

A REPARATIONS SOLSTICE OFFERING

LEARN | REFLECT | ACT

Introduction

MNIPL has made a long-term commitment to reparations programming as a core part of work. Some of you are already involved in these programs and for others, it is new to think about reparations as a part of climate work. **This introductory tool explains why the two are so intertwined, invites you to begin incorporating the idea of reparations into your climate work, and offers a tool that you can use to introduce others to this idea.**

Why reparations and why now?

People often ask us, “Why are reparations a core part of a climate justice agenda?”

Most of the time, we begin our answer by saying that the same systems that separate us from caring for the earth also work to separate us from caring for one another.

How we experience climate change today is rooted in scientific *and* social history. White ancestors built the United States on land they stole from Native people and labor they stole from enslaved Black people. They commodified land and people just as they commodified natural “resources” – coal, iron, and other metals and minerals. This world view prioritized extractive profit for some over the needs of all and created a segmented world dependent on fossil fuels at the expense of our care for each other and the earth.

We can’t work towards a thriving, just, and sustainable world without also committing to repairing the wounds of land theft and enslavement. And so we ask ourselves, if we want the work to be different, what kind of ancestor are we going to work to become?

People also ask us, “Why is Indigenous and Tribal sovereignty a core part of a climate justice agenda?”

To answer that, we turn to the brilliant work of Menominee scholar Michael Lane. He writes:

For Indigenous Peoples, what is called nature is an interconnected web of different beings of which humans are a part. They exist in their own right....Indigenous Sovereignty can be thought of as encompassing not just legal/political authority, but is inclusive of language, spiritual ways, culture/tradition, and relationships with all that is on or in their respective lands and waters, as well as the lands and waters themselves. When the land and waters are harmed, the Indigenous

Peoples relating to the lands and waters are harmed. Indigenous Sovereignty is thus being attacked when the lands and waters are being harmed. This linkage is important. Supporting Indigenous Sovereignty is supporting the rights of nature. The two concepts are intertwined and cannot be separated.

When we work together to repair the harm that climate change causes to our planet, we invite one another into deeper interdependence. And when we work towards repair, we work towards our own reconnection, and towards a thriving and sustainable future.

Reflection

Robin Wall Kimmerer is a scientist, botanist, storyteller, and culture keeper in the tradition of the Potawatomi people. We invite you to watch [this short video](#), then return to these questions: In her talk, Dr. Kimmerer suggests that the turtles are asking us to pay a different kind of attention. What would it mean to you to pay attention differently in response to the turtles? What gifts and offerings might you have to bring to the work of building a more sustainable future?



There are clickable links throughout this document if you're viewing it on a computer or phone. If you're unable to click the links or if you're reading this in printed form, all of the materials, resources, and actions are compiled at mnipl.org/solstice-offering. You can also scan the QR code above.



What are reparations?

“Reparations” describes a diverse universe of concepts, framings, and actions related to addressing the harm of stolen land and stolen labor individually, communally, and systemically. At MNIPL, we define Reparations as specific work towards repair that requires healing, accountability, and the return of resources on the part of white-bodied people towards Black and Indigenous people.

In our colonized world, “reparations” marks an imperfect way to acknowledge the theft of land from Indigenous ancestors, the theft of labor from Black ancestors, and the attempted genocide of both peoples through the return of resources and power to Black and Indigenous people today. These shifts in the distribution of resources orient us toward spiritual and systemic changes that liberate us all.

