

# Science Spotlight



**Name:** Dr. Bill Morrison

**Community:** Métis - Chapleau Cree Fox Lake

**Ethnicity:** Métis & Cree

**Occupation:** Professor - Biomechanics

**Education:** BSc(PE), MSc, PhD (Biomechanics)

**Field of Science:** Biomechanics - Mechanics of Injury

## What inspired you to enter into this particular field of Science?

In my early years of high school I was interested in Mathematics and Biology. However, there was no real interest in education. Consequently my grades were very poor and my reading ability was low. I did excel, however, in Math and Biology as well as sports. Through the playing of sports I met people who encouraged me to do better in the other subjects and see that there was a possible future at other levels of education and sport. These people saw potential in my abilities and they, unknown to me, became advocates for me at these next levels of education and sport. Once I truly saw the other students and athletes at these higher levels I realized that my knowledge from traditional life was strong and very meaningful in comparison. These fellow students were not any smarter than me they simply knew different things. They knew more material from the books but I knew more material from the bush and the way of life I had experienced.

My grandmother's teaching of courage, bravery, respect and humility prepared me for the new levels of education, sport and personal relationships. The inspiration was not just for science but for life. The name or category of science was simply a label that the school system placed on the things I knew, but did not recognize as falling into their system. To put it into simple terms, it was the appreciation of life and all living things that inspired me through traditional teaching to pursue science.



# How do you think Indigenous Knowledge can help to advance Science and Technology?



In my experiences science is always looking to quantify the aspects of life. How much of this? How many of those? How can I manipulate the process? These pursuits lead to failure and thus result in attempts to modify the aspects that are being studied or investigated. The science investigator looks to change things hopefully for the better.

However with Indigenous Knowledge we live to develop relationships and respect for the areas we are observing and appreciate the gifts that exist for continued sharing. We do not attempt to harness or control the gifts but we understand the need to cooperate with all the aspects of life for the mutual existence. Nurturing, collaboration, protection, harvesting, sharing and learning are all displayed in our traditional way of life. We have been asked; I say that in a polite way, by science and technology to accept their desire to improve the future. But, we have not been provided with the respect or appreciation of our knowledge which allows them to pursue their failures. I do not believe we can “help to advance science and technology” until there is a mutual respect, relationship and appreciation of our knowledge, culture, concerns and strengths. Our knowledge and way of life does not deal with an easing of life but an appreciation of life through respect and protection. These attempts will take time so there is a need to take your time and go slowly.

## How do you incorporate Indigenous Knowledge in the work you do?

My work has always been directed to seeking information about one’s self and where you see yourself in the activity you are doing. These experiences then allow the work to follow the characteristic of the investigator and in turn supply information to others for their interpretation and utilization. Realize that the knowledge base is much larger than first versioned. Realize that there will be setbacks and failures, but those are the ways of learning, just don’t keep trying the same thing and expect a different result. Share all the experiences as others will see a different path than you and these need to be considered. Gain relationships and develop that mutual respect which allows us to build the community. These attempts will take time so there is a need to take your time and go slowly.



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