

**Sylvia McAdam, Nêhiyawak Knowledge Keeper**  
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**Big River First Nation**

**Interview Synopsis**

Start time	End time	Topic
00:00	04:49	Introduction – how she learned, what she is working on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How she has learned Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous governance</li> <li>- How others can learn by learning from Elders in their communities</li> </ul>
04:50	06:00	The history of how Cree laws came to be
06:01	08:01	Two broad areas within Indigenous laws: Human Laws (laws between human beings) and laws that are other than between human beings. Four elements within Creator's Laws: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Human Laws</li> <li>- Earth Laws</li> <li>- Spiritual Laws</li> <li>- Animal/Plant Laws</li> </ul>
08:02	11:04	Roles of men and women in the governance structure during the time of treaty signing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hereditary Chiefs</li> <li>- Clan Mothers – Guardians of the Laws</li> </ul>
11:05	19:36	Discussion of the Indian Act imposed system of governance compared to Traditional, Indigenous systems of governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How Canadian system does not work for them – high incarceration rates</li> <li>- Her perspective on being under the Indian Act and being under Treaty</li> <li>- Chief and Fake (or Pretend) Chief under the Indian Act</li> <li>- Canadian system – current Chief and Council system is looked upon as a municipality with a Mayor and Council</li> <li>- No Cree words for sex-related offences; why not?</li> </ul>
19:37	29:16	Discussion of difference between Laws of the Bible and Laws of the Creator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Laws of how to raise your children</li> <li>- Laws of kinship</li> <li>- Laws of leadership and respect</li> <li>- No support/financial assistance in reclaiming Indigenous laws – it is individual choice and commitment to follow Indigenous laws</li> <li>- Laws of the Land</li> <li>- If seeking out Laws, you must follow protocol and procedure; all Peoples have their own protocols and processes to learn</li> </ul>
29:17	32:54	Her thoughts and perspective on sovereignty
32:55	36:56	At time of treaty signing, how land was allocated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cree understanding of land allocations for future generations</li> <li>- Expectations/understandings and what really happened</li> </ul>
36:57	43:36	Differences in what treaties say (e.g., treaty rights) and what took place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion about sovereignty and treaty signing, treaty rights</li> <li>- History of Indian Act</li> <li>- How the Indian Act evolved – pass system, residential schools</li> </ul>
43:37	48:59	Treaty implementation and concept of 'comity' – 'friendly relations' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It was foretold that the 'Hereditary Chief and Headman' governance structure will come back to Canada</li> <li>- Respecting these laws is a choice</li> <li>- Discussion of laws of kinship and adoption</li> <li>- Importance of family and support of family</li> <li>- Kinship parenting – a preferred term for foster parenting</li> </ul>

49:00	54:43	<p>Indigenous laws are housed in the ceremonies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When laws are broken, “ceremonies are the corrective force”</li> <li>- A ‘sickness’ is in them and ceremonies can correct/heal</li> <li>- For example, if food is stolen, then the person would be taught to hunt and replace the food that was taken – the ceremonies would be taught</li> <li>- Ceremonies are used as a remedy (e.g., going on a vision quest or going to learn from a particular Elder, etc)</li> <li>- When sentencing circles were used in the past; what the use of them today is missing</li> </ul>
54:44	57:23	<p>Several people have different roles to play in Indigenous laws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apprentices to carry laws and keep laws alive</li> <li>- loss of language contributing to the loss of use of their laws</li> </ul>
57:24	58:59	<p>United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- right to self-determination</li> <li>- right to recognize their own Indigenous laws</li> </ul>
59:00	1:01:37	<p>Encouragement for young people to learn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- their lineage, history, language, laws</li> <li>- system of leadership – has eroded over time, but not gone</li> <li>- claim to sovereignty</li> <li>- Nowhere in the treaties were rights extinguished to the land, water, trees, etc.</li> </ul>