

Report of the gathering Call of the Wolf

Was it about a key or was it about destiny?

It was at Grandfather William's pipe ceremony, celebrating the Solstice on June 21st 2010 that I first found out about the "Call of the Wolf". I didn't hesitate for one second, I immediately felt the call, I knew right there and then that not only did I have to be there but I knew that I had to contribute, I didn't know how just yet... I am keeper of Mother Earth since I was very little and I answered the call to participate in this very important humanitarian project. This is an extract of the invitation that really called me the most:

"This is the time when we must make our choice. We cannot continue any longer on the pathway of destruction, we have to decide to step forward, to take the steep and narrow path of simple living, taking us back to our Mother Earth, back to the garden we have left, as our responsibility towards the next seven generations"

Nearly 300 people attended the gathering. Some came from as far as Europe and Guatemala. We held councils in circle for 7 days with the participation of elders from the Anishinabe, Micmac, Wendat, Mohawk, Cheyenne, Aztec, Maya Kakchikel and of course the anishinabe who hosted the event. There were also participants from the Inuit, Ojibway, Cree, Metis as well as non-natives people from Canada, USA, Mexico, Guatemala, Columbia, Scotland, France, Germany, Lebanon, China, Russia and the Philippines. On the ceremonial ground a kitchen was built and a small wigwam, a big one for council was put up; a sacred Fire, 3 sweat lodges and a 24 ft Teepee.

Elders that were present:

- Kokum Mary Whiteduck, main anishinabe host, loving grandmother and a great cook
- Kokum Louise Wawatie, anishinabe, leading women's sweat and healing ceremonies
- Kokum Francine.Payer anishinabe, leading women's sweat, healing ceremonies and drumming
- Mishomis Jacob Wawatie, anishinabe, leader, teacher and circle facilitator
- Solomon Wawatie, anishinabe, support and dedication to the gathering
- Grandfather Donald, Micmac, Sunrise / Pipe ceremonies and men's sweat lodges
- Grandmother Françoise Montigny-Pelletier, Wendat/Mohawk, for her inspiring words
- Abuela Leonor Hurtado, Maya, International teacher of Food Sovereignty
- Abuela Francisco Aguilar, Aztec, teacher of Nahuati martial art and the sacred Flower of Life and the path of the Heart
- Abuelo Cristobal Cojti Garcia, Maya Kakchikel, teacher of the ancestral calendar and cosmogony
- Elva Coatloxopeu Mesnil, Mexican/Cheyenne, International ambassador for the Heart Medicine

Some people came and left, some stayed a couple of days, and some decided to stay and make a difference. Those people participated in many ways, some helped in the kitchen, in the construction of lodges & tipi, some became fire keepers, some work in the making of the big drum or participated in talking circles, in several workshops, in sunrise ceremonies and other ceremonies. Everyone found their place and contributed in their own ways. A very special thanks to the kitchen and the fire keepers; I won't mention any names because I wouldn't want to forget anyone, but those people know who they are.

It all starts here, I had planned to leave Monday around 5: 00 p.m. after work, but the owner of the company I work for asked me to delay my vacation by one day to help him finish a very important project. I was not very happy but I agreed, so I arrived Tuesday night, August 18 around 1: 30 a.m.; a young man greeted me at the welcome tent, but it was so late that I decided to put my seat down and rest a little, I was very tired after 3 ½ hrs drive and a lot of extra hours at work.

Day 1. Wednesday morning, I feel a lot of tension at the airport even though not too many people have arrived yet. I ask questions trying to find the lodges and the sacred fire so that I can offer my tobacco and my intentions to the Creator. I am told that all the ceremonies will be on top of a mountain. I must make a comment here to explain that I walk with a cane because I have a pinched sciatic nerve and a torn ligament on my right knee so I am a little annoyed and wonder how I 'm going to manage the week ahead?

I am told that the road is not very accessible and very little parking up there, but I am also told that we will have people taking us up to the grounds?? I decided to be by myself a little to meditate and find a place to install my tent and then go see for myself what is going on. I am all set up and, in the afternoon, I'm getting a little impatient but I have to tell you that it is not in my nature as I am a very patient woman; a young boy proposes to show me the way and he accompany me up there.

Finally, and without breaking anything on my van we arrive on the site, the parking is very limited; I walk a little and I see a kitchen very well equipped, toilets, a big lodge for the circles and the sacred fire Ah....! People are coming towards me, I briefly meet elders that came from different part of the world but they are leaving, they are done for the day. I walk to the sacred fire to make my offerings and don't know much more than I did this morning. I spend the evening assessing my day, meeting fantastic people, the Rainbow family in majority, I don't know this family but I feel very comfortable and I am very attracted to their ways, I feel at home; all I can do now is listen..

