

Grassy Narrows Journey for Mercury Justice

Photo credit: Allan Lisner

Background, Geographical Location of Grassy Narrows

- Grassy Narrows is Asubpeeschoseewagong in Anishinabemowin (our indigenous language). We are located in the northwestern part of the province of Ontario in Canada. We Are geographically located close to the centre of Canada and our village population is about 800 people.



20,000+ Anishinabek Treaty #3

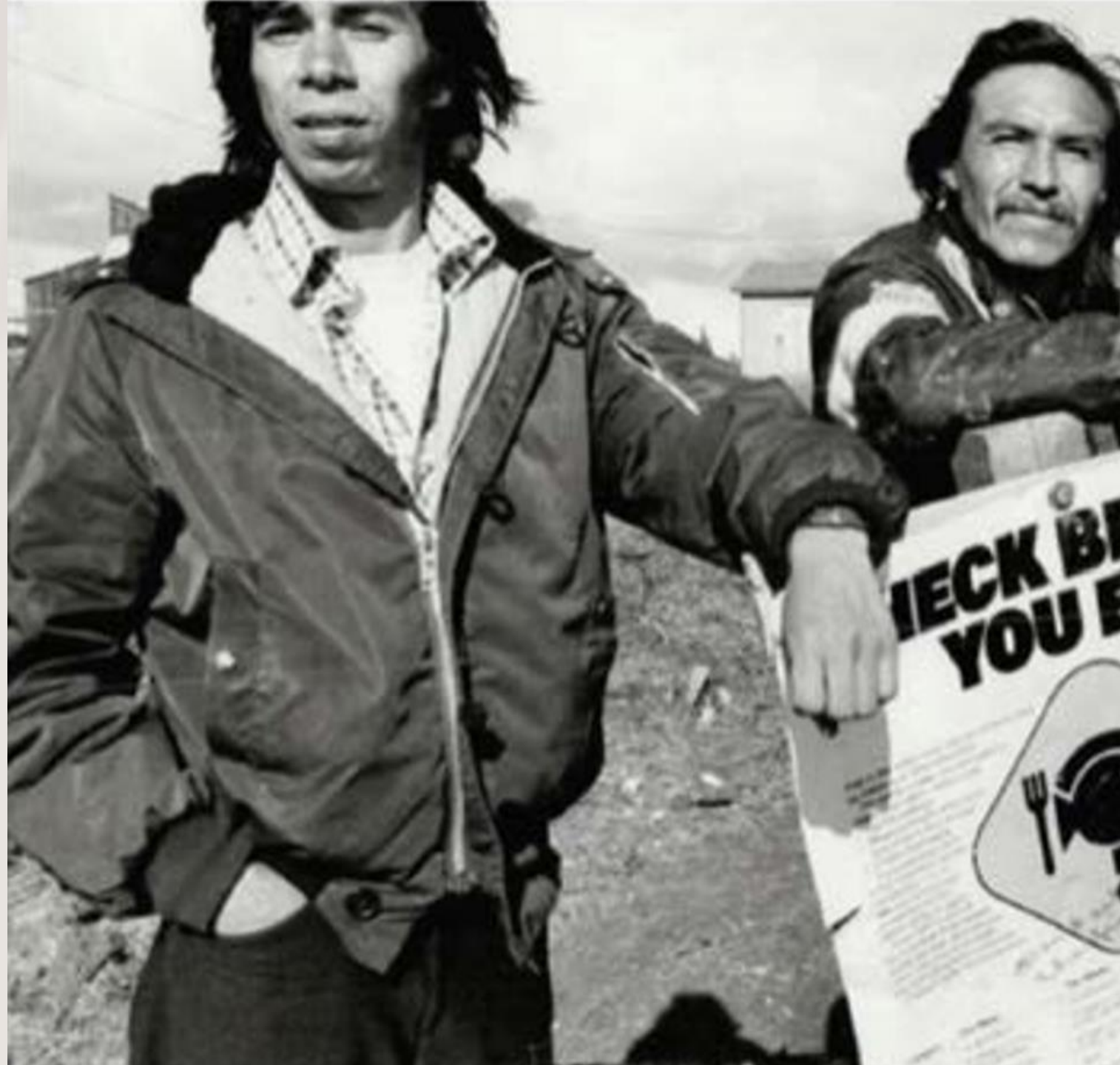
- We were named the Ojibway by the missionaries in early colonial times when the Europeans first came on to north America. We are correctly called Anishinabek. We are a people that number 100,000 plus in north America called the Algonquins. We are one of the larger population of indigenous nations in North America. In the treaty #3 area, surrounding Kenora Ontario, there are 28 villages of my people the Anishinabek numbering 20,000 plus



What is the Mercury Crisis?

