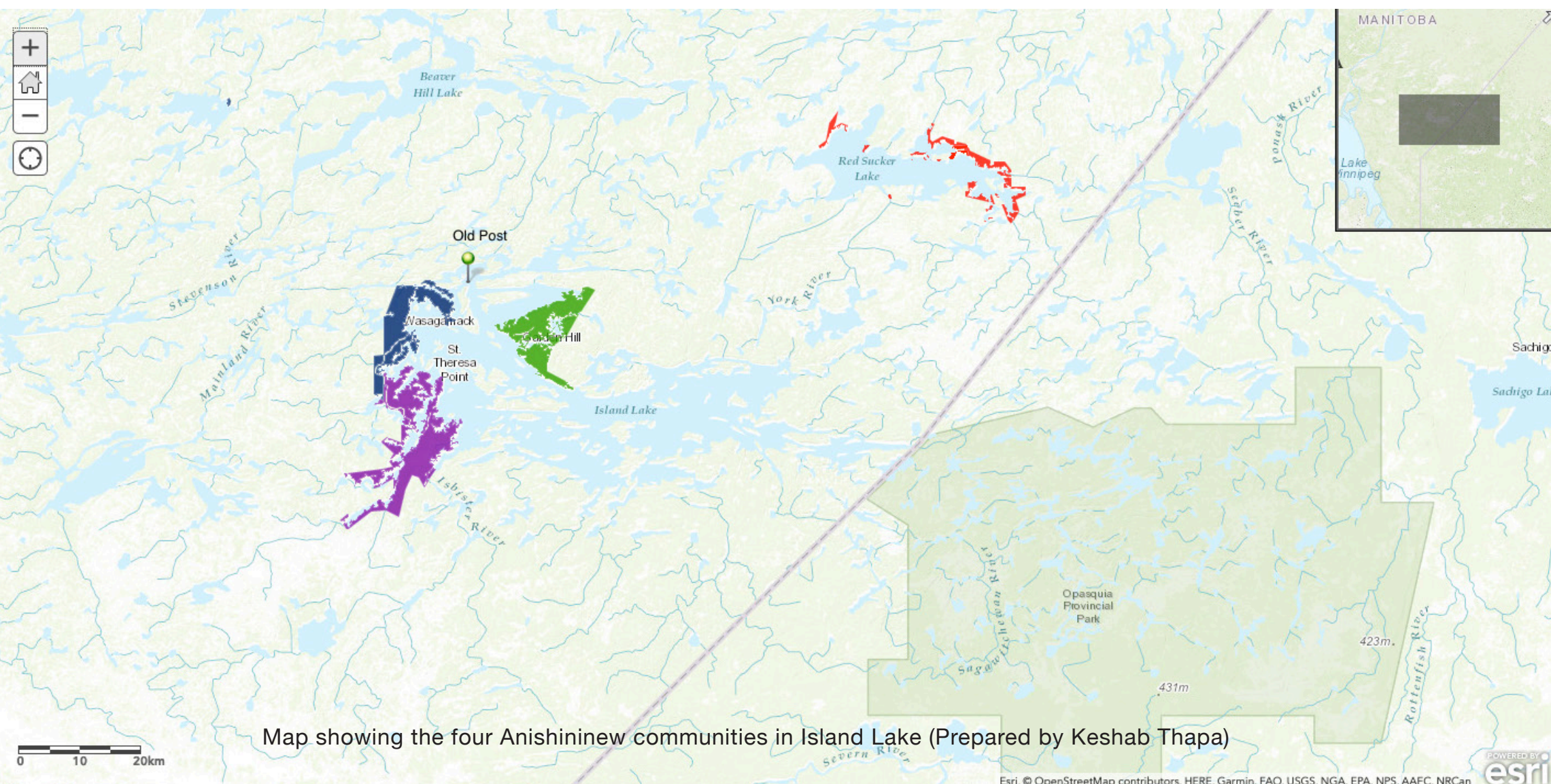
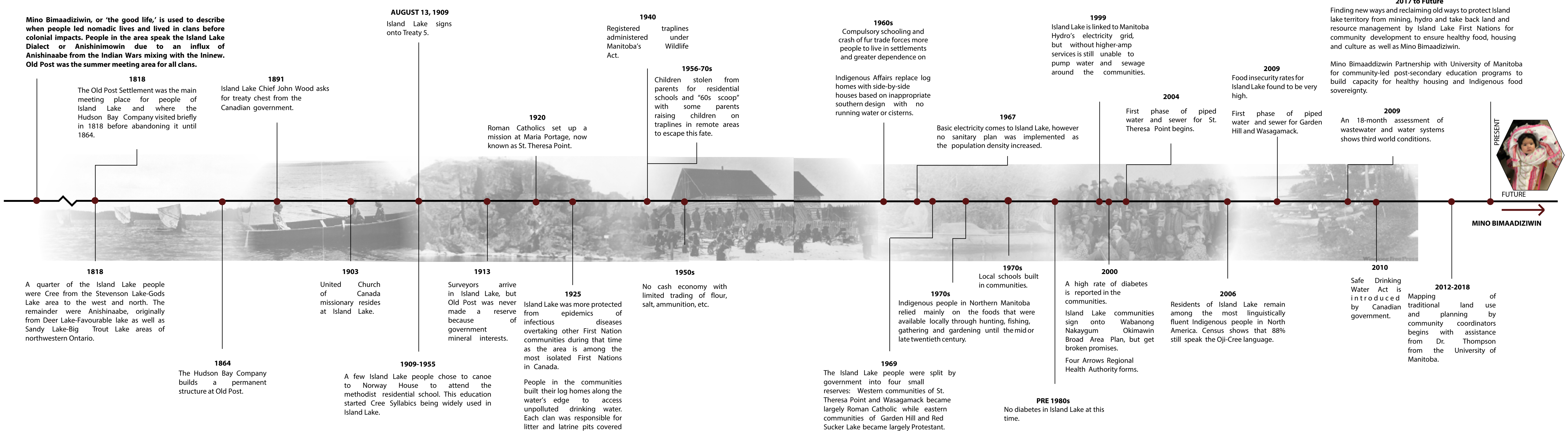