Day 2. Thursday August 19th, today it's my birthday, people are arriving and setting up, I decide to go for a walk with new friends that I just met, they are looking for a place to setup their tent, I take my keys, lock my vehicle and the way we go. The weather is not to good, the sky is gray looks like rain is coming, so we decide to head back. Once I arrive at my site and reach for my keys, I have a lot of key but oops one is missing, of course it's the key to my van....I back track trying to find the missing key, but no luck, perhaps it fell inside the van, now I have to find someone to unlock it. Finally, a very nice young man offers to help and succeed to open the door... but to my surprise no sign of a key!!! All I can do now is let go and let the Creator take care of this, there is nothing I can do, it's pouring rain, windy and cold, I am just very grateful that someone was able to unlock my door so I can get some dry clothes.

I believe that everything happens for a reason, I am told that nothing is going on today, but that we will have a sunrise ceremony tomorrow morning, Grandfather Donald is arriving tonight. So, I stay at the airport and I spend time at the welcome tent for a little while, greeting people arriving, telling them where they can setup, making new friends, listening and learning. I go back to my tent and make myself a very good supper and go back to the Welcome in the evening. I have a long discussion with Bô and Brian, we talk about the sacred fire which was the topic of the day, the need of a sacred fire at the airport... So, I ask you, what is a sacred fire? What is the purpose of a sacred fire at a gathering?.....The fire is prepared with our medicine, the flame represents the light of the Great Spirit, it is a place of reflection, we offer our tobacco and other medicines, we pray for our Mother Earth, for our family and friends, for our community, for ourselves. We ask the Spirits of the four directions to listen to our prayers, our requests and ask for healing. The fire is the most sacred place of all gatherings. This is what I learned about the sacred fire, those are my teachings, I am a firekeeper.

Day 3. Today is Friday and very early this morning I offer my tobacco to find my key, I look just about everywhere I can think of and all of a sudden, I see something shining on the ground... it is a heart shape small ring which is broken with a smiley in the center, then... I stop... the Creator has just told me that He loves me and that He is taking care of me and not to worry. I go back to my tent with a smile on my face, I get ready to go to the ceremonial site and join the circle which will begin soon.

I talked to Jacob this morning about joining the two fires, he doesn't really answer me and I leave it at that. My sister and friend Louise and I did a beautiful Water ceremony in the lake (Wolf Lake), we do the blessing of the water with a beautiful ceremony in the lake while I sing Nibi Wabo (song for the water ceremony) everyone gets a turn in the water, it was a very special moment, and for me, one of the highlight of the gathering...

We are finally told that the fire will be brought at the airport, I will not go into details as Bô already talked about it in his report; perhaps I will just add that it was a great privilege to have taken part in this beautiful ceremony of joining the two fires together.

This afternoon we gather in a circle and Abuela Leonor speaks about food, she asks us to stop encouraging fast food restaurant, also, by respect to Mother earth, she asks that we stop using disposable dishes that are manufactured for big profit. She teaches us to write inspirational words under our plates which will become a meditating tool while doing the dishes and also a legacy for the future generations. We have to plant the seed (the universal seed) around the globe. We must start with small activities in our own communities. She tells us about food sovereignty which according to the spiritual Mayan concept is much more than to produce, transform and consume our own food.

Food sovereignty responds to our cosmic way of understanding life as a whole, as being part of nature and the universe. It is to produce our food with the blessing of Grandmother Moon, Mother Earth, our Sister the Water, Father Sky and Grandfather Sun. For us anishinabe it is about creating a relationship with our food.

Abuelo Cristobal tells us that we must make a return to ancestral cultures in our communities, alive nature/alive food; we already have all the tools, knowledge and experience of the elders. He also says that the year 2012 is the end of one era and the beginning of a new one; it is important

for everyone to find their personal mission first, their life purpose so that they can better help their family and their community.

Abuelo Franscisco speaks to us about unification and common vision, he tells us to document everything and keep the writings precious, to form a council and to meet at least once a year, to make alliances with other associations having the same objective and he asked us to prepare a "declaration of hope"

It is necessary to integrate our teachings and our knowledge in our daily lives, to transmit our teachings and to bring back the legends. That everyone takes their responsibilities, we have to make decisions, we must act now. I would also like to thank Elva for her heart warming story and her words of wisdom.

