

Keepers of the Land

Excerpt from 'Keepers of the land': How Indigenous-led conservation can boost biodiversity

Indigenous-led conservation is not a new concept, but recently has had increased support and represent a long-term commitment to land, responsibilities, and reciprocity. Reciprocity means having a mutual relationship between humans and the land – humans are responsible to take care of the land that provides for them.

The Shawanaga First Nation, located on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay is one of Ontario's Indigenous-led conservation areas, stewarded by Anishinaabe people. They aim to balance conservation and preservation with responsible land use. On the island, they are exploring species at risk, such as the Massasauga rattlesnake, the Blanding turtle, and the Algonquin wolf, with a focus on biodiversity preservation.

Studies have shown that Indigenous-managed lands are better at supporting biodiversity, and therefore more species rich. As stewards of the land, Indigenous people have long-standing connections and vast interest in preserving biodiversity and using resources sustainability.