During the 1960s and early '70s, the chemical plant at the Reed Paper mill in Dryden, Ont., which is upstream of Grassy Narrows, dumped 9,000 kilograms of mercury into the English-Wabigoon River.

The fish were full of poison, and the people from Grassy Narrows, Wabaseemoong, and Wabauskang who relied on the fish as a staple in their diet, were found to have the chemical toxin in their bodies.



Impact on way of life

Before the mercury dumping, Grassy Narrows was a largely self-sufficient community steeped in culture and with 90 per cent employment. After the poisoning, the commercial fisher was shut down, the largest sport fishing lodge closed, and employment dropped to 10 per cent.

The mercury crisis has greatly contributed to a loss of way of life, relationships with language, land and waters on the territory have been harmed. Repairing these relationships is only just beginning.



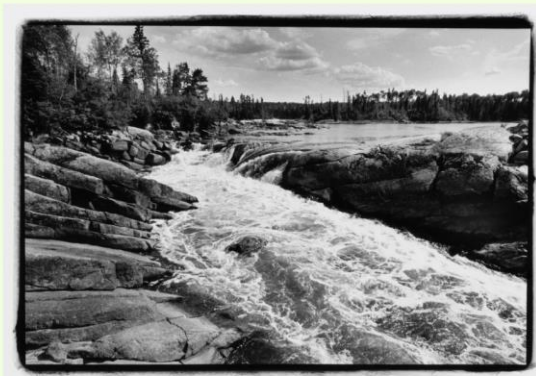


How has Grassy Narrows sought justice?

- Research
- Alliances
- Ceremony
- Action

Research


Report: Mercury poison levels in Grassy Narrows still in highest risk category



Mercury levels rising in the sediment of some lakes

Grassy Narrows: A newly released government commissioned report has found that mercury levels in the sediment of Grassy Narrows' Wabigoon

River remain up to 20 times above natural levels, while fish are up to 15 times above consumption guideline levels. This places the river above the frequent adverse effects level – the highest risk threshold used by Environment Canada to trigger remediation in the St. Lawrence environmental risk assessment. The Wabigoon River is the site of one of Canada's most infamous ongoing environmental health disasters which began when 9,000 kg of mercury were dumped by a paper mill upstream in the 1960's. No clean-up has been done even though multiple generations of Grassy Narrows families have been poisoned by the mercury.



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Report: Grassy Narrows mercury poisoning can be remediated

This report reviews approaches to reduce mercury contamination in aquatic systems, and identifies options with the potential to be applied in the Wabigoon-English River system. Approximately 10 tonnes of mercury were released to the Wabigoon River between 1962 and 1969 from a chlor-alkali facility at Dryden, Ontario, resulting in highly contaminated waters, sediments and biota. Mercury contamination in fish was observed at least as far as Tetu Lake, 250 km downstream of Dryden. After measures were carried out in the early 1970s to reduce mercury releases from the chlor-alkali facility, mercury concentrations quickly began to decline in sediments and fish, but unfortunately these concentrations stabilized or declined very slowly since the 1990s, and remained 2-10 times above regional background levels in Clay Lake walleye in 2010. [\[click to read the full report\]](#)

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Thunder Bay

New report calls for 'urgent action' over mercury poisoning of Grassy Narrows youth, mothers



