

Wisdom of Great Lakes

By Amar Veluri

On a crisp autumn evening, as dusk fell, the heavenly Milky Way rose over the Bond Falls. Then, an angel descended the Milky Way with her veil cascading down the falls. A layer of mist settled over the Ottawa National Forest as the angel spread her veil across the pristine wilderness and glided over the tributaries of the Ontonagon River, toward Lake Superior. The angel then entered the great lake and cradled the spirits of the indigenous ancestors that once worshipped the lake. Her veil continued to breeze through the forest canopies prompting the golden aspens to shower glittering leaves on the sacred land of the indigenous peoples as musky-sweet and earthy smells redeemed the air.

It was a dream, but it inspired me to explore the cultural heritage of the Great Lakes region. When I read about the Council of Three Fires, established in 796 AD to build a strategic alliance between the Anishinaabe tribes, I felt that the collective wisdom of the Great Lakes ecosystem may have guided Anishinaabe's thought process in conceiving this alliance. Perhaps, a composed Lake Superior inspired the need for the keepers of faith, represented by the Chippewa; rivers that fuel lifeblood into the neural networks of the vegetation inspired the need for the keepers of trade, represented by the Ottawa; and the glistening and vibrant rapids and waterfalls inspired the need for the keepers of fire, represented by the Potawatomi.

As generations pass, the delicate balance of the Great Lakes is at the verge of collapse. I truly hope that we as mankind will make it our sacred mission to save the Great Lakes, thereby illuminating a beacon of hope for our own survival!