

Dear Ed:

Despite my very best intentions, I have had almost no time at all to work on the project during the past 2 months.

I did, however, have a great meeting with Colleena Bibeau and Leah Lemm. They are both very supportive of the project. Leah has particular interest in developing digital and media aspects alongside physical elements, and I believe that when the time comes, she will be a great resource.

I talked with them about the need to speak with Sandy Lake Band members and other elders who might have had family history in this area. Colleena suggested holding a listening session - getting a select group of such people together in the same room and just posing some questions and see what information and ideas come of it.

Jim Merhar and Frank Bibeau's names came up, as well as some of the members of the group of Ojibwe who oversee the property given to them by the mines a little ways up the Iron Range some years ago. (These were families recruited from White Earth by the mines to come and work.) That group meets monthly, I believe, and Jim is involved in it.

I am planning to stop in next week and chat with Jim anyway, as I haven't seen him in a year, and I will introduce the idea of a listening session to him. Bernadine has already asked Frank Bibeau if he will meet with us. That came close to happening, but his mother fell very ill and at the moment he is tied up with caring for her and is not able to make any plans. I have still not heard back from Sue Meisner and I will not bug her again. I can get probably a better introduction to Sandy Lake band members through Frank, once I meet with him.

My plan is as follows:

- 1) I must complete the compilation of all my historical notes and anecdotes into a chronological narrative of what happened here at the Long Rapids of the Mississippi and in the Pokegama area. This has to be done in order to decide just what story we aim to tell in this project and which parts of the story lend themselves to which parts what types of presentation. That task of compiling the notes is entirely in my hands. I have a good start on it but have not been able to touch it for two months.
- 2) If possible, I will stop in on Jim Merhar next week, tell him more about the project, introduce the idea of a listening session, and find out how to meet/talk with the Iron Range Group.
- 3) Hopefully, things will be stable enough for Frank Bibeau that when I return from New York in early August, we can meet. Frank has historical knowledge, understands the political context, and has close ties to the Sandy Lake band, who are, interestingly, currently working on becoming recognized as a distinct band by the Federal Government, I think.
- 4) Convene a listening session this fall with selected band members, the goal of which will be to glean any historical information we can about the Pokegama band, and make sure that the products of this work grow out of local Native knowledge, experience, and perspective.
- 5) After all this is done, I envision having a planning team together of me, Leah, Colleena, hopefully a couple of other local Anishinaabe engaged during the first four steps, as well as Katie Marshall and you or someone else from the Arts & Culture Commission, to plan the specific parts of the project and put together a strategic/work plan for finding resources, artists, project manager and finances to execute it. That's the big picture for now.

Hope your summer is going well.

Karen Noyce