous law. A source of law can also be called an authority — something that gives law meaning and weight. At any time, there may be one or more authorities helping give direction on what to do.

Sacred Law – from Indigenous societies' creation stories and spiritual beliefs that have been passed down over the years

Natural Law – lessons people learn by watching how humans, animals and the natural world work together

Deliberative Law – from people talking together, challenging each other, sharing ideas and making decisions as a group

Positivistic Law – the rules, teachings, codes and proclamations that all people have heard and agree to follow

Customary Law – based on traditions, patterns and the intentional ways things have been done over time in the community

Knowing where the law comes from helps people understand, follow and use the law.

These Indigenous legal experts pictured below identify many sources and authorities for Indigenous law and legal orders, as well as the legal resources you'll see on the next two pages.



Val Napoleon,
University of Victoria



John Borrows,
University of Toronto



Andrée Boisselle,
York University



Matthew Fletcher,
University of Michigan





WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS LAW

In 2020, the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation were concerned about the health of the caribou and whether the animals would survive. They made a special plan to help protect the caribou.

The project leaders believed it was important to talk to people from the Nation. Elders and others were asked about how they should take care of the caribou while still allowing their people to hunt for them – something very important to their culture.

After many discussions, they came up with a plan grounded in Dene law. It is called Yúnethé Xá ʔetthên Hádı (caribou stewardship plan).

-Ní chu K'ech'ą́ dı chu besú dı
(we respect the land and animals)

-Etthên hurétth'ą (the caribou are listening to us)

-Nuwé yakı begháre ʔeghádalıdá
(we have our own laws that we must follow)

-Nuwé ch'anié beréldı xá ʔą (we must pass on the teachings)



The base of this totem pole in Washington State depicts a Coast Salish child peeping out of a clam. Coast Salish society exists on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border – evidence of how Indigenous peoples lived differently in times before colonial borders were created.

Coast Salish people believe it is wrong to be greedy. They **value** only using what you need and making sure there's enough for everyone. Based on these **norms**, the Coast Salish people have a **principle** of sharing their resources.

In the Coast Salish legal order, some places for fishing and gathering food are shared by the community, while others belong to certain families. Children are taught by their relatives which places their family is responsible for and how to take care of the land, animals and plants.

Coast Salish law guided people in understanding how to care for the world around them so that they had enough food and resources. This included **rules** that stopped people from being greedy and taking too much for themselves. For example, elder women would

teach their families to only collect fully grown clams. By letting the baby clams grow, there would always be enough clams for food in the future. Here, elder women, family members and children all act as **legal actors** to carry out Coast Salish law on protecting the land and not taking too much.

Even though there are rules about who can use a fishing or gathering place, the principle of sharing means that others could ask to use these places too.

If a visitor wants to use that place, they have to follow a **legal process** to ask for permission. Usually, visitors must give a gift or make a trade.

If the family says yes, the visitor must follow the family's rules for fishing and gathering on their land.



Residential School survivor Barney Williams Jr. leads a song after accepting the ashes of the Sacred Fire at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Quebec National Event in Montreal, 2013.

In Canadian law, lawyers and judges use past legal cases to make new arguments and come to new decisions. Indigenous law also uses stories. We always need lots of stories or cases to help us make good decisions. One is never enough.

By asking questions of the stories,

we can learn how people in the past thought about the problems and how they worked to solve them. When we draw on past stories or cases, they help solve the current problem or conflict by telling us what people have done before.

Here are some questions to ask of a story to help it teach you.

What is the main human **problem** that the story focuses on?

What **facts** matter?

What is **decided** or how is the issue **resolved**?

What is the **reason** behind the decision? Is there an explanation in the story? If so, is it said? Unsaid?

Your head might be spinning thinking about law in a different way. That's okay! Thinking about law is about seeing the world around us through a different lens.

Part of seeing law in the world around us involves using the tools we have talked about — thinking about sources and authorities,

problems, reasons, decisions, facts. It can be fun when you start seeing the patterns emerge — kind of like seeing the world through new eyes.

As you read the story “**Summer in a Bag**” on the next page, think about what the problem was, the facts, the decision and the reason.



Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth event, 2024.



Elder Claudette Commanda of Kitigan Zibi in Quebec, 2024.



The Muskrat Singers of Sitisansk, New Brunswick, 2023.



Luke Amittu and Peter Alareak perform an Inuit drum dance, 2024.

