

Protecting the Water *Who are the Water Walkers?*

Biinaagami

The title of this Giant Floor Map was chosen with great intention.

The name Biinaagami was gifted by Elder Barbara Nolan of Garden River First Nation and Elder/Gezit Donna Debassige of Anishinabek Nation, both water protectors. In Anishinaabemowin, the language of the Anishinaabek Peoples, Biinaagami can be interpreted as “clean water.” Biinad means something is clean, while aagami comes from another part of a word referring to the state of a liquid. “When it’s clear,” explains Nolan, “it’s Biinaagami.”

Biinaagami was chosen for the map to highlight our shared responsibility to the Great Lakes, one of the largest groups of lakes on Earth containing 21% of the world’s most accessible fresh water. The Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island (North America) recognize that water is a sacred gift that sustains and connects all forms of life — without clean water, all life will perish. No matter where we call home, we all have a role to play in protecting the health of the planet’s water systems from pollution, drought and waste, including the smallest of rivers all the way up to the greatest of the Great Lakes.