

WALKING
WITH
A'NÓ:WARA



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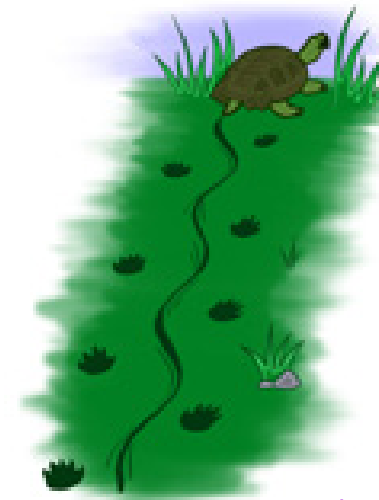
Additional companion publication resources include *Miskwaadesi & A'nó:wara Curriculum-based Activities Guide*, *The Ways of Knowing Guide Earth's Teachings*, and Reptiles & Amphibian Species Identifier guides are available online at www.turtleislandconservation.ca or directly from Turtle Island Conservation at the Toronto Zoo.

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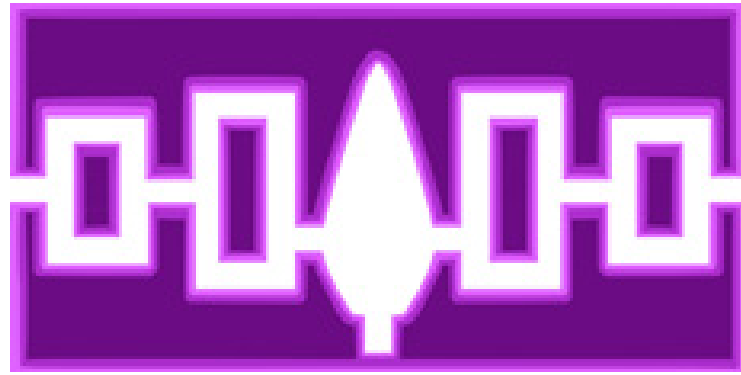
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The sacred Turtle Teachings this project is based upon have existed since the beginning of time and are shared to foster and guide generations to come. It is with good hearts and minds we honour these original teachings, so that each one of us can walk the good red road our ancestors planned for us. The Toronto Zoo's Turtle Island Conservation (TIC) programme respectfully acknowledges with infinite gratitude those who have contributed including all First Nation Elders; First Nation community members; Traditional Knowledge Keepers; First Nation TIC Advisory Group members; funding partners; First Nation authors; Deyohahage – Indigenous Knowledge Centre; Six Nations Polytechnic; Ohsweken Ontario; previous TIC programme coordinators Benny Michaud, Candace Maracle, Barbara Filion; TIC assistants Skye Vandenburg, Marilyn Desani, Randy Pittawanakwat and Jocelyn Pelltier; and the countless children and youth who continue to inspire us for generations to come.

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Special mention and thanks goes to Rick Hill Senior who skillfully reworked the story to be culturally reflective of the Haudenosaunee nation and to Wesley "Tehawannahkwa" Miller who patiently provided all of the translations.

All my relations,
Misheeken n'dodem, Shkode Neegan Wawaskone,
Shawanaga n'doonji Anishinaabe Kwe n'dow.
Turtle Clan, Kim Wheatley, Head of the Fire Flower,
Shawanaga First Nation, Anishinaabe

WELCOME

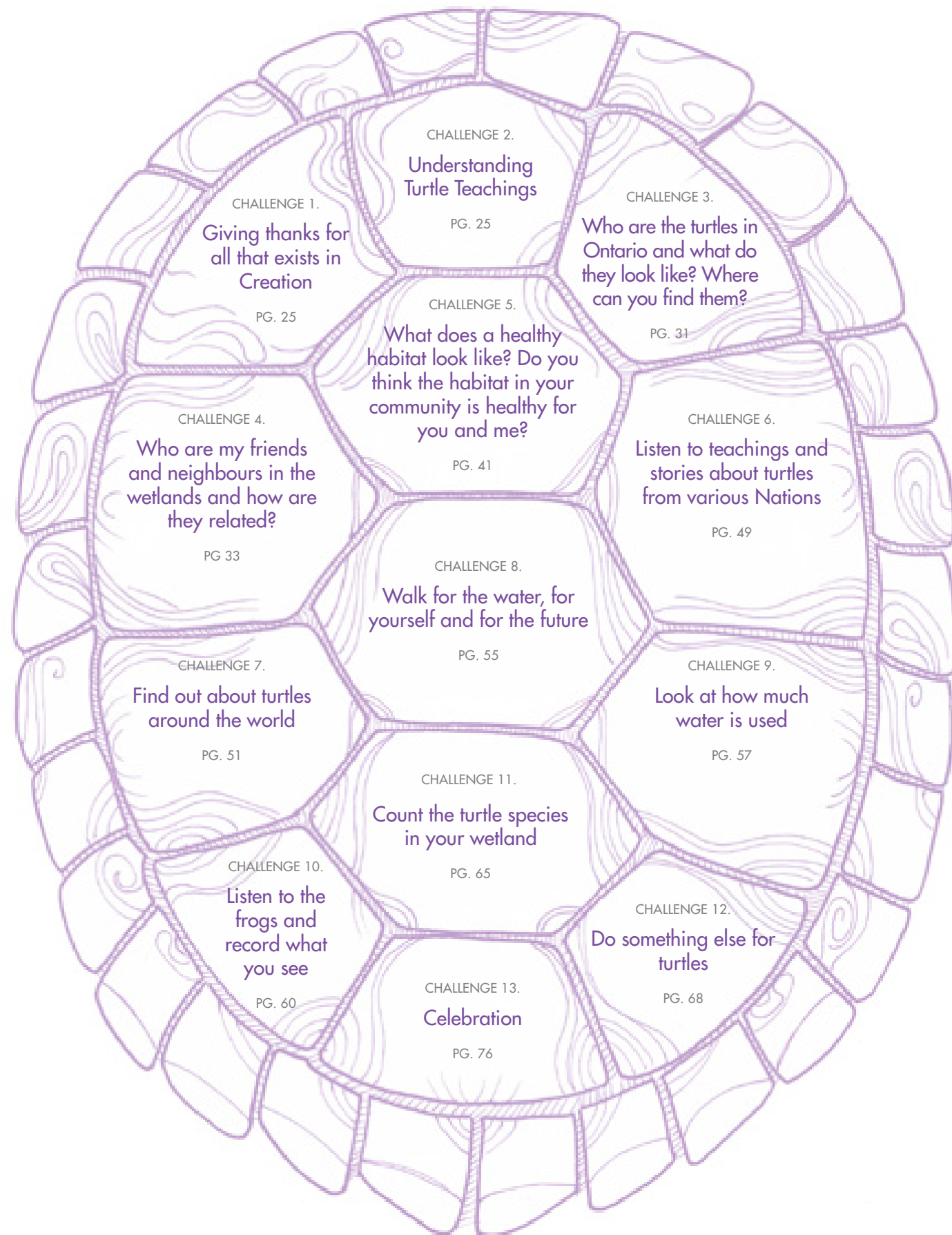
She:kon and Welcome to Walking with *A'nó:wara*! This story is designed to invite readers into the world of turtles designated Species at Risk through the eyes of *A'nó:wara*, a snapping turtle.

