



MANAGEMENT POLICY

MARCH 2026

GLOSSARY

Anicinabe: Indigenous people of Abitibi-Témiscamingue and the Outaouais, established in the communities of Pikogan, Lac Simon, Kitchisakik, Kitiganik, Kitigan Zibi, Kebaowek, Wolf Lake, Long Point, Timiskaming, Pikwakanagan, and Wahgoshig, as well as in the cities of Senneterre, Val-d’Or, and Maniwaki. Some people write “ANICINAPE”; others “Anicinape,” “Anishnabe,” “Anishinabe,” or “Anichinabé.” Minwashin uses the spelling “Anicinabe” (“Anicinabek” in the plural), while recognizing the legitimacy of all the others. What matters most is how the language is spoken, not how it is written.

In this policy, the word “Anicinabe” has a more restricted meaning than in common usage; it does not include other peoples within the Anicinabe linguistic family (e.g., Ojibway, Odawa, Chippewa).

Archive: a source of information (e.g., artifact, photograph, *adisokan*) that sheds light on the past or the culture of Anicinabek communities and families, whether or not they created it.

The word “*archive*” has no equivalent in Anicinabemowin. Weckatc, the Kitci Anicinabek passed down words, stories, and knowledge orally. After multiple collective traumas and technological shifts, the records of the Wemitikojik, period photographs, and other archives have become objects to reclaim in order to revitalize culture.

Circle: a group of people who discuss as equals.

Canado-European culture sometimes portrays intelligence as the faculty of geniuses who adopt positions of authority to direct others. Minwashin instead views *Mitonentcikan*—wisdom—as a co-construction developed through listening, sharing, and mutual respect.

Digital collection: a website that hosts digital copies of archives to make them accessible to various audiences.

Contributor: a person who shares metadata* with Minwashin. That person retains intellectual property rights.

Those who transmit knowledge—first and foremost the *comisak* and the *kokomak*—contribute to the flourishing of communities. They are bearers, not creators, of collective knowledge inherited from their ancestors. The recognition owed to them is profound.

Personal information: information that makes it possible to identify a person (e.g., name, date of birth, genealogical ancestry). It is protected by the right to reputation and the right to privacy.

Among the *Wemitikojik*, the protection of personal information is often conceived in terms of confidentiality. Minwashin instead proceeds on the basis of responsibility. What matters is less concealing information at all costs than recognizing the appropriate context in which to share it, with respect for people and their rights.

Editor : a person, family, or organization that shares an archive with Minwashin for the purpose of publishing it in NIPAKANATIK.

Metadata: information relating to an archive, intended to be published in NIPAKANATIK.

When describing an archive, emphasis is placed on its relationship with the territory, and with *Anicinabek* communities and families. Situating an archive within the world is a mark of respect for what preceded it. It is a way of recognizing the interconnectedness of everything that inhabits *Aki*.

CONTEXT

For centuries, the *comisak* and *kokomak* have shared ancestral stories with younger generations. To their words are added archives scattered across Turtle Island, held by individuals, community buildings, and memory institutions (e.g., Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec; Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian; National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation).

Archives are essential sources of information and key tools for cultural revitalization. Yet geographic and institutional barriers complicate their access. Many documents are held in Montréal, Ottawa, Winnipeg, and Washington—far from Aki. Community and family archives are thus often described by Canadian or U.S. institutions. Contrary to longstanding colonial assumptions, archive description can never be neutral or objective.

In 2021, the term “Amérindien” was still found in the descriptions at the Archives des Augustines. That same year, Minwashin observed that object descriptions at the Musée de la civilisation and the McCord Stewart Museum did not take into account their Anicinabemowin names, use contexts, or spiritual characteristics. Minwashin also noted that Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ) had not identified the Anicinabek appearing in its Abitibi photographic archives; most images carried generic titles such as “*Indigenous family*” or “*A veteran*”. Each of these choices contributed to the erasure of language, knowledge, and memory.

Aware of these issues, Maurice J. Kistabish and Minwashin launched the digital collection NIPAKANATIK in 2023. In Anicinabemowin, “Nipakanatik” refers to the structure of a wigwam—the set of poles erected before the covering is laid. It is the foundation of the shelter under which knowledge about Aki, Weckatc, and culture was shared.

NIPAKANATIK hosts digital copies of archives retracing Anicinabe community and family histories. Between 2022 and 2025, BAnQ, the MCQ, the MMCS, and the Archives des Augustines each authorized Minwashin to publish digital copies of their archives and to (re)describe them from an Anicinabe perspective.

PURPOSES OF THE POLICY

This policy aims to:

- define the objectives of the NIPAKANATIK project;

- facilitate decision-making;
- define the roles and responsibilities of involved parties.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all persons remunerated by Minwashin as part of the NIPAKANATIK project.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

SELF-DETERMINATION

That the Anicinabek be the primary actors in archive preservation and description.

