



**From Creation:  
Land-Based Healing  
and Wellness**

**Introduction**

## The Land - Styres and Zinga

“We have chosen to capitalize Land when we are referring to it as a proper name indicating a primary relationship rather than when used in a more general sense.... ‘Land’ (the proper name) extends beyond a material fixed space. Land is a spiritually infused place grounded in the interconnected and interdependent relationships, cultural positioning, and is highly contextualized.”

## Ancestral Territory

Delorea asserted that the first six inches of topsoil were the bones of his ancestors. Indigenous peoples have a unique genetic connection to ancestral Land which is relational and promotes wholistic healing.

R.C. Aldred tells us settlers can learn to live on the Land where they find themselves in a “good way.”

All our lives, in fact, depend upon it.

# Trauma and the Human World

When we have been traumatized by other human beings and institutions, we are often overwhelmed by stimuli such as loud noises, bright lights, healthcare environments, and social demands.

Time on the Land has beneficial effects physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

## The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

## Healing and the Land

Elders teach that the Land heals us. This wisdom requires no external proof; Indigenous ways of knowing are drawn from thousands of years of cultural research.

Science, however, now supports what Indigenous people have always known:

*The Land herself is inherently healing.*

## Transformation

A deep connection with the Land forever changes us. As we see the trees, the stones, the plants and the animals living out their purpose in their place, we have a profound sense of belonging. There is no longer a need for excessive ego or power games. We each are integral to the Land. We have a right to exist and a place we are called to simply *be*.

*Knowing that you love the earth  
changes you, activates you to defend,  
protect and celebrate. But when you feel  
the earth loves you in return, that  
feeling transforms the relationship from  
a one-way street into a sacred bond.*

*~ Robin Wall Kimmerer in  
Braiding Sweetgrass.*



## Healing and Trust

Connection with the Land soothes our overwrought nervous systems. We find our place in nature and realize *we are the Land* and we fall in love with her including all our relatives in the nonhuman world.

We re-establish relationships with our nonhuman relatives—the stones, plants and animals—and we heal. We learn to trust again.

This healing is deeply spiritual.

## The Creator and Creation - Charleston

“One way to understand the Native American spiritual bond with the land is to place it next to the Western theology of having a personal relationship to God. Many evangelical faiths emphasize this kind of relationship as foundational to their tradition. In the same sense, Native tradition believes in a deeply personal relationship to the Creator, but goes one step further: since the Creator is still incarnate within all of creation, then the relationship is not just metaphorical or emotional, but physical. The personal contact with the sacred is tactile. How we treat the earth is how we treat God. In this way, Native tradition has a personal relationship theology that you can both see and touch. The bond is grounded.”

## Bringing Healing to Others

A natural progression of healing is gratitude and the desire to be of service to others.

Research has shown that the arts bring the experience of the Land to those who may not have easy access to nature, having a similarly positive effect upon health.

The art exhibitions and this documentary endeavour to bring the healing experience of the Land to others.

