

"They're going to destroy our lands ... they're going to destroy our way of life," Wayne Moonias said outside the chamber.

*"First Nations leaders removed from Ontario legislature after shouting at premier for meeting,"
Global News, March 29, 2023*

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Aanin, Aylan Couchie ndizhnikaaz, Nbisiing ndoonjibaa. Nishnaabekwe ndaaw, Tkaronto/Duchesnay endayaan.

I'm a Nishnaabekwe interdisciplinary artist, writer and curator who has the good fortune to be working with a great team at OCADFA at OCAD University where I'm also a Sessional Instructor in the Graduate Studies Program. I'm at the end of my 3rd year as a PhD student in the Cultural Studies program at Queen's University. My understanding of Nishnaabeg (albeit N**isiing** Nishnaabeg) placemaking comes through lived experience as well as historical, land-based and community-driven PhD research gathered over a period of five years through collaborative interdisciplinary projects with Nipissing University/Nipissing First Nation/Dokis First Nation and subsequent research-creation, digital experimentation and curatorial projects founded in the N**isiing** (Nipissing) Nishnaabemwin dialect, cosmologies, and understandings of place. My PhD dissertation will speak to the histories of mapping, naming, erasure, and resistance on N**isiing** territory, but my research-based practice has been investigating colonial/Indigenous placemaking through monuments, public art, and interventions since 2015. Now you know a little bit about me and my background, I will make this brief as time is of the essence.

The Land Alliance is made up of five First Nations whose lands are under threat from Ontario Premier Doug Ford and his Ring of Fire mining project interests. They are Nishnaabeg communities protecting Nishnaabeg lands from Premier Doug Ford who has said he's going to "[move forward with mining in the Ring of Fire despite opposition from First Nations like Neskantaga](#)." You may or may not have heard about some of these First Nations in the news before. One of the Land Alliance communities, Neskantaga First Nation, has been under the **LONGEST BOIL-WATER ADVISORY IN CANADA** - more than 27 years (see CBC News: "[Neskantaga First Nation surpasses 10,000 days under a drinking water advisory](#)" June 20, 2023). Another Nishnaabeg community in the Land Alliance is Grassy Narrows First Nation and if you don't know about Grassy Narrows and how people are [STILL dying of mercury poisoning](#) from settler contaminated waters then I'd suggest you spend some time Googling because this issue has been ongoing for decades in spite of [ongoing protests at Queen's Park](#) since 2010. These are but two of the communities whose ancestral lands Premier Doug Ford is targeting for (more) environmental destruction and desecration.

Maybe people think, "that's their problem, up there" but, aside from the climate and environmental impacts, I'd like to remind them...communities like this, rez communities - ancestral communities, have been holding down language and culture, keeping it alive for the rest of us, for more time than you can fathom. This, in spite

of residential schools, enfranchisement, child welfare apprehensions, bans on our culture and cultural practices and every other violent action settlers and settler governments have thrown at us in a full-on DELIBERATE attempt to destroy our people, language, culture and connection to land. The technical and recently accepted term here is, Genocide.

Nishnaabeg ways of being and knowing come from the land and are connected to place, the same as our language and specific dialects within. These knowledges and dialects are passed down to children and grandchildren on and through those lands, lands they know well. Nishnaabeg have place names connected to specific sites and ways they use the land. This intergenerational land + language knowledge spans thousands of years and are interconnected to our ancestors and ways of knowing and being. **These lands are sacred.** So, when colonizers like Doug Ford threaten to bulldoze through ancestral lands containing our [Nishnaabeg textbooks](#) - protected, loved, cherished and, relied upon by these communities since time immemorial - it should make people HALT IN THEIR ***** TRACKS. (see: Ongoing Genocide)

As we approach the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a reminder: settler colonialism is ongoing, it's alive and well here in so-called Canada and we see it daily through government action and inaction (see Search the Landfill). We can and must think about the past, but we also need to think about what's happening in the present, and always, as my [Nishnaabekwe colleague and friend Susan Blight reminds us](#), seven generations to the future – just as our Nishnaabeg ancestors did.

If you're able, please **show up** and if you can't, then **speak up**. Write your MPP and put your social media to good use by adding your name to our March for the Land social media graphic and share in **solidarity with the Land Alliance Nishnaabeg communities**. G'chi miigwech.

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