

THE NATURE OF OUR TREATIES

WITH MATHEW JAMES WEIGEL

FIRESIDE
CHATS



The *Nature of our Treaties* emerged as a conversation between Hunter Cardinal and Mathew James Weigel during a fireside chat hosted by the Creative Green Tools Canada. Once every other month, we gather to learn more about Indigenous ways of looking at environmental issues. In this opportunity, Mathew and Hunter helped us reflect on our understanding of treaty.

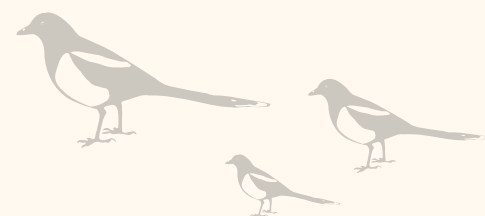
ABOUT TREATY AND THE STORIES WE TELL:

Treaty is not one person's point of view, it's not one person's story. One way to look at it is of relationships of reciprocity and obligation. All treaties are different because they are made of different people, of different stories. Treaty is about how all these stories interact.

One can think of treaties as a coral reef. The coral and the algae share resources and space to build the world around them. Like the coral, the connections between people, between nations, between the non-human relations allow us to continue building relationships off of that.

From a Western perspective, a treaty tends to be a very transactional agreement that focuses heavily on resources to be exploited and traded, rather than the relationships that exist in a physical space and in relation to the non-human. The notion of non-human nations isn't intuitive to the Western mindset. Like the buffalo or the magpie, it's our responsibility to remember they are sovereign nations that deserve our respect, our attention.

There is a lot of power in the stories we tell. As an artist, one has the capacity to develop the kind of worlds we want to inhabit. The world is made up of relations and, by becoming aware of them, we can tell stories that honour these relationships.



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Matthew James Weigel is a Dene and Métis poet and artist born and raised in Edmonton. Currently pursuing a PhD in English at the University of Alberta, he holds a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences. He is the designer for Moon Jelly House press and his words and art have been published by people like Arc Poetry Magazine, Book*Hug, The Polyglot, and The Mamawi Project. Matthew is a National Magazine Award finalist, Nelson Ball Prize finalist, Cécile E. Mactaggart award winner, and winner of both the 2020 Vallum Chapbook Award and 2021 bpNichol Chapbook Award for his chapbook "It Was Treaty / It Was Me". His debut full-length collection "Whitemud Walking" recently won the Alcuin Society Award for book design, and is available now from Coach House Books.



**IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER TO BRING
PEOPLE WITH YOU IN THE STORIES YOU TELL.**



**I DO POETRY AND ART BECAUSE THAT'S
HOW I LOOK AT THE COMPLEX
RELATIONSHIPS THAT MAKE UP THE
WORLD AROUND US**

FOR MORE, VISIT HIS WEBSITE AT MATTHEWJAMESWEIGEL.COM