This story is about humans facing challenges in the world around them. It is also about working together and about deciding what to do. And you guessed it! That means we can learn about law when reading it.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
CP IMAGES, COURTESY OF THE
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION,
CP IMAGES



Summer in a Bag

When the world was new, the winters were much colder than they are now. You used to be able to hear the trees cracking and splitting in the icy air. One year in the Deh Cho Valley, the land was just beginning to thaw after a long, hard winter. Then, all of a sudden, snow began to fall and winter started again. There was no summer that year.

People began to worry about not having a summer. The snow was deep in the bush, and even the caribou and moose were having a hard time getting around. They could easily be hunted in the deep snow, but the Elders cautioned against taking advantage of the situation. They said, "We will need them, so we should save them for the future." The animals began to starve, and people collected white moss, willow tops and dried grasses for them. It seemed no one would make it through the winter.

Finally, a big meeting was called for humans and animals to look into the unusual weather. One of the leaders said, "We found out that a southern group has stolen our spring and taken it south, so we have been left with double winters. We will look into whether there is any way we can get around them and get our spring back."

After much thinking and talking, the group decided that Squirrel and some other helpers should travel south to steal back the spring. After many days, Squirrel and the others returned, pulling a huge bag. Everyone met again to conduct a ceremony to help springtime return to the land. After much singing, Squirrel chewed a hole in the bag and whoosh! Out came the warm air. Spring and the green season had returned.

Everyone thanked Squirrel for stealing spring back.

ISTOCK

**“Summer in a Bag” is about a problem:
How was a group of people living together
to respond to a hard winter?**

Some of the facts they had to deal with were:

- One year there was no spring, and the people had a double winter.
- People began to worry about not having a summer. The snow was deep and even tall animals like the caribou and moose were having a hard time getting around. They would have been easy to hunt had humans chosen to.
- The animals began to starve and the people were worried they could starve too. The Elders warned against taking advantage of the animals affected by the weather, and when the animals began to starve, the people collected food for them (moss, willows and dried grasses).
- The leaders also investigated and discovered that spring had been stolen by a southern group.

When they found out what caused the difficulties, the people and animals called a public meeting to talk and listen to one another. They decided that Squirrel and several others would go south and steal spring back — Squirrel was best placed to help everyone. This was the decision made.

Squirrel and the others brought spring back in a bag. The community conducted a ceremony, then Squirrel ate a hole in the bag, releasing the spring. Everyone thanked Squirrel.

The Elders and the animals worked together for an important reason. They knew it was wrong to take advantage of vulnerable animals, even if it seemed like they had to in order to stay alive. The humans helped the animals survive because they needed them for their futures: “We will need them, so we should save them for the future.” The people and animals talked about the problem in a big meeting because it was an issue that affected them all and everyone needed to be part of the solution.

MOVING FORWARD

When human beings live together, things sometimes work well and sometimes don't. There are times when things are kind of in the middle, too. This happens among people, but also among societies and groups of people as well. Problems and conflicts are a part of living. That is why we need to have laws.

We also have challenges living with the planet itself. With climate change and other changes in our environment, we humans need to

think carefully about how to live with the Earth, and with all of the animals, plants, waters and air that make up this amazing place called Earth.

The story "Summer in a Bag" can help us think about law and lessons that come from using law to think about the world.

For example, by looking carefully at this story, we can understand a lot about the laws the people chose to live by. We can also learn that this story might be useful today in addressing a challenge.

All legal problem-solving requires us to be thinkers and to be creative. What creative solutions can you imagine?

TRY IT OUT FOR YOURSELF

Imagine the following situation:

The water level of a river is getting really low in the summer, which is placing stress on the fish in the river. The fish need a place to live.

Eagles and osprey really like to eat those fish.

People also like to go boating and swimming on that river.

A nearby company also needs the river's water to power their machines.

The river also would like to be a river and flow normally to the sea.

What questions need to be asked to address these challenges?

Who is right?

How does “Summer in a Bag” help teach us about different ways to think about all the needs and ideas about the river? How do you think about that situation?

What have you learned that might help you think about what should happen for the river and all the things that rely on it?

This is a real example that is happening right now in the historic territories of the Quw'utsun (Cowichan) people on Vancouver Island. What can you learn about them and their approaches to how they might address these challenges?

VALERIE PAYNE

Cowichan River, Vancouver Island

One important thing to remember is that law is not static!

It doesn't stay the same.

Each generation has new problems to face — new challenges to tackle.

Every generation has to bring law forward into the world today, and tomorrow.

