

ALGONQUIN NATION SECRETARIAT

TREATY & TITLE

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Voices cried out in the past

Chief Joe Petremond to minister of Indian Affairs

... game and fur are becoming very scarce in this neighbourhood owing to the influx of white trappers and that it is therefore necessary to make some special provision in the way of a Reserve in order that the Indians here may not be reduced to an actual state of starvation...It is our humble prayer that you at once take steps to set aside an area of fifty miles by fifty miles which will comprise the Wolf Lake and adjacent area. This ...should receive immediate attention otherwise game will have all been destroyed

July 17, 1924

Chief Hilarion Masinikijik to department of Indian Affairs

I, Masinikijik, residing at Temiskaming, come as to say to pay you a sort of visit to you who are our Grand Chief. - I am coming to give you some news of the bush, to tell you how much we are suffering, yes indeed we are in a very distressful state...and every thing we require to make as living costs us very dear. Flour is the dearest thing here! It costs us here twenty- two dollars a barrel now. That is the reason why I am addressing to you... What shall we do to keep the Indians alive....

October 27, 1877

Chief David Makakoose to federal and Quebec Indian Affairs departments

...some thirty years ago we Indians are the only hunter and trapper was known there no white trapper anywhere in this part ...and also there was no game law of any kind to bother us... suddenly game laws come out, the problem came out too to be faced by the Indian people and then more game law...Some ten years ago the Indian hunting preserve was handed to us... then five or six years later another kind of game law was...handed to us so this time we refused to sign this lease trap line.

August 24, 1948

HISTORY SPEAKS

TO DATE, HOWEVER, THE CROWN HAS NOT ENTERED INTO FURTHER TREATY WITH THE OTHER DESCENDANTS OF THE NIPISSINGS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE SWEGATCHY, KAHNAWKE AND NIAGARA TREATIES, OR WITH OTHER ANISHNABEG WHO WERE ALLIES AND DEPENDANTS OF THE ALGONQUINS AND NIPISSINGS OF LAKE OF TWO MOUNTAINS. THESE INCLUDE WHAT ARE NOW THE WOLF LAKE AND TIMISKAMING FIRST NATIONS, AND THE ALGONQUINS OF BARRIERE LAKE. NOR HAS THE CROWN PROTECTED THE TRADITIONAL LANDS OF THESE FIRST NATIONS FROM ENCROACHMENT BY SETTLERS AND RESOURCE DEVELOPERS AS...OFFICERS OF THE CROWN HAD CONSISTENTLY PROMISED.

-JAMES MORRISON

REPORT ON TREATIES OF 1760 TO 1764

Algonquin Peoples' are now at historical cross-roads. The future of the land is in our hands. It is time to make history right. The road lies long and rough but the goals are clear.

Our communities must reap the benefits from the use of lands and resources that for too long have gone to other governments and settlers.

These benefits should come in the form of training, jobs and the improvement of community housing, school buildings and other infrastructure.

Our Communities can only gain true benefits through taking more control of lands and management of resources.

Our communities need to begin tough negotiations with governments to settle our title over our lands, resources, and implement our treaties.

Governments can't ignore the historical Algonquin facts

Algonquin Communities will soon make important decisions that will have an impact on our children and our children's children. For years, chiefs and community members have been working hard to improve conditions and to take more control over lands and resources on Algonquin territory. The work has been difficult because federal and provincial governments want things done under their rules and they often ignored the voices of chiefs and community members. Now these gov-

ernments are going to have to sit down and talk because things have changed. Our communities have always said that this is their land, that they never gave it up, that they have a right to take care of the trees, animals and waters that grow and flow throughout the territory. Now governments can't ignore these facts because they are spelled out in a language they understand. The member communities of

the Algonquin Nation Secretariat now have detailed maps, documentation and proof of our history, our Aboriginal title & rights and our treaties that governments cannot dismiss. This does not mean that things will be easy. The road will continue to be tough. But we now have the tools to assert our rights and it will be up to the members from each community to decide how to use these tools.

Member First Nations of the Algonquin Nation Secretariat (ANS) are preparing for negotiations over Aboriginal title. We are also working to deal with the after-effects of recent Supreme Court of Canada decisions that requires governments to consult and accommodate Aboriginal interests when development plans impact claimed territories even without a formal start to negotiations.

Aboriginal Title & the Treaties prove land never surrendered

OUR COMMUNITIES HAVE ALWAYS SAID THAT THIS IS THEIR LAND, THAT THEY NEVER GAVE IT UP, THAT THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO TAKE CARE OF THE TREES, ANIMALS AND WATERS

Some of the facts the governments cannot ignore are the treaties signed by the Algonquin and Nipissing nations with the British between 1760 and 1764. The three main treaties from this time were concluded at Swegatchy (now Ogdensburg, New York) and Kahnawake in 1760 and at Niagara in 1764.

that the traditional lands of the Algonquins and Nipissings would be protected from encroachment. Laws were passed based on these treaties that prevented settlers from trespassing on Indian lands. The Algonquins never signed any further treaties. The ANS member communities are linked to the signatories

of these treaties, which validate our long-held knowledge that our territories in the Upper Ottawa River Valley were never surrendered, and they provide a solid foundation for negotiations with other governments. A detailed report on those treaties is available from the ANS and copies are available. Contact us.