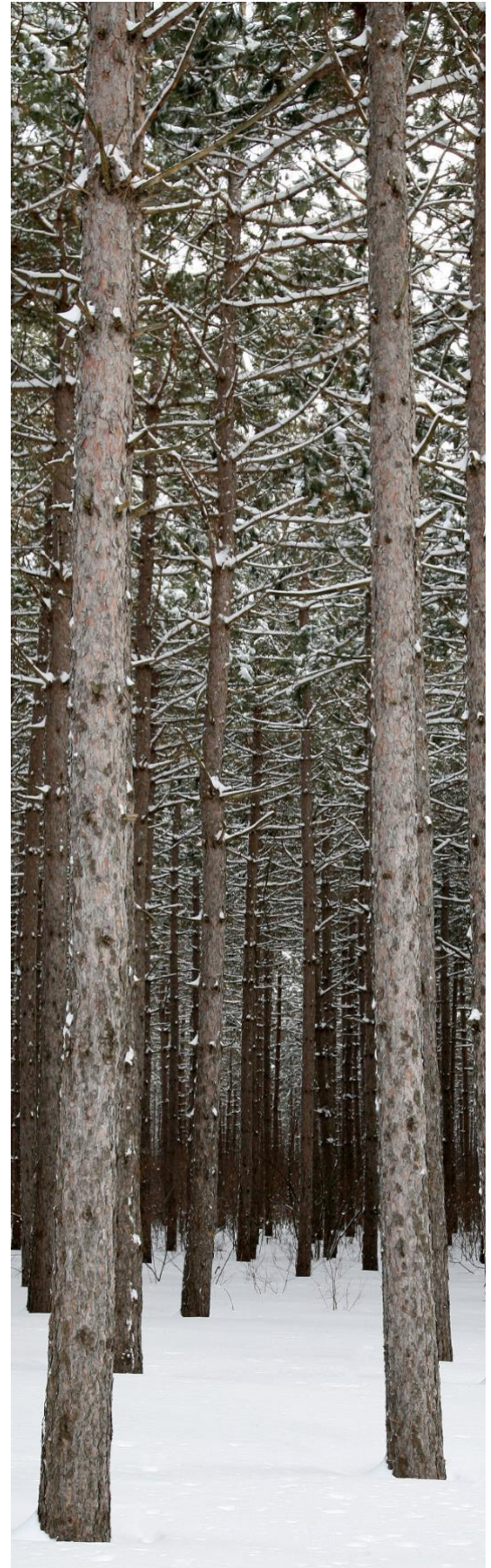
“Imagine a world wherein private landowners approached Indigenous tribes to ask what they would like to have happen. Imagine a world where state and federal agencies come to tribal elders with gifts of sage, cedar, tobacco, food and beverages to ask them to ask the land what it wants. Imagine a world where once there came an answer, the abundance of the world still managed to take care of the basic needs all people at the tribal, municipal, state, federal and individual level.”



Alfred Walking Bull
Sicangu Lakota
MNIPL Black & Indigenous
Reparations Table Member

Reflection

How are reparations as we’ve described them similar to and different from racial-justice work? How has your work so far aligned with this framework? What edges of your work have room for growth?

