**Council Fire Opening Ceremony #9**

**Little Hawk, the Magical Waters & the Black Sand**

**Overview:** Council Fire Openings set the stage for a great and memorable council fire for your program. It is written to be used at the beginning of a Longhouse council fire gathering. Featured here is the story of Little Hawk and the Black Sand. The Medicine Man (or any other selected Longhouse officer) will conduct this fire-lighting portion of the ceremony.

There is one central fire. Just aside, at the edge of or slightly away from the unlit central fire is an area staged to conduct the magical gift of fire from the Great Spirit. The story combines the Black Sand of the far north with the magical waters of the Lake of Light. Once these are combined, they magically create fire. Of course this is all illusion. Black or blackened sand and water can be used for the illusion but there is a small charge that is set off electronically/remotely to bring the small fire materials to life (such as black fuel-primed rags) in a small flat container. There is a hand-held torch, that from that small fire, the Medicine Man will carry the fire to light the main council fire.

**Participants:**

* Medicine Man, Sachem, Elder, Chief, etc.: Ceremonial Leader
* Drumbeater
* Longhouse Chief

**Relevant Ceremonial Pieces:** You may wish to incorporate this ceremony with other ceremonial components to form your full ceremony. The following are basic suggestions. Your creativity is your limit.

* Parade to Ceremonial Location
* Inductions
* Officer Inductions
* Special Awards
* Ceremonial Closing

**OPENING CEREMONY**

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| Scene | *(Council Fire is unlit as Longhouse membership gathers in a circle around the fire. All stand silently.)* |
| Drumbeater | *(Drumbeats during this gathering time until instructed to stop.)* |
| Med. Man | *(Carries with him a pouch with the black sand and a container with the magical waters. He narrates this story as he moves about the unlit council fire. The place for the magical fire is largely invisible to the people, near the edge of the council fire.)* |
| Medicine Man | Many moons ago, when the forest was young, a tribe of brave warriors lived on the shores of the Great Shining Water which we now call Lake Michigan.  IN the tribes medicine lodge, was a sacred fire that burned day and night in honor of the Great Spirit. It was the people of the tribe’s task to tend it carefully so it would never go out. But one day, the Medicine Man’s helper, whose job it was to tend the fire that day, fell asleep as he sat next to it, and the fire went out.  The people were very unhappy, for they knew that the Great Spirit would be displeased. The Medicine Man called a council of all the people in the village, and spoke to them: “My people, he said… it is possible for us to rekindle the sacred fire of our fathers and once again be blessed by the Great Spirit. But this is a task that cannot be undertaken easily. The strongest and bravest member of our tribe must do this for us. That is why I have chosen Little Hawk as the one who will help us.”  The Medicine Man told Little Hawk that he must undertake two very difficult and perilous journeys to find the necessary things to rekindle the fire. First, he was to travel to the far north and find the Lake of Darkness, where the waters, the sands, and even the forest were black. Little Hawk set out on his journey, and after many hardships, he found the dark lake. As the Medicine Man had told him, he scooped several large handfuls of the dark sand into his pouch he wore at his waist and returned to his village. Here in my pouch is some of the same sand that Little Hawk brought back to his village. I now place it as that Medicine Man did, at the edge of the fire so many moons ago.  *(Slowly/drastically, pours the sand around the outside of the small remote fire)* |
| Medicine Man | Little Hawk was then sent to the south to find the Lake of Light, where the waters sparkled and the sands were white. Four moons passed before Little Hawk found the lake. He dipped some of the water into a container he had brought, and brought it back to the Medicine Man. He took the flask from Little Hawk, moved to the unlit fire and poured the water on the sands, even as I do now with some of the very water brought by Little Hawk.  *(Slowly pours water onto the sand around the outside of the small remote fire)* |
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| Medicine Man | Then, the Medicine Man prayed and chanted, asking the Great Spirit to once again smile on his children and return the sacred fire to them |
| Medicine Man | (Chants in some form of Native American language for about 30 second, then recites the following Native American verse in original form and then in English) |
| Medicine Man | Nee-Chay, Wana-Tasi-Nay, Wakan-Tanka… Light in the Sky, our Great Spirit!  BRING US FIRE AS A SIGN OF YOUR PRESENCE! |
| REMOTE | *(Small fire then comes to life)* |
| Medicine Man | The Great Spirit looks upon us and is pleased! The spirits of our fathers of long ago are with us now. I now take this torch and pass the flames of this sacred fire to bring life to our Council Fire.  *(Takes the torch, lights it and then lights the Council Fire)*  Our fires have been lit. As a sigh of thanks to the Great Spirit, let us conduct ourselves with dignity and show our pride in being Native Sons & Daughters. |
| Drumbeater | *(Drumbeats until Chief enters and signals for drumbeats to stop)* |
| Chief/ALL | *(Shouts Longhouse salutation in celebration, ALL return salutation)* |
| Chief | I now declare this council of the (**Longhouse Name**) Longhouse to be open. Let us begin. |
|  | **CONTINUE WITH CEREMONY** |
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Adapted from a story told long ago by Walt Leikett, Northwest Detroit Federation