**Ken Weyaus Sr Summer Traditions**

In the past, I’ve written about some Ojibwe traditions for the fall, winter and spring.  This time, I’d like to write about summer traditions.

In the summer, the Ojibwe People would gather by the shores of the big lakes.  They would go fishing and hunt small game animals.  They did not hunt big game animals during the summer because they had no means of preserving that much meat and it would spoil.  They also had little gardens with corn, beans and squash that they tended.  The people worked hard to store up their food for the winter.

Summertime was when people did most of their planning for the year ahead and figured out what they would need.  For example, if you needed a new canoe to go ricing in the fall, you gathered the birchbark for it in the summer.  If you needed more bark for your home, you gathered it during the summer, too.  People would make sheets out of the bark and sew them together, then roll them up to make them easier to carry.

People also gathered lots of berries in the summer and made them into little patties.  Then in the winter, they would boil these patties and sprinkle them with maple sugar, and they tasted just as sweet and tasty as they had in the summer.

To get ready for the big, long winter, people would tan deer hides and work on clothing in the summer.  Men did a lot of hunting and fishing.  As I said, they hunted small game, like raccoons and ducks.  When they fished, they knew how to make nets that were just big enough to catch what they needed, rather than catch large quantities that would spoil.

They were good conservationists – they didn’t waste anything.  When they caught fish, they didn’t just take the fish out and eat them.  If they saw that a fish was female, they would squeeze the eggs out and deposit them back into the lake.  If they killed a turtle for food, they used the shell for storage or as a plate.

They also moved their camps each year to be good conservationists.  For example, in the summer they used elm bark when making their wigwams.  Elm bark doesn’t regrow within a year, so they wouldn’t come back to the same area the next summer – they would leave the first area alone and move to a different area.  That allowed the first area to regrow itself, and the trees and the animals would come back.