

Transcript of Interview with Will Landon

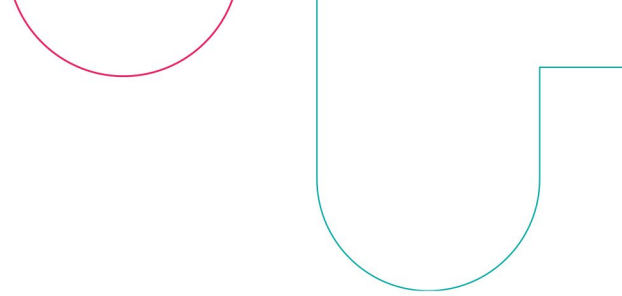
[00:07]

[Greeting in traditional language]. Hello. My name is Standing White Bear. I come from the Lynx Clan, and I'm from Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation, located on the northern shores of Lake of the Woods. And I am the youth representative of the PLT Collaborative, although not as young anymore as when I started. So how do I view the collaborative? As my parents. I'm their son. No, I'm just kidding. I really feel like, when I say that I make a joke, but what I really want to make a point of, that of how expansive and how intensive and how substantive the work that we've been able to endeavour upon in terms of incorporating that Indigenous knowledge into practices, we've almost become the relationship I think that our ancestors had envisioned our two peoples are always supposed to be, and that's settlers and Indigenous people, and it's almost as if we became a family, and how much we cared about each other, how much we learned about one another throughout this whole entire process. That almost the work itself is secondary to what came out of it in terms of the personal relationships that we all have now.

[01:40]

I feel that my perspective and the perspective that I've always been taught about why youth are important to this role is because of the teaching I was given, is that when we're born, and the younger we are, the closer to Creator we are. When we're old and getting older and getting ready to transition to the next part of our life cycle, which is the spirit world, that's when we're as close to Creator as we can be as well. But as we get into this middle adult part, our vision is narrowed. So that's why we need these youth perspectives. That's why we need these Elder perspectives, because they have the wider lens. For young people, it's the fire, it's all their hopes, you know, all their dreams and all the visions that they want moving forward. For the Elders, I've always seen it as the wisdom to be able to guide that vision. So here's how it does. And obviously, for the middle ground, it's doing the actual work that was done. And to me, everything that has come out of this work and all the things that I've read, it's really going to change, I think, it's going to be a staple and an example of how people need to engage with each other moving forward, particularly Indigenous people and institutions and laws and non-Indigenous institutions and people and laws. So to me that's what's been really impactful for me watching. I think the value that really needs to be taken out of all of this is that each and every single one of us had something to contribute, that we all had knowledge in some aspect or another, whether it be lived experience, whether we were doctors, whether we, you know, had been through similar work before, all of that was valued into building what we have, you know, today.

[03:56]



And I think that's what needs to carry on, and one of the greatest examples that needs to be taken. I don't think that people can necessarily come into this and examine the PLT Collaborative and replicate it. There was a lot of speed bumps that we had to come over. This took a long period of time for us to get to where we are and each person or each institution or whatever have you that embarks on this journey, the only thing that they should be thinking about, is are they prepared to take the same amount of time that we did, but that they have to take their own approach as each institution, each people, each region is going to have their own unique relations or ideas or what needs to happen moving forward. I am very honoured and very privileged to have gotten to know everybody on the PLT Collaborative, from everybody on the staff to the representatives to the experts to the knowledge holders.

[05:16]

You know, as a young person, I just took what was there. Some meetings, I just felt like a fly on the wall. But I never felt that way. I always felt valued. And to everybody that watches this, if you have young— if you want to bring young people into your group, into your circle and you want their voice, you have to make them always feel valued and appreciated and know that they're not just there to provide the voice. They're also there to learn from you. And throughout this process, I have learned so, so much, and I wouldn't be the person I am today without this experience that I was very, very, very blessed to have. So that, miigwech.