Means favoured by Minwashin: involve knowledge holders in NIPAKANATIK management; facilitate sharing circles to revise, improve, or correct metadata; train community archive managers.

ACCESS

That Anicinabek have easy access to archives for the next seven generations.

Means: digitize archives and publish digital copies in NIPAKANATIK; distribute printed copies in elders' residences; connect communities with institutions holding their archives.

OWNERSHIP

That Anicinabek be the owners of archives and metadata.

Means: return archives to editors after digitization; credit contributors whenever metadata are used; support repatriation requests.

TRANSMISSION

That archives be used to teach family and community histories or to create works of art.

Means: support the development of educational materials; invite youth to sharing circles around archives; integrate archives into artistic or museum projects.

VALUES

MANATCIWEWIN (CARE)

Respect partners' rhythms to build lasting trust. Every archive and every person must be treated with care and kindness.

MATONAMAKEWIN (RECIPROCITY)

Remain accountable to editors and contributors. As equals, we support one another in co-constructing a better understanding of the past.

TEBWEWIN (TRUTH)

Restore and honour ancestors' memory by correcting misinterpretations of the past.

FRAMEWORK

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy complements Minwashin's bylaws and the following laws:

- Copyright Act;
- Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information;
- Act respecting the protection of personal information.

REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

This policy draws on:

- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007);
- Local Contexts Traditional Knowledge Labels (2010);
- AFNQL Research Protocol (2014);
- Calls to Action 67, 69, 70, 92 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015);
- First Nations of Québec–Labrador Information Governance Framework (2019);
- AFNQL Data Governance Strategy (2020);
- OCAP® Principles (2023).

ACQUISITION POLICY

Minwashin acquires digital copies of archives. Upon signature by the editor, Minwashin is granted the right to:

- publish the archives in NIPAKANATIK;
- produce printed copies;
- share them with authorized audiences;
- translate them;
- reinterpret them and situate them within their historical context.

Each editor retains physical ownership of the archives and intellectual property rights over the metadata. Accordingly, Minwashin does not retain the archive once it has been digitized; it is returned to the editor along with a digital copy on a USB drive.

ACQUISITION CRITERIA

An archive is digitized or a digital copy acquired provided that it can be published in NIPAKANATIK and meets at least three of the following criteria:

- **Age:** more than 60 years old;
- **Preservation:** at risk of deterioration within the next two years;
- **Historical relevance:** represents or addresses a cultural practice or the history of *Aki*, a community, or a family;
- **Quality:** has no major technical defects (e.g., blurry image, poor framing, dark lighting);
- **Rarity:** is a rare or unique item;
- **Respect for privacy:** pertains to public or community life.

An archive meeting fewer than three criteria may nevertheless be digitized if no other archive is available and if doing so is deemed to contribute to building a relationship of trust with a knowledge holder.

ACQUISITION PROCEDURE

Minwashin must present the project to the editor and have them sign a usage licence prior to publishing digital copies in NIPAKANATIK.

RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

A editor may contact Minwashin to request the removal of a digital copy from **NIPAKANATIK**. Minwashin must acknowledge and act on this request as quickly as possible.

Any identifiable person appearing in a digital copy holds the same right.

ACCESS POLICY

ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Each digital copy of an archive is assigned one of the following access levels:

- **Open access:** access to all audiences.
- **Community and authorized users (restricted):** the *description* of the archive is accessible to all audiences, but its digital copy is reserved for named communities and users authorized by the Mitonenticikan circle.

CONSULTATION PROTOCOL

Each digital copy with restricted access is associated with one or more of the following consultation protocols:

- **Anicinabekwe:** authorized users are invited to consult an Anishinaabe woman to interpret the content of the digital copy.
- **Anicinabewinni:** authorized users are invited to consult an Anishinaabe man to interpret the content of the digital copy.
- **Family:** authorized users are invited to consult a member of the concerned family to interpret the content of the digital copy.
- **Knowledge keeper:** authorized users are invited to consult a knowledge keeper to interpret the content of the digital copy.
- **Season:** authorized users are invited to consult the digital copy during a specific season.
- **Sensitive:** authorized users are invited to use the digital copy with caution, paying particular attention to audiences who may relive trauma when exposed to it.

PROCEDURE

In the usage license, the editor establishes the access level and consultation protocol. The Mitonenticikan Circle then validates the access level based on the following criteria:

- **External accessibility:** availability of the archive in another digital collection;
- **Rights to reputation and privacy:** reasonable risks to rights and persons;
- **Sensitivity:** reasonable risks of misuse, such as identity fraud or commercial exploitation.

RIGHT TO CHANGE ACCESS LEVEL

A editor may contact Minwashin to change the access level of a digital copy. Minwashin must act as promptly as possible.

