



The White Earth Nation: Ratification of a Native Democratic Constitution

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The White Earth Nation of Anishinaabeg Natives ratified in 2009 a new constitution, the first indigenous democratic constitution, on a reservation in Minnesota. Many Native constitutions were written by the federal government, and with little knowledge of the people and cultures. The White Earth Nation set out to create a constitution that reflected its own culture. The resulting document provides a clear Native perspective on sovereignty, independent governance, traditional leadership values, and the importance of individual and human rights.

This volume includes the text of the Constitution of the White Earth Nation; an introduction by David E. Wilkins, a legal and political scholar who was a special consultant to the White Earth Constitutional Convention; an essay by Gerald Vizenor, the delegate and principal writer of the Constitution of the White Earth Nation; and articles first published in *Anishinaabeg Today* by Jill Doerfler, who coordinated and participated in the deliberations and ratification of the Constitution. Together these essays and the text of the Constitution provide direct insight into the process of the delegate deliberations, the writing and ratification of this groundbreaking document, and the current constitutional, legal, and political debates about new constitutions.

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