

Statement by Robert J. Potts, Principal Negotiator and Senior Legal Counsel for the Algonquins of Ontario, on behalf of the elected representatives of Algonquins of Ontario

The Algonquins of Ontario (AOO) welcome the Declaration by the Algonquin Anishinabeg First Nation communities of Abitibiwinni, Eagle Village, Kitcisakik, Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, Long Point, Lac Simon and Wahgoshig. The Algonquins of Ontario, representing people of Algonquin descent living in present-day Ontario, have a historical connection and many family and personal relations with the Algonquin Anishinabeg First Nation communities in present-day Quebec.

Since 1991 the AOO have been engaged in Treaty negotiations with the Governments of Canada and Ontario towards the settlement of an outstanding land claim dating back to 1772. The present round of negotiations between the AOO and Ontario and Canada to settle this land claim have been ongoing since 2004. The Traditional Territory of the Algonquins in present-day Ontario includes the National Capital Region in Ottawa and Algonquin Park. The AOO, along with the federal and Ontario governments, have jointly agreed to attempt to reach an agreement in principle in 2011 as a first step towards concluding a Treaty.

Prior to the commencement of negotiations, the Algonquins of Golden Lake, now known as the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation, took the initiative to secure the participation of all Algonquin First Nations, in Ontario and Quebec, in a unified claim negotiation. However, it was impossible for a number of reasons to achieve this goal and the AOO proceeded into negotiations. Over the past 25 years, the AOO have communicated with various of the Algonquin First Nations in Quebec to reassure them that the AOO negotiations are without prejudice to their aboriginal rights.

The AOO agree with the Algonquin Anishinabeg First Nation communities that before Europeans settled in present-day Ontario and Quebec, the Algonquin people lived as one Nation on lands on both sides of Kitchi Sibi, now known as the Ottawa River. For the lands south of the Ottawa River, as with the lands to the north, the Algonquins have never signed a treaty nor taken treaty benefits. The present negotiations covering these lands in present-day Ontario are motivated by an assertion of the AOO of existing aboriginal rights.

The AOO believes the Declaration provides an excellent opportunity for the Government of Canada to enter into a productive dialogue with the Algonquin

Anishinabeg First Nation communities in present-day Quebec. The AOO urges the Government of Canada to move forward in an expedited manner.

The AOO respects the fact that the Algonquin Anishinabeg First Nation communities, as well as the AOO, have aboriginal rights on both sides of the Ottawa River. None of the rights of the Algonquin Anishinabeg First Nation communities will be harmed by the AOO negotiations. Indeed, we hope to sit down around a table with representatives of all Quebec Algonquins to gain a better understanding of those rights and the arrangements we will need to make regarding overlapping territories.

About the Algonquins of Ontario

The Algonquins of Ontario include these Algonquin communities in the Ottawa River watershed:

Antoine, Bancroft, Bonnechere, Algonquins of Greater Golden Lake, Mattawa/North Bay, Ottawa, the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation, Shabot Obaadjiwan, Snimikobi and Whitney and Area.

For further information about the Algonquins of Ontario, please visit:

www.tanakiwin.com

Principal Negotiator Robert J. Potts is available for interview.

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