Day 4. Saturday August 21st.....Still no key, the worst part is that I am so busy, I don't really have time to think about it, everybody else but me seems to be worried. After the sunrise ceremony, Grandfather Donald takes me down to the airport and we search my van, he looks in the front and I search the back, he is sure that my key is inside but we don't find anything. (to be continued).

Today we have a very good circle, migwetch Grandfather Donald for the great teaching about the two-world map. Jacob teaches us about the world and turtle island and how we are all related, it was a great teaching, it is just sad that everyone wasn't there.

Day 5. Today it's Sunday, it is 5:00 A.M., I can't see anyone so I decided to walk up, it's a very long walk and I am hoping to meet someone on the way, did I tell you that I am not using my cane anymore I switched to a walking stick. It takes me more than an hour to arrive at the site...Grandfather Donald is just preparing his pipe for the sunrise; Solomon asked me to drum and sing, migwetch for that, what a beautiful way to start the day.

Many great teachings and I always appreciate it but we are going in circle, no decision is taken, nothing gets done. Personally, I believe that everyone at the gathering should be involve in the discussions, why only the elders can sit in, Abuelo Franscisco is in agreement and he adds that it is necessary to get started. We pass the feather around and again we all give our opinion. It's been five days and nothing is happening. Don't think we were just chatting, having fun, it was no picnic, the days were full and heavy, sitting on wet ground, we were getting nowhere; the ceremony of coronation was a shock for several people, it was so out of context....it is necessary to return to the original intention of this gathering.

Thank you Bô for the beautiful presentation of the medicine basket, we all needed that, your timing was perfect. Tonight I am very lucky to find someone to bring me back down at a reasonable hour and like every night I stop at the sacred fire, making sure the girls don't need anything and that there is enough medicine to make it through the night, I offer my tobacco and thank the Creator for my day and ask him to inspire me for tomorrow. Note: I am in charge of the firekeepers, rotation is important as someone has to be there 24 hrs. I have many women that are firekeeping because there is more women than men.

Day 6, Monday August 23rd..Louise meets me at my van and we search again for my key, she looks everywhere and I tell her not to worry the key will turn up eventually lol.

There is a lot of tension in the air, today Jacob tells us to have a circle, we must unite with one goal, one objective, one vision; he proposes to have four groups (finally) and then meet again with our discussion to prepare a resume. Once finished we will return in circle in order to put together the notes from all four groups and prepare the “declaration of Hope”. Abuelo Francisco is the first one to make a firm commitment; he takes the first step and makes an engagement to become our Liaison.

Jacob wants to decide who will be part of each group but each person knows their strengths and weaknesses, he becomes impatient and decides to leave, he gives me the feather and tells me to get the groups together so with the help of Abuela Léonor we formed 4 working groups

Here are the four groups with the contact for each group:

1. Knowledge... Grandmother Francine (myself)
2. Organization Abuela Leonor
3. Planning François
4. Project Brian

Reports from the groups :

Knowledge Committee: there was 16 persons in that group, 8 men & 8 women

- talking stick/feather should be introduced into our families, our schools
- introduce the circle into our communities, our schools in order to give free expression to our children
- we don't have to reinvent the wheel, we have already the necessary tools:
 1. United First Nations & Peoples for the Great Earth Peace for the communication
 2. Ironlog Production (audio and video)
 3. Our inner strength
 4. Integrity
 5. The four elements
 6. Creativity
 7. Legends
 8. Nature
 9. Tourism
- To transmit our knowledge free of charge (if necessary) in the schools, introduce programs to teenagers such as “initiation to teenage years” as per our traditions. (rites of passage)
- Very important: learn how to listen to the children

- learn and teach forgiveness in order to eliminate frictions in schoolyards, in our families and our communities

Organization committee:

- Stop being consumers and be creators
- Bring back full moon ceremonies and transmit our knowledge
- Make a list of our strengths
- Have a garden or join community gardens
- Everything must start in our own families
- Importance of the full Moon ceremonies with men and women
- Personal involvement in our communities

Planning committee:

- sow the seed and water the tree to keep it alive
- We all breathe the same air
- Universal meditation

Project committee:

- Universal value: different ritual, same need
- manage the resources: eco villages
- All the projects are part of one large circle, no project is not too small

It's been a long day; I arrive every morning around 5: 00 for the sunrise ceremony it is late and almost everyone is gone back to the airport, we are still up here, Léonor and myself and we are trying to find a way to go down, me to my camping site and Leonor to her room. Jacob has already left so I ask Solomon to ask around to see who will bring Leonor (she is staying at the resort a little further away, I catch a ride with grandmother Mary Whiteduck.