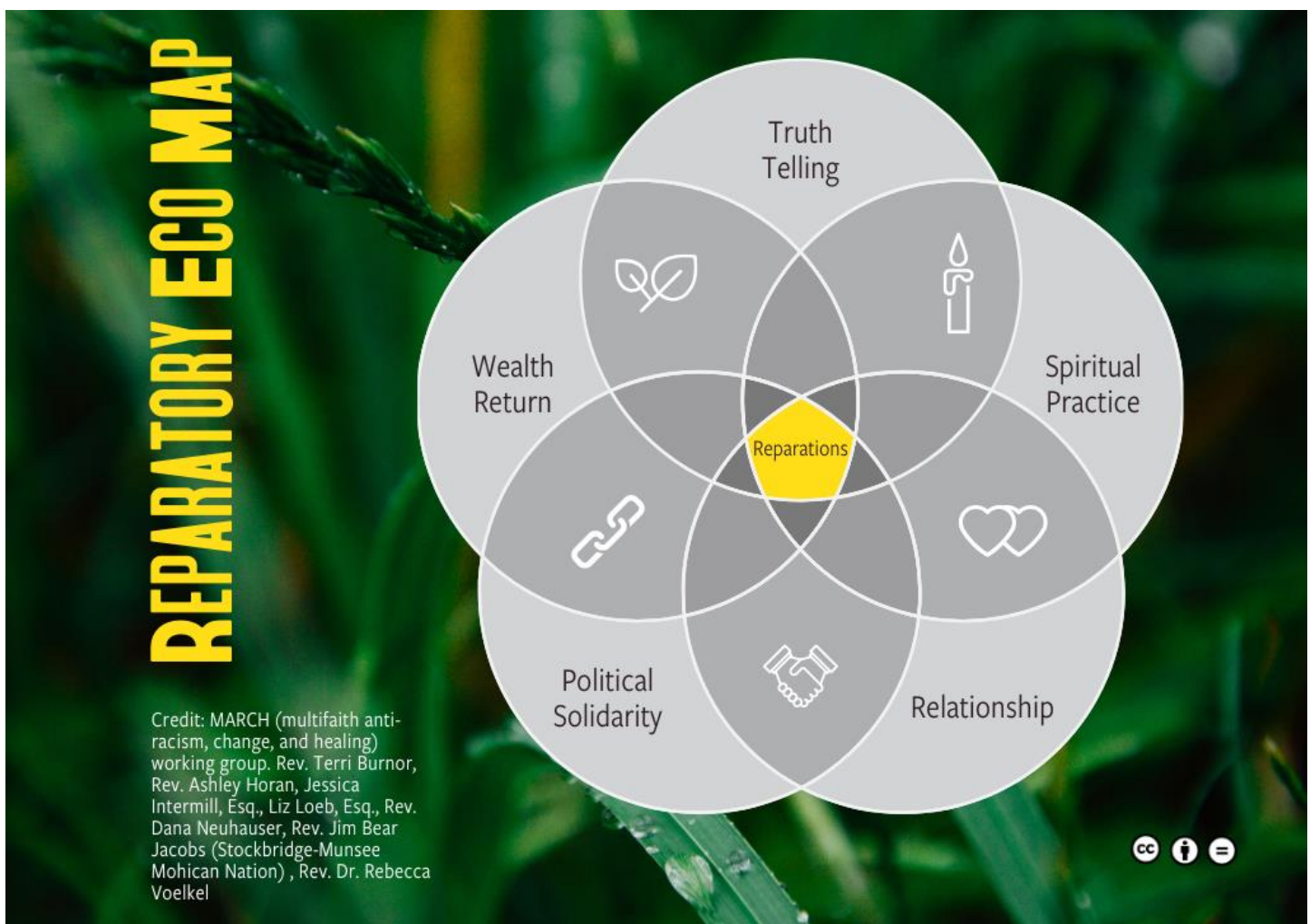


Reparations Eco Map

It may take generations to undo the compound harm that generations have caused.

A pro-queer multifaith and multiracial group of organizers created this Reparatory Eco Map. It illustrates one possible model for thinking about a holistic approach to reparations. Each of the sections of the map are necessary, but none by itself is sufficient. True repair for the wounds of stolen land, stolen labor, and stolen power asks us to commit throughout our lives to the intersection of different approaches over time.

We designed this framework as a circle to help organizers and individuals formulate questions that can move them towards deeper action and deeper connection. Repair can begin in any sector of the map, and that work will naturally lead to exploration of other sections, without a specific beginning or end. The work continues, around the circle, until all of us are free.



Use: Creative Commons/BY/ND

Reflection

What part of the Eco Map calls to you? What invites you into action? What part makes you uncomfortable?

Learn



Many of us have been shaped by a lifetime of lessons from a colonized framework that teaches us to continue patterns of extraction and domination. The work of decolonization invites us into a different kind of curiosity, and offers us the opportunity to shift towards a worldview rooted in interdependence, reciprocity, and repair.

Here are some resources for thinking and learning about reparations as part of a larger process of decolonization.

- [Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light: Reparations: What are They?](#)

This recoding of a session hosted by Liz Loeb and Jessica Intermill at MNIPL reviews the definition of reparations and makes the case for why reparations are a necessary part of climate justice work and the work communities of faith, conscience, and spiritual practice. It's a great place to start for folks who are new to this work and curious about what it means.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates, The Case for Reparations](#)

Published in The Atlantic, this is a seminal piece about the lasting affects of slavery, Jim Crow, and discrimination. It makes the case that the United States will never find healing or live up to its promises without reckoning with or repairing these compounding moral harms.