Any identifiable person appearing in a digital copy holds the same right.

ACCESS REQUESTS

An unauthorized person may fill out NIPAKANATIK's registration form to request access to a restricted digital copy.

The request is evaluated by Minwashin and the Mitonencikan Circle. If approved, the requester must sign an agreement with Minwashin.

Following signature, the person is granted access for six weeks. Access may be renewed by contacting Minwashin.

TERMS OF USE

By using NIPAKANATIK, users accept and agree to comply with these terms of use.

General Terms and Conditions

Individuals who are identifiable in resources are protected by the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (C-12). Users are responsible for ensuring that they do not infringe upon image rights, reputation, or privacy, nor any other rights, in Canada or in any other country in which they are located. Minwashin assumes no responsibility in this regard.

Anyone who becomes aware of a use of a resource that infringes upon their rights is invited to contact Minwashin.

Intellectual Property

The resources and their descriptions are protected by the Copyright Act (R.S.C., c. C-42) and by other intellectual property rights granted under user licenses.

Users are responsible for ensuring that they do not infringe copyright laws, in Canada or in any other country in which they are located. Minwashin assumes no responsibility in this regard.

Copyright Exceptions

Resources and their descriptions that are protected by the Copyright Act and other intellectual property rights may be used in accordance with the exceptions provided by law.

For any other use of a resource or descriptive information, users must contact Minwashin to obtain a user license.

Creative Commons Licenses

Resources that include a rights statement or a Creative Commons license may be used in accordance with the specific terms of that statement or license. However, the descriptions of these resources remain protected by the Copyright Act and by other intellectual property rights.

Public Domain

Resources that are part of the public domain in Canada are identified with the mention “Public Domain.”

When a resource is identified as such, it may be used freely. However, descriptions of these resources are protected by the Copyright Act and by other intellectual property rights.

Citation and Reference

Any use of a resource or descriptive information that complies with copyright must be accompanied by a reference, in full respect of intellectual property rights. Users must provide the following : the title ; the creation date ; the publisher ; the contributor ; a mention of NIPAKANATIK.

Example: *Polson Family* (n.d.). *Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec* (P88). Interpreted by JÉRÔME, Alice. Photograph located in NIPAKANATIK.

Restricted-Access Resources

NIPAKANATIK hosts certain resources whose access is restricted to members of Anicinabek communities and to users authorized by the Mitonenticikan Circle. These resources are protected by the Copyright Act (R.S.C., c. C-42), the Act respecting the protection of personal information in the private sector (P-39.1), and by other rights.

Access restrictions are implemented to protect sensitive information from potential misuse, such as commercial exploitation or the falsification of Indigenous identity.

Access to Community or Authorized Users Access Resources

To access community or authorized users access resources, users must complete the NIPAKANATIK registration form.

If the user is not Anicinabe, they must indicate the identifiers of the requested resources, the reason for their access request, and the measures that will be put in place to comply with consultation protocol(s), if applicable.

Use of Restricted-Access Resources

Individuals who appear in or are mentioned in restricted-access resources are protected by personal information protection legislation, notably the Act respecting the protection of personal information in the private sector (P-39.1). Users are responsible for ensuring that they do not infringe upon privacy rights, in Canada or in any other country in which they are located. Minwashin assumes no responsibility in this regard.

For any use of a restricted-access resource or its descriptive information, users must contact Minwashin in advance to obtain a user license.

Disclaimer

Minwashin offers no guarantee regarding the use of resources and descriptions available on Nipakanatik. Users agree to use them as-is and to rely on them at their own risk.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

MITONENTCIKAN CIRCLE

The Mitonenticikan Circle ensures that digital copies are used with respect for rights and persons. It includes individuals external to Minwashin, selected for their community engagement and interest in history.

*“For a long time, research was done **on** the Anicinabek... From now on, research will be done **with and for** the Anicinabek.”*

Roles

- Meet at least four half-days per year
- Set priorities for the archival projects manager
- Define access levels
- Evaluate access requests
- Co-develop strategic action plans
- Support negotiations with colonial institutions

Responsibilities

Members must act in accordance with this policy, avoid conflicts of interest, and report any such situations promptly.

ARCHIVAL PROJECTS MANAGER

Roles

- Locate, digitize, classify, describe, and publish archives
- Coordinate and train staff
- Negotiate with institutions
- Enforce Mitonenticikan Circle decisions
- Supervise internships
- Co-develop annual action plans

Responsibilities

Act in accordance with this policy and report any conflicts of interest.

OTHER STAFF

Roles

- Archive research and publication
- Project promotion
- Grant writing

Responsibilities

Comply with this policy and disclose any conflicts of interest.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This policy comes into force upon adoption and is reviewed every three years by the Mitonenticikan Circle.