Our place names on the landscape are telling stories of the land we recognize as the Traditional Territory of our people, the Akisitaqikinag of Atanarkwuyik Aki, and all the life that surrounds us.

Listening to and talking about our place names is like reading a book. They tell stories of the landscape, the animals, birds, fish, plants, and people. These named places ensure that these stories will carry on, sometimes for thousands of years. When my father and grandfather would come back from the land they would talk about and describe the places where they had been and tell us the Akisitaqikinak names of those places. They were teaching us the stories of the land so we would always remember them. Sometimes we would go to places we had never been before and we were able to recognize where we were and we knew the name of that place.

When my father was describing names he had heard, he would say kaa’yap’oog nasyan’ikwey, which means, he would tell the stories of people who had been there before. The stories of our ancestors are connected to those places and us by the place names.

Sophia Robliskas (January 13, 2020)