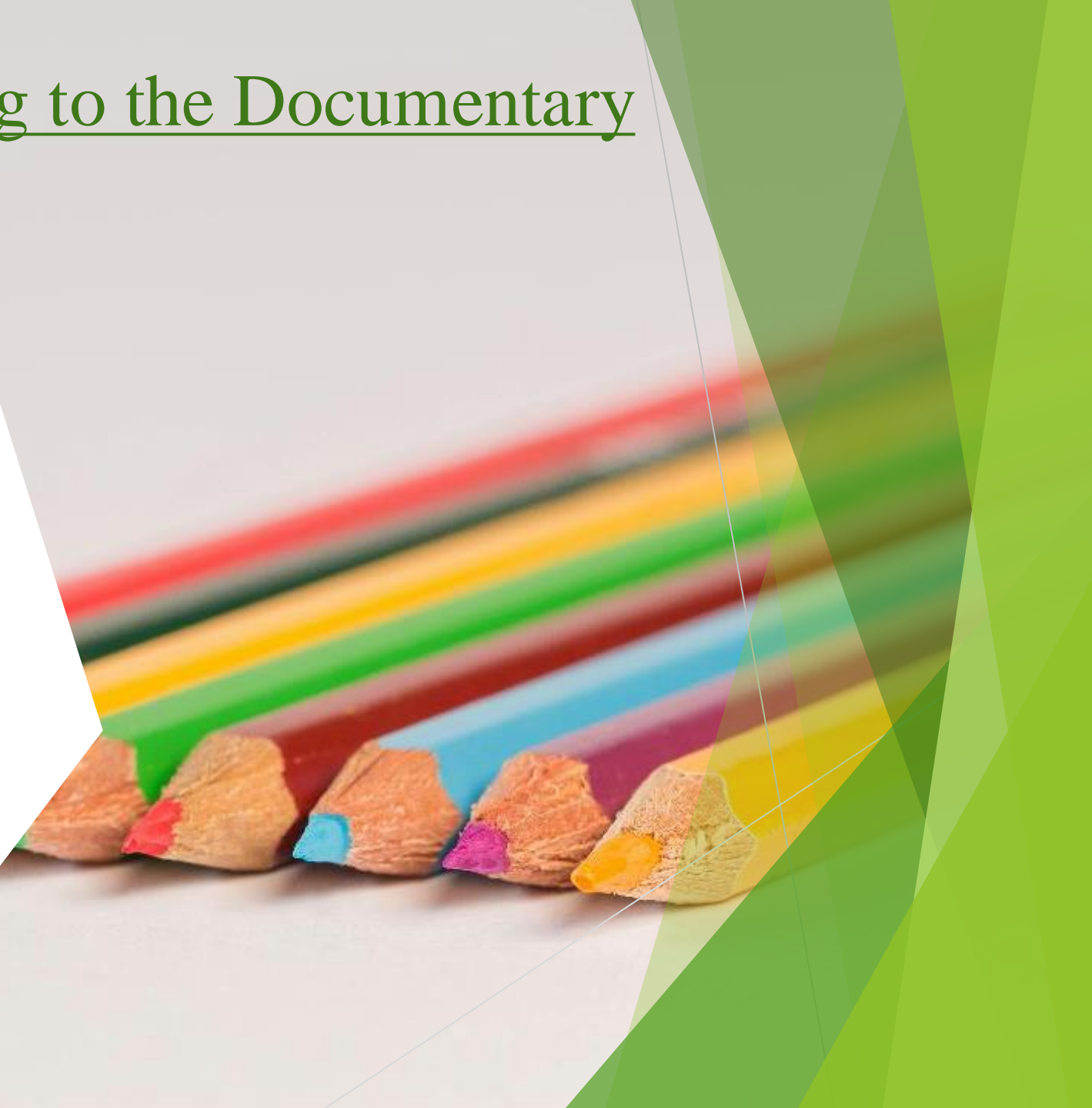
## Interconnectedness

In a forest, all the trees share nutrients and communicate together through a root system. Led by a Mother tree, the weak are sustained by the stronger until they are strong again. Information is shared even between different types of trees. Perhaps I also am led by the “Mother tree” to share spiritual food as I again become stronger. The roots of my artistic endeavours entwine with my teaching and preaching. Each informs the other and reaching out, communicates and shares with others.

# Watching and Responding to the Documentary

**Our spontaneous creative responses often give us embodied insight beyond our academic thoughts.**

**You are encouraged to grab paper, pencil, colouring materials and to doodle and/or write poetry along through the video.**



# Questions for Consideration

As you watch the documentary, consider:

- ▶ How has your own experience of healing inspired you to help others?
- ▶ How would you describe your own relationship with the Land where you live and/or your own ancestral Lands?
- ▶ What is sacred to you? How is this expressed?
- ▶ What do you do you to preserve your own well-being?
- ▶ How will you integrate your knowledge of Land-Based Healing and Wellness into your own practice?



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The beautiful  
traditional,  
ancestral and  
unceded  
territory of the  
Nak'azdli  
Whuten at  
Stuart Lake,  
Fort St. James,  
British  
Columbia.