- [LAND BACK! What do we mean?](#)

This post by Ronald Gamblin from the 4Rs Youth Moment provides a framework for non-Indigenous people living on Indigenous land to understand what Indigenous people mean when they talk about Land Back. It offers an opportunity for particularly white people to interrogate their own relationship and reactions to the idea of land back and to understand how they can stand in solidarity for this call.

- [What Are Reparations? The Movement for Black Lives](#)

This document offers two different definitions for reparations, one from the United Nations and one from the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA).

- [Indigenous Repatriation, Restitution, and Apologies: The Reparations Syllabus](#)
This Reparations Syllabus is an extension of a symposium offered by the University of Minnesota called “Reparations, Restitution, and Apologies.” The designers of this curriculum wanted to offer it publicly as a way for teachers, researchers, and advocates interested in learning or teaching about the topic of reparations. It offers a series of readings by local and national Indigenous leaders and scholars about how land is essential to Native identity and community, and what material decolonization could be like.
- [Land Grab Universities from High Country News](#)
The United States gave stolen land to 52 land-grant universities in the United States, including the University of Minnesota, in order to leverage huge amounts of funding. This resource offers an overview of the dark history of these land grab universities and detailed information about how and where universities across the country benefit from the theft of Native land.
- [The Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery](#)
During the Crusades and through the 15th century, Church law declared that the entire world belonged to Christendom, and that any European who “discovered” or conquered any land had ownership of it. This “Doctrine of Discovery” drove the arrival of Europeans in the Western hemisphere (and elsewhere), and provided the legal and moral framework that has fueled American and European imperialism. This coalition calls on the Christian Church to address the extinction, enslavement, and extraction done in the name of Christ on Indigenous lands.
- [Jim Crow of the North: Racism and Redlining in Minnesota](#)
This documentary from TPT explores the origins of housing segregation in the Minneapolis area through the realities of red-lining and racial covenants (requirements placed in housing deeds that barred homeowners from selling their homes to Black and Indigenous people as well as people from other groups). It calls on Minnesotans to challenge our assumptions of “Minnesota Nice” and grapple with our history and present state of segregation.

Reflect

As our learning shows us, the wealth we call ours is not ours. If you are white person living in the geography of the United States, no matter what your identities or inheritances might be, and no matter what historical forces brought you to this land, our wealth is rooted in stolen land and stolen labor. That history asks us to take financial action towards repair in practical and concrete ways. We’re going to ask you to make financial contributions to specific places, but before we do, we want you to reflect on the following questions.

Do you find yourself wanting to know how wealth returned will be used before you make a financial commitment? From where do you think that desire comes? How might this feeling of “wanting to know how the money will be used” be intertwined with lessons around power or control? What does it mean to think that something is yours to own? How does the work of reparations challenge your learned framework of ownership?

Act

If you are able, make a contribution in any amount that is meaningful to you to one or all of the following:

- [MNIPL's Black and Indigenous Reparations Advisory Table](#): Because we take relationship and accountability seriously, we guide our reparations work through the counsel of Black & Indigenous advisors. This fund ensures that Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light can meaningfully compensate these leaders for their time and talents. Every dollar donated through this page goes to the amazing activists who are guiding us towards authentic change.
- [Rootsprings](#): Fund rest! Rootsprings is a Black-led retreat center that fosters healing, learning, and connection for individuals, community, and Earth centering BIPOC and LGBTQ+ artists, activists, and healers.
- [Mni Sota Makoce Honor Tax](#): If you live in, work on, or visit Minnesota, you are on Dakota Land. Recognize your role in this place with a voluntary payment of governmental revenue directly to the Lower Sioux Indian Community, the tribe whose home sits at the epicenter of the economic and military violence of the US-Dakota War.

Now keep going! Connect to our reparations community of people taking action and join us in supporting each other in this work!

- [Become a monthly sustainer of MNIPL](#)
- [Join the MNIPL mailing list](#)
- [Join the Rise and Repair mailing list](#)

Additional Offerings

Help your community learn, connect, and act on reparations by offering a 90-minute workshop facilitated by our reparations team, Liz and Jessica. Gather 15-20 members of your community for an interactive deep dive into the Reparatory Eco Map and to brainstorm practical tips for repair. Only a few workshops are available each year, so email Liz@mnipl.org to get on the list!

