



# WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?

## CHAPTER 12

Tota Ma realized it was time to get active! She needed to call upon Wari, Sewatis, and Sose for some ideas. She wondered what else they could do to help turtles and their wetland homes. They would need to tell others about what they saw living in the wetland. She would invite Elders to speak about the medicine plants, traditional places, and the importance of turtles.

A clean up of the waterways and the shoreline would be a great idea too, thought Tota Ma. She decided to put out garbage boxes and recycling bins, and put up turtle crossing signs to help protect turtles on their way to nesting areas.

Tota Ma would encourage community members to look at their fresh water usage to ensure water would be available for future generations. Most importantly, Tota Ma decided to speak about what she learned with Chief and Band Council. She needed to find more help to get all of the work done!

Tota Ma told Sewatis and Wari right away about the plans she had for their day. With so much to do,

they had to get right to it! Cleaning the wetland was first on the list and Tota Ma knew that Sewatis, Wari and Sose would do a great job!

“Invite your friends to take part in our very special project today,” Tota Ma encouraged. She gathered all of the outdoor clothing she could find and filled a backpack with a delicious lunch. It was going to be a long day!

Everyone gathered at Tota Ma’s house to walk to the shoreline together. Children from the community came to help, along with their parents. Tota Ma thought it was nice to see parents as excited as their children. The group walked down to the wetland and broke up into groups to tackle the shoreline in sections. This would ensure the most thorough clean up. Everyone carried a garbage bag, along with a bucket for recyclable litter. Wari and Sewatis went with Tota Ma and three other groups went in different directions to start the clean up.

Wari and Sewatis were so excited Tota Ma could barely keep up with them. “Hey slow down, you two! If we go too quickly, we might miss some litter that needs to be picked up!” said Tota Ma. She was right! There were many little pieces of litter and fishing line which were easy to miss, but could make a big difference to safety of the creatures living in the wetland.

“Hey guys! I am going to make it my responsibility to pick up all of these bottle caps and plastic rings! I heard that these can be very harmful to turtles and other species living in the wetland,” said Wari with concern.

“Yes, that is a great idea Wari! I will be in charge of cans and bottles. We can recycle them when we get back to Tota’s house,” said Sewatis. Tota Ma was proud that her grandchildren were developing an appreciation for the land and a greater understanding of the importance of taking care of *Yethinihstenha Ohwentsya*.

Before they knew it, their section of the wetland looked as clean as could be! Wari and Sewatis were proud of the work they completed, and Tota Ma was happy to see their wetland looking so much more clean and beautiful. The group met up once everyone was done working to enjoy lunch. The local newspaper came to report on the good work of the community. What a successful day and a wonderful story the children could tell when they got back to the city. Tota Ma was sure that this was the beginning of a special new task that the community would continue.

