



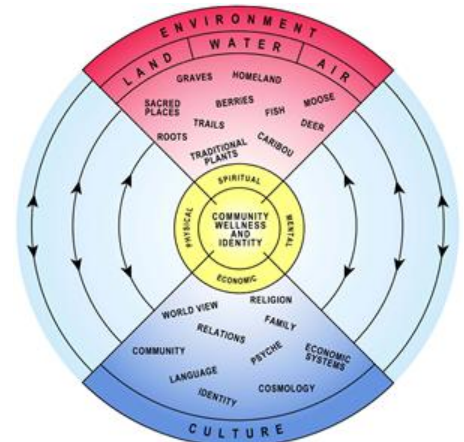
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The Traditional Lifeways

The traditional lifeways of the northern Aboriginal peoples was based on a seasonal cycle of hunting, gathering and trapping. In the northern portion of the RMWB, herds of woodland caribou were integral to the lives and existence of Aboriginal peoples. To the south, wood buffalo were the primary large game resource. Small family groups would disperse in the late fall to traditional winter hunting grounds, coming together in the late summer to early fall when the plentiful resources of the region could support large gatherings. Archaeological and ethnographic evidence records a significant traditional gathering place used for thousands of years at Ena K'erring K'a Tuwe (Cree Burn Lake or Isadore's Lake) near Fort McKay. This location was rich in plant and animal resources, was defensible, is located along water travel-routes, affords a commanding vantage point, and is located near landforms that could be used for bison pounds (Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi 2002).

The traditional diet would have come in large part from big game animals, fish, birds and berries, though a vast range of animal and plant species were harvested for both consumptive and medicinal purposes. Today traditional foods are still highly valued, even though some are considered a 'delicacy' due to their rareness. For example, moose is now the most commonly consumed large game animal (as opposed to caribou or bison). Barrenland caribou used to range as far south as the Muskeg River until about 60 years ago; now they stay north of Lake Athabasca, and woodland caribou have become a protected species. There are consumption advisories on fish taken from the Athabasca River and Lake Athabasca. As a result, many people do not consider them safe to eat.



Wellness Diagram

Source: AXYS Environmental Management Ltd. and FMA Heritage Resource Consultants Ltd.
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Bison Harvest

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