Day 7, Tuesday August 24, today is supposed to be the last day of the gathering and the closing should be done with the full Moon ceremony tonight, at least that is what I thought.... tonight I realized why I couldn't find my key, because all week I looked with my eyes closedwhy? well because I don't want to go back to civilization! I feel good here and there is so much more work to be done.

I arrived at the site very early this morning and Abuela Léonor is already there (she didn't get a ride to her room, she had to sleep in the elder's lodge, on the wet ground, this is unacceptable!) She has to leave early today, so as soon as the sunrise ceremony is done, we sit together to review our notes from the groups and we prepare a draft of the Declaration of Hope.

We gather everyone and read the declaration in French and English and we change a few words as per the people's request, then Leonor translated the declaration in Spanish and Stephane and myself rewrite the declaration in French and English and give the transcript to Jacob. Since Leonor had to leave she didn't have time to finish the Spanish translation but Jacob gave it to Gustavo so that he could finish it, we will never know what happened to the Spanish copy and as a matter of fact we will never know what happened to the other copies either, I am just happy that I have the draft.

Before Leonor left I asked her what will become of the Declaration and this is what she answered "The Creator will make sure that the Declaration of Hope falls into the right hands and that it gets published as many places as possible". I guess I became the guardian of the declaration since I was the only one with the draft copies in French and in English.

In the afternoon we had several workshops, I attended the Maya calendar workshop given by our Mayan elder Abuelo Cristobal ... I learned so much, it was a great teaching. Just a little before supper time, Solomon calls an elders' circle and he selected the people according to age. Three items were proposed by Solomon: 1. The lack of respect... 2. The solar drum... 3. Who should be invited in an elders' circle? I know that Bô already spoke on the subject but I want to share with you what I said in that circle "if we want to join ourselves as one nation, it is necessary to begin by respecting the elders of all the various groups, the age doesn't have any importance, wisdom is what makes a person an elder, a grandmother or grandfather, and we must accept the elders of the rainbow family whatever age they might be as they have different protocols when it comes to elders".

To finish Solomon asked to gather the Rainbow family at sunrise and ask them if they wanted to finish the solar drum in harmony, it was asked that they bring back the decision to the circle the next morning. This circle closed very late, Grandmother Moon was already out, I didn't have supper and I was exhausted both physically and emotionally, too tired to have a full Moon ceremony. I got a ride down and went straight to bed.

Day 8: I don't want to speak about the next morning because Bô already did in his report and the events that followed upset me too much, I have lots of difficulties accepting the lack of respect towards the sacred fire, the very same place where I prayed and offered my tobacco all week for Mother Earth, my children, my grandchildren, for myself and for all those in need. Words cannot describe the feeling I felt, this same water on my face a few minutes before and he dared speaking to us about respect! I shed many tears and I did many meditations since my return from the Call of the Wolf, we can forgive but forget is more difficult.

I asked some grandmothers of my community to meet in order to help me deal with this lack of respect, this lack of leadership; we offered our tobacco, played our drum and I listened to their wisdoms. I am ready to continue my mission and concentrate all my energy for the 7 next generations. It is necessary to put the negativity behind us and go forward, we have so much more important things to achieve. Lots of work ahead of us. I am very happy to have met so

many beautiful people at the gathering and I am already very anxious to see everyone again soon.

Now we must really start the work, we must not let our group discussion fade away, we must act and start working on our projects and bring new ones to this circle, go back to the source, teach the children. So, I open the discussion and I wait for your suggestions, I would also like to hear about your own experiences in your communities.

In conclusion I would like to leave you with this: To see the young Rainbow children behaving in such a respectful and traditional way at the Sacred Fire was really touching, what a beautiful lesson of life! ... Let us open our heart, let us listen to the children and especially let us remember that they observe us! They are our future! To see this young boy at the fire that last morning gave me hope for the generations to come but it also gave me shivers. One day we will have to explain to this same little boy who just wanted to offer his tobacco, what really happened the morning of August 25, 2010 at the Sacred Fire!

Many people grieved for many years after this incident. The way the Sacred Fire relighted by itself after the "Forever Lasting" were thrown in by a little girl, all that will stay in my heart forever but I will forgive others for their wrong doing.

Day 9, Oh!.... About my key, well I found it when it was time for me to leave, just like that, it was on the steering wheel console in my van... Ah! He works in mysterious ways, one should not try to understand, we just have to trust Him.

Migwetch, thank you, gracias to all my relations

Serenity and love
Grandmother Francine
Aki Songideye Ikwe
Strong hearted woman keeper of Mother Earth