Think about the law that is now needed to deal with artificial intelligence. Or the laws dealing with drones or electric bikes.

These are new things for all of society just as they are new for Indigenous societies.

These new challenges and opportunities need to be thought through carefully — and lawfully.



This artwork by Naia Kuljis was entered in the 2025 Imagine a Canada program. Visit the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's website to find out how you can participate.

Law is necessary to protect communities and individuals from the harmful actions of others. When such harm occurs within Aboriginal communities, Indigenous law is needed to censure and correct citizens when they depart from what the community defines as being acceptable. Any failure to recognize First Nations, Inuit, and Métis law would be a failure to affirm that Aboriginal peoples, like all other peoples, need the power of law to effectively deal with the challenges they face.

- *The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Volume 6*

We call on all governments in Canada to respect Aboriginal justice systems, Aboriginal rights, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- *Spirit Bear's Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action 42*

Law is essential to finding truth. It is a necessary part of realizing reconciliation.

- *The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Volume 6*

Looking to the future

There is room in the world for lots of ways of thinking. There are lots of ways to learn about law and lots of ways to reach agreements to manage our conflicts and problems.

We need to talk to one another. To

have conversations, we need to learn to hear other people. When we don't do this, we jump to conclusions. We can fall into the bad habit of polarized thinking — a trap where we can only see two things: this or that.

Examples of polarized thinking (also called dichotomous thinking):

- If you are not with me, you are against me.
- I am a complete success or total failure.
- If I am not the best, I am the worst.

The world is way more complicated than simple answers. There is lots of space and middle ground with many shades of grey. There are many variations of thinking and seeing and doing.

Don't look for easy answers. Instead, try to understand how other people see things.

How do they understand something differently than you do, and why?

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION



Imagine a Canada youth leadership training day,
Turtle Lodge, Manitoba, 2018.

**We need more people in the world who can listen, think,
ask questions and solve problems!**

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Ry Moran is a proud member of the Red River Métis. Currently the Associate University Librarian — Reconciliation at the University of Victoria, Ry was the founding Director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. Previously he served with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



Ceilidh Pitaw is a Two-Spirit Mi'kmaw artist raised between Wagmatcook First Nation and Ottawa. They work with pen and ink, digital illustration, painting, storytelling and cultural education. Ceilidh's visual art explores themes of land relationships, Mi'kmaq cosmology, Two-Spirit identity and intergenerational care. They see their art and poetry as "vessels for storytelling and cultural reclamation."



Val Napoleon is a professor in the Faculty of Law at the University of Victoria, and the Law Foundation Chair of Indigenous Justice and Governance. She is the co-founder of the JD/JID dual degree program in Indigenous legal orders and Canadian common law, the founding director of the Indigenous Law Research Unit and former Acting Dean of Law. She is Cree from Saulteau First Nation and an adopted member of the Gitanyow (northern Gitksan).



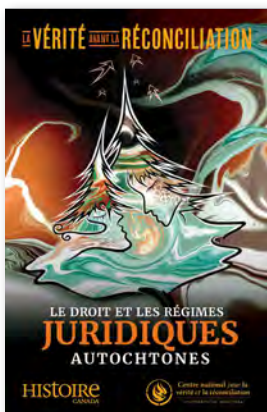
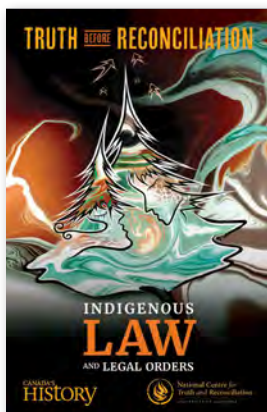
Lana Lowe is Dene from the Fort Nelson First Nation with over 20 years of experience working with Indigenous organizations and communities. She holds a master's degree in Indigenous Governance and is a PhD candidate at the University of Victoria's Faculty of Law, focusing on revitalizing Dene laws for land and water governance. Lana is committed to advancing Indigenous self-determination through the rebuilding of Indigenous legal orders.



Noémie Foley is a fourth-year law student in the joint program in the JD/JID program at the University of Victoria. Noémie is primarily of French and Irish ancestry and was born and raised on Treaty 7 territory. Noémie has a Bachelor of Arts in International Indigenous Studies from the University of Calgary.



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**“Human beings are allowed to talk
about the things that hurt them.
Your heart has many messages
and it’s time to open up and be the
person you want to be. Let’s find
those good ways of living together.”**

***-John Jones (Tseqalmit), Member of the
NCTR Survivors Circle***

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