

Grand River Water Walk Protocols

Please read these pages carefully before participating.

The Grand River Water Walk will take place September 20-25, 2026 in leap-frog fashion. Cars will be used along the route to help support the walkers. Each day, the walk begins before 4:00 a.m. with an opening ceremony. Once the walking begins, a copper pail of water and "Little Boy" eagle feather staff are carried by a pair of core walkers for approximately 300 to 500 metres. Once they reach this distance, they pass the pail and staff to another pair of walkers (who are waiting by a car), then drive the waiting vehicle ahead and wait for their turn to carry the pail and staff again. In this fashion, the water and walkers flow continuously. At the end of each day, there is a "touchdown" ceremony.

CORE WALKERS made a commitment to the walk earlier this year. Their food and accommodations are provided so that they can focus their attention on the many days of the ceremony. The core walkers carry the pail and staff during the water walk.

COMMUNITY WALKERS who join the walk are welcome to take part in morning and afternoon ceremonies and to walk behind the core walkers throughout the day.

Interested in learning more? Attend our virtual meeting for Community Walkers in September (date TBD). Contact grandriverwaterwalk@gmail.com to register.

Respect the Water Walk's Anishinaabe protocols:

- Long skirts or pants and shirts with sleeves are worn during the water walk.
- Drugs and alcohol are not permitted.
- Each person carries Asemaa (tobacco) to offer to any flowing streams or rivers they cross.
- Asemaa is also laid down for any dead animals or birds.
- Women on their moon-time (menstruating) are asked to pray for the water from home, as they are already in ceremony.
- Men carry the eagle feather staff, but if there are no males in attendance, women may carry the staff.
- Always respect the territory we are traveling through.
- Remember why you are here. This walk is about Nibi (the water).

Questions? Contact grandriverwaterwalk@gmail.com or locate a SCOUT vehicle.

Instructions for Community Walkers:

Interested in learning more? [Attend our virtual meeting for Community Walkers on September 8 at 7:00 p.m.](#) Contact grandriverwaterwalk@gmail.com to register.

- If you are joining the walk after we have started for the day, check [SPOT GPS](#) for our location.
- Please do not attend if you are menstruating, as you are already in ceremony.
- Bring a tobacco offering tied in a small square of red cloth. You will also need a small pouch of tobacco.
- Wear a reflective vest or clothing and pack snacks, lunch and drinking water.
- Everyone is welcome at the community feast following touchdown. Bring some food for yourself and a feast bundle (reusable plate, bowl, cutlery, cup).
- Ensure that you have a full tank of gas. You are responsible for your gas costs.
- **When you arrive for the day, please go directly to the Grandmother Van** to offer your tobacco. You will need to smudge and **wait for further instructions**.
- You will walk behind the core walkers and in front of the grandmother van.
- Be cautious, safety always comes first. First aid is available from the Scouts.
- Walk on the outside of the white line closest to the shoulder.
- If you bring children, keep them close to your side and away from the road.
- Keep the pace and stay with the group at all times.
- You must team up with another community walker to move in leap-frog fashion. This means taking turns walking and driving one car, then returning to pick up the second car at day's end.
- Always park on the left side of the road. Do not turn on four-way flashers. Core walker cars park on the right side of the road.
- Do not stop in the middle of the highway for any reason — pull over if needed.
- Community walkers that choose to walk over several days must arrange their own accommodation.
- Carry what you learn from Nibi and the All Nations Grand River Water Walk to your community.

[Nga Zhichige Nibi Onji — I will do it for the water.](#)

Instructions for Core Walkers:

- Please bring Aseema (tobacco) for the water, a reusable water bottle and feast bundle (plate, bowl, cutlery, cup).
- You are welcome to wear ceremonial regalia.
- Safety always comes first. We will provide a reflective safety vest to wear during the walk. First aid and drinking water are available from the Scouts.
- Women on moon-time must not carry the pail or the "Little Boy" Staff.
- Be ready and prepared when Nibi and the Staff come to you.
- Nibi is handed off first. Pass the Staff and Nibi in FRONT of the vehicle.
- When carrying Nibi, keep looking forward, don't stop walking, and don't turn your head to look behind. If something is dropped, the Staff Carrier can pick it up.
- Staff Carriers: You are the eyes and ears for the walkers and the water.
- Staff Carriers: Offer Aseema when you walk by rivers or streams and when you walk by a dead animal/bird.
- Core walkers park on the right side of the road.
Community walkers park on the left side.
- Always park at the front of the line-up and keep your vehicle placed in rotation.
- Do not park in the middle of curves, bridges, or hills, even if it means a slightly longer walk.
- Turn the vehicle's hazard lights on while parked. Before moving, put on your seat belt, turn off the hazards, and use the turn signal.
- Do not stop in the middle of the highway to talk — pull over if needed.
- You are welcome to take breaks, but please check to see that enough core walkers remain.
- If you must leave the rotation for longer than a bathroom break, use your own vehicle (not someone else's).
- Be respectful of other people's belongings and vehicles. Always smoke outside, not in the vehicles.
- If food/snacks are out, they are shareable. If you don't want others to eat something, please put it away.
- Keep track of your belongings and return any that you find.
- Carry what you learn from Nibi to your community.

Gchi'miigwech for your beautiful work for Nibi.