

Regional News

Saint Regis River Reflections

The Saint Regis River Association is planning a comprehensive, community appreciation of Saint Regis River to take place over Earth Day Weekend, 19-22 April 1996. On those four days, people throughout the watershed of this great river will visit a favorite spot, and record what they see. They will take photographs, draw sketches, make videos, and write descriptions. Their "Reflections" will be collected and become part of a public exhibit in the Fall of 1996. The exhibit will reflect what people saw at one moment in time, from the river's source in the mountains to its mouth at the Saint Lawrence. Please join with the Association, area schools and colleges to celebrate a great river on a great weekend.

Since December 1995, members of the Saint Regis River Association have been working with students and teachers from area schools. They have been designating sites on the Saint Regis River to take photographs, to sketch, and to write descriptions of river and watershed. Local college students have been helping participants interpret ecologically what they will see. Participating are teachers and students the central schools of: Potsdam, Canton, Massena, St. Lawrence, Colton Pierpont, and Saint Regis Falls. Providing assistance are students from the Outing Club and Environmental Clubs at Clarkson University, the Outing and Photography Clubs at SUNY Potsdam.

The Association hopes this project will raise public awareness of the value of this great resource, while introducing the young people who live near by to its beauties and problems. "We want their

participation to be fun, and informative, and to get them together with young people up and down the river," said Pam McLean, SRRRA spokesperson. "At the same time, we want to profile the river today as background for further projects aimed at enhancing appreciation of a wonderful river."

With that in mind, the Association invites anyone to submit pictures and writings created that weekend describing tributaries or lands within the Saint Regis River Watershed. Please affix your name and the precise location of the view, and send your materials to "Reflections" PO Box 95, Saint Regis Falls, New York 12980. As the Association is non-profit, all participants are being asked to provide their own film and cameras and writing and sketching materials, and to make at least 5 x 7 enlargements of all submitted images. All participants will be invited to the public opening.

The Saint Regis River Association was founded in February 1995 in the village of

Saint Regis Falls. It is a cooperative group of citizens with a stake in the health of three related systems: the East, West and Main Branch, from their sources in the Adirondacks, including the lands of their watersheds, to the mouth of the Saint Lawrence River at Akwesasne. It has organized river cleanups, and free public lectures.

Its members include 50 people from 8 different towns in Saint Lawrence and Franklin counties. Anyone who lives in the Watershed or who loves it is welcome to join. For more information about any of this event, or membership, please contact Pam McLean, of Saint Regis Falls, at (518) 856-9206.

A National Day of Prayer for Protecting Our Children

A National Day of Prayer for Protecting Our Children is being set aside for Sunday, April 21. Sponsored by the National Indian Child Welfare Association, this day is receiving recognition as a time for people from all tribes to focus on the needs of Indian children.

Through prayers, songs, dance, sweats, and local ceremonies, tribes are being encouraged to take time to petition our Creator for wisdom and protection in raising our children.

"We believe that children are our greatest resource," said Terry Cross, Director for National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA). "It is common knowledge that abuse and neglect of our children is on the increase, and yet they have the right to grow up in a healthy, nurturing environment."

On April 22nd, at the opening session of the 14th annual "Protecting Our Children Conference," in Albuquerque, New Mexico, there will be a ceremony and prayer.

Tribal councils have been encouraged to adopt a resolution making the third Sunday of April a day of prayer for protecting our children, and using the day for special ceremonies or activities, such as prayer, singing, dancing, and sweats.

The day was conceived by Don Milligan, a member of NICWA's Board of Directors. "The unifying spirit of these traditional ceremonies would be protection against the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994, victory over bills that negatively impact the Indian Child Welfare Act, and the success of all Indian Families For Kids Initiatives across the country," Milligan said.

"The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994 places Canadian Indians and children who cannot be enrolled outside the protection of ICWA," Milligan explained.

For Milligan, it is a call to not only unify, but to return to our traditional beliefs in the protection of

Creator. "It we truly believe in the sacred circle or hoop, the medicine wheel, we should practice what we preach and pray for the return of the natural way."

A resolution has been circulated to tribes for their councils to consider and adopt.

Following is the resolution advanced to the tribes:

WHEREAS, Children are our most valued resource; and

WHEREAS, our children have a right to be raised in an environment that nurtures them and helps them grow up safe, healthy and spiritually strong; and

WHEREAS, our children have a right to be free of physical or mental abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, or the damaging affects of substance abuse; and

WHEREAS, raising our children is a parental, extended family, community, and tribal responsibility; and

WHEREAS, children are a gift of our Creator, who has designed the family and community as a protection for and care of them during their developing years; and

WHEREAS, child abuse and neglect escalates each year and is a violation of Creator's design in placing children in our care; and

WHEREAS, certain federal, state, and local laws, regulations and practices serve as contrary influences on our family, community and tribe's ability to properly care for our children, now

BE IT RESOLVED, that (Tribe) declares the third Sunday of April, 1996, and the third Sunday of April each succeeding year, as a Day of Prayer for Protecting Our children.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a special focus will be placed on that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities, such as prayers, singing, dancing and sweats, to invoke Creator's wisdom and protection for our people in raising our children.

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