

Grand River Water Walk – How to Participate

When we walk for Nibi (the water), we are in Ceremony. We move like water, continuously each day, until we reach our destination. This is a time for prayers or songs for the water.

We follow protocols established by Josephine-Baa Mandamin to show respect for our ancestors, grandmothers, Mother Earth, and ourselves:

- Long skirts or pants and shirts with sleeves are worn during the water walk.
- Drugs and alcohol are not permitted.
- Each person carries 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) do not carry the water, 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).

The Grand River Water Walk will take place **September 17 to 25, 2023** in leap-frog fashion. Cars will be used along the route to help support the walkers. Each day, the walk begins before 5:00 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 300-500 feet. 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 of walking, there is a "touchdown" ceremony.

Women and men from all Nations are welcome to participate in the Grand River Water Walk. There is no registration fee, but please bring a small handful of tobacco tied in a piece of red cloth. You will also need to cover your own expenses (such as gas, snacks, and lunch). Core walkers who commit to the full duration of the walk are provided meals and accommodation. Anyone who agrees to follow the protocols may participate — whether for a few hours or a full day. We encourage you to walk behind the core walkers or take part in the morning and afternoon ceremonies.

The Grand River Water Walk is NOT:

- A protest or social event
- A vacation or easy journey
- About you, or what you can gain
- A competition of "I can go the distance"
- For sleeping in or sitting idle
- For boasting or gossiping
- A place to look for your next partner
- For pets, bikes or skateboards
- Showing up on only the final day to be seen and say you were there
- For anyone who has romanticized ideas about Indigenous people
- For those who feel the need to force other cultural values onto the protocols

If anyone is disruptive or disrespectful during the walk, they will be asked to leave. For more information, visit grandriverwaterwalk.com.