

**ašiihkiwi neehi kiišikwi: A MULTI-GENERATIONAL, CULTURALLY-EMBEDDED EARTH AND SKY CURRICULUM FOR THE MYAAMIKI.**

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**Introduction:** Meteoritics and planetary science outreach to native communities is often hampered by the perceived incompatibility of science and traditional ways of knowing embodied in culture [1]. Yet, both scientists and native communities share place as a central interest. Geologic observations on planets are interpreted in the context of processes deciphered from Earth, while indigenous communities have embedded in their cultures and languages viewpoints forged from a strong sense of place [2].

As a citizen of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, my work has focused on the myaamiaki, a Central Algonquian speaking people historically centered along the upper Wabash River near modern Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Forced removal in 1846 took the Tribe west to Kansas, with a subsequent removal in the 1870's to the northeast corner of Indian Territory, which became Oklahoma.. Language loss through the 1950's ultimately caused our language to become a "sleeping" language. Current efforts are focused on cultural and language revitalization.

Over the past 4 years, a group of Tribal linguists, cultural preservationists, artists, scientists and engineers has developed a multi-generational curriculum on Earth and Sky embedded within the culture of the myaamiaki. Designed as a printed booklet, it will be available on the web and supplemented by an interactive map, glossary with sound clips, comparison to national science standards, and directions and modules for a myaamia version of the Stellarium planetarium program.

**For our youngest citizens:** Stories – particularly winter stories – are important for many native communities. We have written and illustrated three stories (*ahkwaniswa neehi anikwa* (Young Girl and Squirrel); *peepicinehkia neehi ahsena* (Mole and Rock); *waawaahsamwa neehi kiilhsa* (Firefly and Moon)) centered on concepts of awareness, earth, and sky, respectively. In each, we use myaamia terms for the main characters to encourage language use.

**For school-aged children:** Connection to place comes not from reading, but from experiencing your connection to your place. We have designed 11 activities, including exploring your place on foot, collecting rocks, exploring how the Sun marks direction and time, how the Moon marks the month and year, how ecological changes are recorded in our perception of time, to drawing and writing about your place.

**For teenagers to elders:** Places have overlapping histories, ranging from their formation long ago to the histories of the people who inhabit places today. For adults, we look at the geologic and cultural stories of nine places in the homelands of the myaamiaki, ranging from how glaciers sculpted the rivers that became the traditional homeland of our people to how lead and zinc mines in Oklahoma continue to alter our lives.

**A multi-generational approach:** Our language and cultural revitalization efforts have focused on the home, where inter-generational knowledge transfer occurs. Our curriculum is designed to both engage the entire family, from young children to elders, and to grow with the individual throughout his or her life.

**References:** [1] Cajete G. (2000) *Native Science*. Clear Light Publishers. [2] Basso K.H. (1996) *Wisdom Sits in Places*. Univ. of New Mexico Press.