# An Anishiniw Timeline of Island Lake, Manitoba, Canada

This timeline displays the oral history of Island Lake, Manitoba, presented by Elder Victor Harper and Emma Harper, as well as other Elders from Island Lake region. The *Anishiniwuk* in Island Lake are united by language, culture, family relations, and geography. All the four *Anishiniw* communities -- Garden Hill, Red Sucker Lake, St. Theresa Point, and Wasagamack First Nation -- were originally part of the Island Lake Band, sharing one Chief at the time of Treaty in 1909 until 1969 (Wasagamack First Nation, 2010).

Island Lake's history is unique. Being in a remote region of the boreal forest, the territory has old growth forests, pristine lakes and *Anishiniw* who fluently speak their language and expertly participate in traditional land uses. Language, Elders, ceremonies, and *nopimink* (land-based education) continue to animate Indigenous knowledge systems, providing people with a strong cultural foundation in a territory having ecological integrity. Before planes, the location was described as being as remote as the North Pole (Fiddler & Stevens, 2002). From Norway House to Island Lake required portaging more than 30 times, and canoeing for more than a week (Hallowell, 1938).



In 1909, the Chief of Island Lake signed an adherence to Treaty 5 with the Dominion of Canada. This treaty was signed on August 13, 1909 at Old Post on Linklater Island (Wasagamack First Nation, 2010). At the time of the Treaty 5 Adhesion, the *Anishiniwuk* population was 649 (McKay, 2018). The first settlers to Island Lake were the missionaries in the early 1900s after Treaty (Hallowell, 1938). The difficult, long and numerous portages are credited with slowing these colonial forces but also the spread of communicable diseases. At this time, canoes and dog sleds provided the only transportation to travel the rivers, lakes, and land within Island Lake and the surrounding lakes (Hallowell, 1938).

Wasagamack First Nation (2010) reports: "In the 1950s, Wasagamack children were sent to Norway House, Cross Lake, The Pas, Birtle, Brandon, Fort Quepelle, Winnipeg, Camperville or Pine Falls for residential school" (p. 34). Despite this brutal attack on children by Canadian government policies, people are returning to *mino bimaadiziwin*, which involves reclaiming language, culture and land governance as well as reconciliation by all Canadians.

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