

Besser Museum of Northeast Michigan

NIMKII WIIKWEDONG

Anishinaabe Exhibit - Introduction (with disclaimer)

Miigwech Biindege'e Maampii
Thank you for being here.

Welcome to Nimkii Wiikwedong (Thunder Bay). This space will provide an immersive experience taking you through the rich culture that occupies this land. It is important to note that the information, teachings, and displays you see here are those that have been guided by an Anishinaabe Advisory Council, artists, and Elders of this region. You may see these stories told in different ways, in other places. This is okay. As we seek to tell the Anishinaabe story in this region, we do so in a way that acknowledges that there are other versions of this story across Mackinac Mnising (Turtle Island).

Introduction to Nimkii Wiikwedong (Thunder Bay)

The Anishinaabek (Ojibwe, Odawa, Bodewadami) formed the three fires. (Need more information here-could we ask an Elder(s) about this?)

The Anishinaabek utilized this area called Nimkii Wiikwedong (Thunder Bay) since time immemorial. Named for its incredible abundance of niibi (water), this region drew many families, clans and communities to gather here to use the gifts provided by Shkaakamakwe (Mother Earth). This region brought many storms which were thought to have significance and power - hence Nimkii Wiikwedong.

Over the course of generations, families moved in and out of the region for various reasons. Some families stayed and others traveled away but would return seasonally, as you will see throughout this exhibit.

Importance of Water:

Niibi (water) is a life giving force. Indigenous peoples from all over the world recognize the importance of water in Creation. Niibi is a living body, a relative.

In Anishinaabe culture women are seen as protectors of Niibi, as they have the special connection of the ability to create and give life. During the creation of life in women, binoojiinhs (babies) are suspended in water allowing that innate connection to Niibi.

Water has the ability to heal. Research has shown that being around water, even hearing water sounds, results in decreased levels of stress hormone in individuals.

Gichi gamig miizhinangwaa mino miijim da minobimaadiziiyang. The lake gives us the good life and good food.

It is known that for this reason, Anishnaabeg traveled to this region to appreciate the gifts of food and life that Mother Earth provided.