

MACKINAC ISLAND LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Mackinac Island (Michilimackinac – land of the Great Turtle) has long been a significant and sacred place for the Anishinabek or people of the Three Fires – Ojibway, Odawa and Pottawattamie.

It was an important summer gathering place where they came to fish the Straits of Mackinac for plentiful lake trout and whitefish.

Oral traditions regarding the island tell of a multitude of spirits living on the island, coming down from the skies and living in the waters around and under the island. Special gifts, bestowed by spirits, onto the Anishinaabe, such as obtaining the knowledge of producing fishing nets, relates back to Mackinac Island. Even the creation of the island itself relates to the beginning of the creation of the Anishinaabe world.

Historians have long reported that the Anishinaabek believed that Michilimackinac Island is the place where creation happened. The island looks like a giant turtle floating on the water, the same turtle that promised to bear the weight of the world upon its back when Nenabozhoo re-created the world after the great flood. Michilimackinac translates into “Great Turtle” in the Anishinaabe language.

Today we acknowledge and thank the Ojibway, Odawa and Pottawattami for this land that is providing a place for us to share our knowledge, create and gather upon this most beautiful summer place.