

## **Update on Mashkiigaki / former Timber Shores Restoration Efforts**

### **Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians**

*Natural Resources Department – Restoration Section*

---

Mashkiigaki, which roughly translates to “place of marshlands and medicines,” is a place of immense cultural and ecological importance that was re-acquired by the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians in 2024 after decades of private ownership and use as the former Timber Shores commercial RV park. A strategic partnership between the GTB and a local non-profit, New Community Vision, combined federal grant funding from NOAA and community donations to purchase the title to the land and deed it to the GTB.

GTB Natural Resources staff have been engaged in community outreach efforts to understand the diverse visions and priorities of the GTB community as the Tribe re-establishes a relationship with this 188-acres of land – including community surveying, outreach at events, the formation of a Tribal Youth Advisory Council, and plans for a facilitated winter engagement series within the Tribal community. “Reconnecting with this land is an opportunity for our people to have a voice, and to safely and peacefully exercise our rights and practice our traditional lifeways,” says Brian NaPont, Director of the GTB Natural Resources Department.

A recent Community Potluck and Beach Night event brought together 130 people at Mashkiigaki. The event was collaboratively hosted by the Niizh Animikiig Program, the GTB Communications Department, Natural Resources Department, and Youth Services Department. The event served as a pre-Powwow gathering and celebration of the land’s return to GTB.

Efforts to assess the landscape of Mashkiigaki and inform future restoration actions are also underway; the Northwest Michigan Invasive Species Network completed a survey of the property and the properties of numerous adjacent landowners in July. Additionally, a recent Request for Proposals by the Restoration section of the GTB Natural Resources Department solicited engineering firms to conduct a formal hydrologic assessment of Mashkiigaki and forensic investigation of the historic alignment of Ennis Creek, as well as preliminary designs for removing and/or remediating eight road-stream crossings that intersect the creek. Confirmation and announcement of the selected firm is forthcoming.