

Sacred Water Walkers make stop at New Credit

By Donna Duric
Writer

It was an emotional night last Monday as New Credit hosted a welcoming gathering for the Mother Earth Water Walkers who have been making their way around the Great Lakes since June 23 with an aim to raise awareness about water protection.

Anishinawbe grandmothers Josephine Mandamin and Melvina Flamand have been leading the walk.

"The walk is all about raising awareness about water, about oil spills and the contamination that could happen to the Great Lakes," Mandamin said during a special dinner held in the group's honour at the New Credit Community Hall Monday night. "We walk the talk with a pail."

The Water Walkers have been

carrying salt water from the Atlantic Ocean since the Sacred Water Walk began on June 23, 2015 at Matane, Quebec.

The walk is estimated to end at Madeline Island, Wisconsin, around Aug. 20.

The walk is aimed at raising awareness of oil spills in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River and train derailments that have caused pollution to waters, animals, fish and vegetation.

The group states: "We do not want pipelines across our country or our communities."

The walkers arrived at New Credit Monday night after walking 60 km from Port Colborne to Cayuga in scorching temperatures in the midst of a heat wave in Southern Ontario.

They've been walking from dawn to dusk every day



From left to right, front row: Melvina Flamand, Roxanne Delille, and Josephine Mandamin, part of the Sacred Water Walkers group, who have followed the women throughout their journey this summer.

without stopping.

The group of Anishinawbe men and women are walking the perimeter of the Great Lakes.

The first annual Women's Water Walk took place April 2003.

Several women from different

clans came together to raise awareness that clean and clear water is being polluted by chemicals, vehicle emissions, motor boats, sewage disposal, agricultural pollution, leaking landfill sites, and residential usage and that it is taking a toll on water qual-

ity.

New Credit Community member Val King invited the walkers here and sang a water song and bear song with her daughters as part of the welcoming.

King said it's important to recognize the importance of

water and the life it brings.

"We are very proud of this work you are doing for Mother Earth and for our water, and everything that it means," King told the walkers.

The group was treated to a delicious meal of buffalo, salmon, fresh garden salad, appetizers, fruit, corn on the cob, drinks and desserts at the New Credit community hall.

The event will be held annually, with the intent of the Women's Water Walk to gain awareness and support for annual walks throughout the region.

This will entail support, recognition, and awareness of the importance of keeping Great Lake waters clean.

For more on their amazing history, please check out <http://www.motherearthwaterwalk.com>.