This is a journey which enlists the Traditional Knowledge of the Haudenosaunee People. The wisdom and knowledge contained in this book includes the authentic voices of recognized Traditional Knowledge Keepers located in the upper Great Lakes region of Ontario, Canada.

The Toronto Zoo's Turtle Island Conservation programme hopes that as you take this journey with *A'nó:wara*, you will gain an insight into the distinct ways of knowing of the Haudenosaunee People and effectively contribute to the preservation of wetlands and the creatures that inhabit them for generations to come.



A'NÓ:WARA'S THIRTEEN CHALLENGES



INTRODUCTION

By Henry Lickers

She:kon My Friends,

I hope this story reaches you and your families in good health and spirits.

My H.S.T. (harmonized sales tax) name is Henry Lickers, I'm Seneca Nation, Turtle Clan, Haudenosaunee.

I was born on the Six Nation Reserve near Brantford, Ontario Canada and as a young boy lived with my Great Grandmother and Grand Parents until I was 13 years old. I received my understanding and knowledge of the world from my family and my education from Trent University and the University of Waikato in New Zealand. I am a biologist who has worked with the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne for the past 35 years.

Turtles and their stories are near and dear to my heart. As a Turtle Clan member, I know that the World starts with the arrival of Sky Woman who fell from the Sky World. While the geese helped to slow her fall, they could not hold her. The animals of the world would have despaired if the Great Turtle had not agreed to bear Skywoman on her back. Today North America is known as Turtle Island.

To Western Society this may be a quaint story, but it reflects the philosophy of the North American Aboriginal People. The turtle reflects the obligation and commitment that all living things, including people, should have to support the Natural World and all of creation. This version of the creation of the world is no different than that of any other society of the world. Turtles are viewed as spiritual creatures with vast knowledge and good power.

There are many turtles that live in Canada and the United States. Some are abundant and some are listed on the Endangered Species List. Although Painted turtles are not listed, they are not as abundant as they were at the

time of first contact with Europeans. Turtles such as Spotted, Stinkpot, Blanding's, Northern Map and Spiny Softshelled are considered rare to endangered. These are protected by the Species at Risk Act in Canada, one of the few Provincial Acts that include First Nation values.

Turtles are a good indicator of environmental contaminants. In Akwesasne, snapping turtles contain many types of organic and inorganic contaminants; so much so that they exceed the definition of toxic waste under the Environmental Protection Act and Environment Canada. If they are caught, their meat cannot be consumed and would have to be disposed of as toxic waste. This condition is appalling to the Mohawk People of Akwesasne.

A System of Clans gave everyone the protection of extended matrilineal families. The totem of the clan was to inspire its members to greatness and to follow the ways of Peace. The Turtle Clan is one of the major clans of the Haudenosaunee. The Turtle is revered for its ability to plan and stay the course. To have a Clan totem contaminated by industrial poison means that the very foundations of the world are threatened and would be considered obscene to the Haudenosaunee.

The Turtle's place in the environment makes it a good indicator of the physical world, even at its own expense. The preservation of these animals is everyone's duty. Anyone who wantonly destroys these animals is committing a crime against Mother Earth, against the Haudenosaunee, all First Nations and against Canada. In times past, wanton destruction of the environment was considered a capital crime and could earn someone banishment from the nation forever.

Turtles, to all Aboriginal people are the very foundation of the spiritual, physical and political world and each of them have their own stories.

