Spirit Food

A Multi-Dimensional Overview of the Decolonizing Diet Project

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What is the DDP?

- The Decolonizing Diet Project (DDP) (approved by IRB: project # HS11-415) is an exploratory study of the relationships between people and Indigenous foods of the Great Lakes Region.
- Multi-dimensional study
Goals of the DDP

• Connect, or reconnect, humans with foods that are Indigenous to the Great Lakes Region and that were part of Indigenous peoples diets prior to colonization.
• To provide food-related data for tribal communities and others that are working toward the revitalization of Indigenous cultures.
Hypotheses and Predictions

• Individual participants in the DDP will experience significant changes in health and social relations as a result of participating in the DDP.

• Individuals eating only Indigenous species of plants and animals in the Great Lakes Region, who follow an exercise regimen equivalent to a pre-colonial lifestyle, will show significantly greater positive effects in health, as compared to individuals who eat a mix of indigenous/non-indigenous species, or only non-indigenous species, and follow an exercise regimen equivalent to a pre-colonial lifestyle.

• Individuals eating only indigenous species of plants and animals in the Great Lakes Region, who follow an exercise regimen equivalent to a pre-colonial lifestyle, will experience significantly more social and legal/political barriers in accessing food, as compared to individuals who eat a mix of indigenous/non-indigenous species, or only non-indigenous species, and follow an exercise regimen equivalent to a pre-colonial lifestyle.
Where did the DDP take place?
Who was involved in the project?

- 25 voluntary research subjects
  - Currently at 23
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Advisors
- NMU Community
- GLR Community
- Others
# DDP Time Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research and Planning Phase</th>
<th>Implementation Phase</th>
<th>Analysis/Reporting Phase</th>
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- *Form advisory group.*
- *Hire staff.*
- *Develop indigenous foods database.*
- *Create a DDP blog site.*
- *Identify indigenous food providers and consultants.*
- *Hold informational gatherings.*
- *Recruit and select research subjects.*
- *Research subjects determine diet level and exercise plan.*
- *Begin stocking up on frozen and dried indigenous foods.*
- *Investigate the possibility of having an indigenous foods garden.*
- *Presentations on DDP.*

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- *Research subjects get annual physicals at the beginning and end of the diet.*
- *Research subjects get regular 3 month check-ups.*
- *We were to begin diet when maple sap ran in the spring, and end diet when it ran again the following spring. Actual start was March 25, 2012, end will be March 24, 2013.*
- *Research subjects keep a daily log of DDP activity.*
- *Consultants provide training on accessing, storing, and preparing indigenous foods.*
- *Presentations on DDP.*

- *Compile data into a final report.*
- *Develop a manuscript about the study to submit to a scholarly journal.*
- *Create and market a DDP recipe book based on the study.*
- *Produce and market a documentary video about the DDP study.*
- *Offer a new NAS special topics course on indigenous foods.*
- *Presentations on DDP.*

*Presentations on DDP.*
Individual Commitment to the DDP

- Between 25%-100% of their daily diet consisted of Indigenous foods from the GLR
- Adhered to an exercise regimen based on pre-colonial physical activities or their equivalents
- Ate and exercised according to this plan for one year
- Used multiple forms of media to record their experiences including a written journal, photos, and video/audio
- Got regularly scheduled health checks
How did people know what to eat?

- Master list of DDP eligible foods identifies many species of plants, mammals, birds, fish, fungi, and insects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nelumbo lutea</strong></td>
<td><strong>American Lotus</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Nemophila mucronata</strong> L.</td>
<td><strong>Catberry</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nymphaea odorata</strong> Ait.</td>
<td><strong>American White Waterlily</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Osmunda regalis</strong></td>
<td><strong>Royal Fern</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Oxalis montana</strong> Raf.</td>
<td><strong>Mountain Woodsorrel</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parmelia physodes</strong> Ack.</td>
<td><strong>Lichen</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</strong> (L.) Planch</td>
<td><strong>Virginia Creeper</strong></td>
<td><strong>manidoo-biimaakwed</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pedicularis canadensis</strong> L.</td>
<td><strong>Canadian Lousewort, Wood Betany</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phaseolus lunatus</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lima Bean</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phaseolus polystachios (polystachyus)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Thicket Bean, Genuine Cornfield Bean</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phaseolus vulgaris</strong> (var. vulgaris and subsp. aborigineus)**</td>
<td><strong>Common Green Bean, Kidney Bean, Cherokee Trail of Tears, Navy Bean, Pinto Bean, Great Northern Marrow Bean, Yellow Eye Bean, Black Bean</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phytolacca americana</strong></td>
<td><strong>Black Chokecherry</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Picea glauca</strong></td>
<td><strong>American Pokeweed</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Picea mariana</strong></td>
<td><strong>White Spruce</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pinus strobus</strong> L.</td>
<td><strong>Black Spruce</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Podophyllum peltatum</strong></td>
<td><strong>Eastern White Pine</strong></td>
<td><strong>kah-be-sah-dah-ge-set</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Polygonum achoreum</strong> S.F. Blake</td>
<td><strong>Mayapple</strong></td>
<td><strong>zhaabozigan</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Polygonum amphibium</strong> L.</td>
<td><strong>Leathery Knotweed</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Polygonum arifolium</strong> L.</td>
<td><strong>Water Knotweed</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Polygonum bupinum</strong> Small</td>
<td><strong>Halberdleaf Tearthumb</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Polygonum careyi</strong> Olney</td>
<td><strong>Box Knotweed</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Polygonum douglasii</strong> Greene</td>
<td><strong>Carey's Smartweed</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Polygonum douglasii</strong> Greene</td>
<td><strong>Douglas' Knotweed</strong></td>
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## DDP Food Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Native Pre-Colonial (NPreC)</th>
<th>Introduced Pre-Colonial (IPreC)</th>
<th>Native Pre-Colonial Derivation (NPreCD)</th>
<th>Introduced Pre-Colonial Derivation (IPreCD)</th>
<th>Introduced Post-Colonial (IPostC)</th>
<th>Introduced Post-Colonial Derivation (IPostCD)</th>
<th>Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanation</strong></td>
<td>These foods were not introduced by humans, deliberately or accidentally, into the Great Lakes Region (GLR), and they existed in the GLR prior to European colonization of the Region.</td>
<td>These foods were introduced by humans, deliberately or accidentally, into the GLR, and they existed in the GLR prior to European colonization of the Region.</td>
<td>These foods have been derived from NPreC foods, and although the species existed in the GLR prior to European colonization of the Region, this particular variety did not, does not include GMOs.</td>
<td>These foods have been derived from IPreC foods, and although the species existed in the GLR prior to European colonization of the Region, this particular variety did not, does not include GMOs.</td>
<td>These foods were introduced by humans, deliberately or accidentally, into the GLR, and they did not exist in the GLR prior to European colonization of the Region.</td>
<td>These foods have been derived from IPostC foods, does not include GMOs.</td>
<td>These foods have been deliberately genetically modified from NPreC, IPreC, NPreCD, IPreCD, IPostC, and IPostCD foods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Included in DDP?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
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</table>
How did people find their food?