Algonquins working with Quebec to avoid fate of being left in the legal dust

The ANS is working with the government of Quebec on a pilot project to try and work out how the province should consult with our communities. The Supreme Court has ruled in the Haida case that governments need to involve First Nations before attempting any development on territory under an Aboriginal

title claim. This was a good decision for the Algonquin, but it also creates new challenges. Governments can now say they consulted if they show they made an effort despite the absence of hard and fast rules on consulting. That is why the ANS began working with the Quebec government in mid-June 2007 to study whether the province's current con-

CONSULTATION REQUESTS... ARE COMING HARD AND FAST.

sultation process is good enough. The ANS is also helping member First Nations in responding to these consultation requests which are coming hard and fast. The ANS wants to develop better long-term rules that clearly set out how the Quebec government should meaningfully consult with First Nations so no one gets left in the legal dust.

Information is the lifeblood of success

Work on the consultation side of things goes hand-in-hand with the bigger task of preparing for negotiations with governments over Aboriginal rights & title. This can take years to settle and community members will need to be patient as this process unfolds. At

times it will seem like things are not moving fast enough. To prepare for this the ANS is working on finding ways to include community members in the decision-making process for negotiations. Those who sit on our side of the table need to show government that we are bringing

the full weight of the communities to the talks. Sometimes lack of community information can make for confusion at the negotiating table. To avoid this, our leadership wants to build clear consensus among community members, but this can only happen if everyone is informed

about the issues and participates in the process of dialogue. This is a long term commitment which will be done through workshops, pamphlets, newsletters and our website that will explain issues like land and resources, title, consultations and negotiations.

Beware bureaucratic dead ends and red tape spider webs

Dealing with the inner world of governments will prove to be one of the toughest tasks. In our case we will be negotiating: Canada, Quebec and Ontario. Government machinery is complex and walking down this path is

like traveling through a maze. The right departments will have to be contacted, the right officials will have to be informed and the right policies will have to be studied to avoid getting stuck in bureaucratic dead-ends or tangled

This path is like traveling through a maze

in the spider-web of sticky red tape. And this is just to reach an agreement with the three governments on how to embark on the arduous journey of negotiating for Aboriginal title and rights.

The five year countdown has begun

Our Council of Chiefs set out a five-year timeline to transition from the research phase to the negotiations. In August 2006 community leaders and representatives met at Tee Lake for a planning meet-

ing and decided to focus first on building community abilities to deal with the fall-out from the Haida Supreme Court decision. A draft manual to deal with consultations has already been developed. In March 2007, the ANS held a planning workshop in Ottawa to begin developing ways to train community mem-

bers to work on these issues. They also talked about mapping, geographic information systems and coordinating better between member communities and the tribal council. We continue to work to obtain the funding required for these activities. These are exciting times

full of promise for the future. The future now rests in the hands of community members. This land is our land. Now it is time to set history right. Get informed, talk to one another and talk to your leadership. Find out all there is to know so the many minds can become one.

Info blitz set for launch

The ANS is preparing to begin informing third party interests, like businesses, municipalities and groups that operate in Algonquin territory, so they are prepared for the new realities that the **Aboriginal title claim will bring.** The ANS is working on information materials like pamphlets and public education sessions to communicate the position of the Algonquin to everyone affected.



Canoe and canoe-making at Barriere Lake, early 20th century.

Photos c/o Algonquins of Barriere Lake



ALGONQUIN NATION SECRETARIAT

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NEWS FLASH

In December 2007, the ANS started up two new projects which are linked to the different initiatives described in this newsletter:

The Aboriginal Inland Habitat Protection project is sponsored by the Federal Department of Fisheries & Oceans (DFO), and it is intended to assist our member communities to begin identifying areas of importance for the fishery—especially areas where fish stocks or fish habitat may be under threat. This will lead to the development of a long term plan for managing habitat and building capacity. This project is being coordinated by Biologist Mario St-Georges, who will be holding a first round of meetings in the communities beginning in January-February 2008.

Natural Resources Canada, a federal department, has started a program called “GeoConnections”. One part of this program is intended to assist First Nations with digital mapping, and in December the ANS received confirmation that Natural Resources Canada has agreed to sponsor our project, called “Towards a Fluency in Mapping”. This project, which will last for 13 months, is intended to build common standards for data backup, management and mapping—beginning at the Tribal Council, and then working with Wolf Lake, Timiskaming, and then Barriere Lake. This project is being coordinated by David Carruthers of PlanLab, which is a community planning company based in Toronto. Nadine Gaudaur and Hilda Chief of Timiskaming have been hired to work on it out of the Tribal Council office.

In future editions of this news bulletin, we will provide updates on these projects.