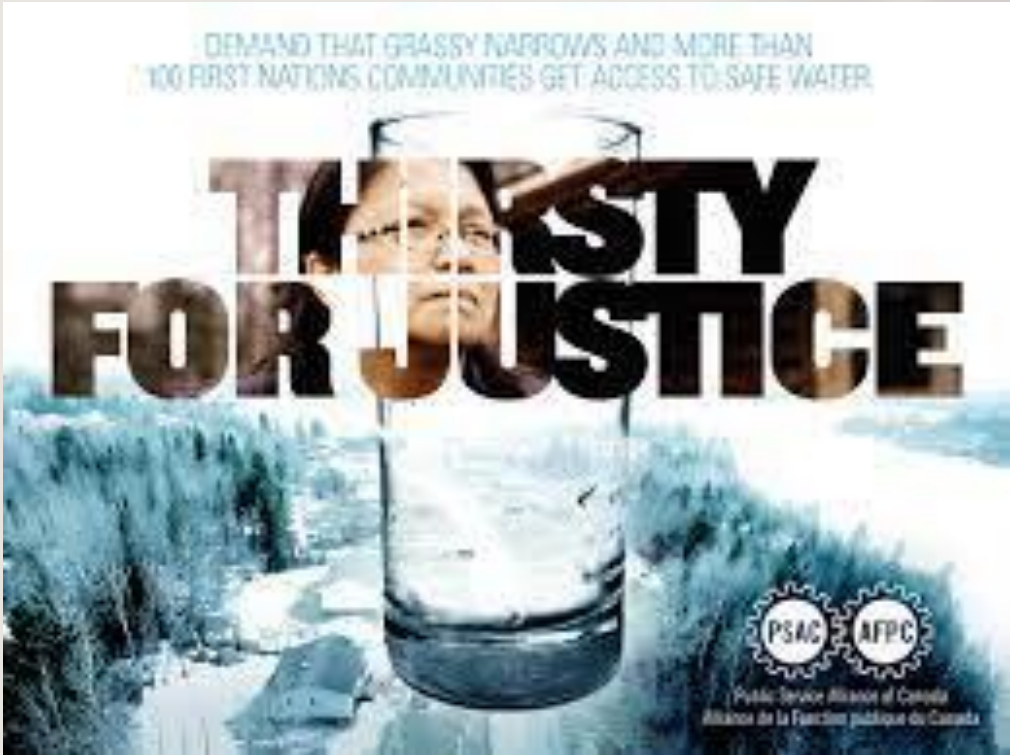
Fish consumption from contaminated river linked to a multitude of health problems in community

[Kris Ketonen](#) · CBC News · Posted: Dec 05, 2018 11:35 AM ET | Last Updated: December 5, 2018

Research Cont'd (Health reports)

- 1979: Neurological examinations “revealed effects that may be associated with methylmercury poisoning but a definitive diagnosis remained elusive”. (Wheatley, 1979)
- 1986: Dr. Brian Postl examined Grassy Narrows’ morbidity and mortality records from the local hospital. The report indicated that the community “experienced illness and death at rates which far exceed district, provincial and national standards”.
- 1975 –2011: Dr. Masazumi Harada and his team examined persons at four occasions and reported many cases of clinical Minamata Disease and Minamata Disease with complications.
- In 2015 - 2018: Dr. Donna Mergler collaborated with Grassy Narrows to carry out a community-based health assessment.
- 2021 – Ailine Philibert publishes Lancet Planetary Health Article linking premature death in Grassy Narrows to mercury

Alliances



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To: Premier Wynne and Prime Minister Trudeau

Clean up the mercury that's poisoning Grassy Narrows' water

Campaign created by **FreeGrassy** .

FreeGrassy

20,351 of 25,000 signatures

Brandi F. signed 2022-10-09 Raphael P. signed 2022-07-20 Reuben Z 2022-03-2

Sign the petition

First Name *

Last Name *

scientists say that GRASSY NARROWS #River-to-Free RIVER

Ceremony



Action







FREEGRASSY.NET



WHEN WILL YOU
CLEAN IT UP? WHEN?



Free
Gussy
Jet





Accomplishments

- Mercury River Cleanup Fund
- Mercury Care Home Funding Agreement
- Commitment to reform the Mercury Disability Board
- Land Declaration
- 20 Years of Resistance to Clear Cutting







Visit **freegrassy.net** for updates.

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