- DDP research subjects employed multiple methods of accessing Indigenous foods including:
  - Hunting
  - Fishing
  - **Gathering/Foraging**
  - Gardening
  - **Purchasing**
  - Trading
  - Sharing
  - Other
How did people know how to prepare the foods?

Cooking Demos

Potlucks

Online Journals

Recipe Forum
Preliminary Outcomes

- Biological
- Cultural
- Legal/Political
- DDP
Most Common Foods

- Wild rice
- Corn
- Maple
- Sunflower
- Pumpkin
- Squash
- Berries
- Wild Leeks
- Beans
- Sweet potatoes
- Pecans
- Turkey
- Sunchokes
- Venison
- Bison
- Fish
Most Uncommon Foods

- Beaver
- Grasshopper
- White Pine Bark
- Crab Apple
- Squirrel
- Porky Pine
Most Common Forms of Physical Activity

- Other smaller categories included things like snow shoveling, cooking, workouts on gym machines, child care, animal care, and every day activities associated with jobs.

- Chicken care was reported for one research subject only.
Preliminary Biological Outcomes

• Research subjects agreed to submit annual physical and quarterly checkup results, but not all research subjects submitted data for all quarters.

• Known illnesses were reported on the pre-assessment including cases of gall stones, allergies, skin disorders, and ulcerative colitis.
Case Study 1: Dr. Martin Reinhardt
100 Percent
Case Study 1 Cont.
Aggregate 100 Percent

Systolic
Diastolic
Pulse
Weight
BMI
Hip
Waist

P1
P2
P3
P4
Case Study 2: < 100 Percent
Case Study 2 Cont.

- Cholesterol
- Cholesterol HDL
- Cholesterol LDL
- Cholesterol Triglycerides
- Glucose, Fasting

Series1
Series2
Series3
Series4
Series5
Aggregate < 100 Percent
Preliminary Social/Cultural Outcomes

- Family/Community Support Very Significant
- Transformation of Space to Accommodate DDP Needs
- Time Commitment was Major Source of DDP Anxiety
- Small Impact on Local Markets
- Large Impact for Certain Businesses
- Price and Convenience were Major Factors
DDP Guilt

• Resulted from straying from commitment level, failure to journal, inability to share, dreams, cravings, etc.

“I've lost too many hours of sleep over DDP guilt to ignore it any longer!

My version of DDP guilt isn't about my diet commitment, which I've kept, but about logging it. I'm disappointed in myself for not keeping that part of the deal, but there it is, here I am, and here I go with what I'm hoping will be a strong finish.’’

-Nancy Irish, blog entry November 27, 2012
DDP Groupings

- 100 percenters
- Less than 100 percenters
- Original DDPers
- Replacements
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Families
- Friends
April Lindala conducted a micro-ethnographic sub-study on the female perspective on the DDP.

- Societal expectations for males to hunt and fish.
- Community and connection more important for female research subjects than males.
Preliminary Legal/Political Outcomes

• Treaty rights and boundaries made a difference in access to foods between Native and non-Native and between tribes

• Policies limited DDP interactions
  – Parking limited for DDP events
  – Website access limited for non-NMU
  – Potlucks not allowed
  – No outside food or drinks allowed
Indigenous Foods Cook-Off

• Three Teams:
  – Elder Berries
  – Nishin Miidjm
  – Maized and Confused

• Provided with mystery ingredients

• 5 hours to prepare an entre, a side, and a dessert

• Judged by professional food tasters and audience members
Indigenous Foods Cook-Off Cont.
DDP End-Of-The-Year Celebration

• A final DDP feast made by DDP staff and volunteers.
• Music provided by Tom, April, and Marty
• DDP Preliminary Outcomes Presentation
• DDP Story by Nancy, Karen, and Andrew
• DDP Giveaway
Anticipated Products

• Presentations
• Invited Chapter
• Cookbook
• Scholarly Articles
• Final Report
• Textbook
• Documentary
• Indigenous Food Posters/Flashcards
DDP Links

DDP Blog Site
http://decolonizingdietproject.blogspot.com/

DDP Group Site
https://share.nmu.edu/moodle/login/index.php

DDP Facebook Site
http://www.facebook.com/groups/decolonizingdietproject/

DDP Flickr Site
http://www.flickr.com/photos/decolonizingdietproject
Miigwech

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