



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 2nd, 2015

**Proposed Agreement-in-Principle
Ratification Vote Dates Announced**

Ontario – Today, the Algonquins of Ontario (AOO) announced that they have commenced a process that will lead to a vote on a proposed Agreement-in-Principle (AIP). Within that process, eligible Algonquin Voters will signify whether they approve of the terms of the proposed AIP by their participation in a ratification vote that will be held between February 29th and March 7th, 2016.

The proposed AIP is the culmination of years of negotiations among the AOO and the Governments of Canada and Ontario. If ratified, it will represent a significant first step towards reaching a modern-day Treaty that would be protected under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

“If wisely managed, the benefits of a Treaty based on the elements proposed in the AIP will bring certainty to Algonquins of Ontario Aboriginal rights and will assure the AOO an enduring place in the social, political and cultural fabric of Ontario and Canada,” said Robert Potts, Principal Negotiator and Senior Legal Counsel for the Algonquins of Ontario.

The proposed AIP is not a legally binding document, but it represents a statement of the main elements of a settlement of the Algonquin Land Claim and provides the framework for future negotiations towards a Final Agreement that will have the legal status of a modern-day Treaty.

On December 13th, 2012, the AOO, Canada and Ontario took a groundbreaking step in Treaty negotiations with the release of a Preliminary Draft Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) for public review. Following the release of the Preliminary Draft AIP, the AOO, Canada and Ontario engaged in extensive consultation efforts in order to garner feedback from Algonquin Voters, stakeholder groups, elected officials and the general public.

“This level of consultation at the Agreement-in-Principle stage is unprecedented in the history of treaty negotiations in Canada,” said Potts.

As a result of the consultation efforts and the feedback received, the AOO, Canada and Ontario completed a comprehensive review of the contents of the Preliminary Draft AIP. The input received was carefully considered and, where deemed necessary and appropriate, revisions to the document were negotiated. These changes which were discussed at a series of community meetings with Algonquin Voters held throughout the Algonquin Territory in August, 2013, are reflected in the proposed AIP.

“The choice is now in the hands of Algonquin voters,” said Kirby Whiteduck, Chief of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation and one of sixteen Algonquin Negotiation Representatives with the Algonquins of Ontario. “We encourage all voters to review the proposed

AIP and consult with their Algonquin Negotiation Representatives on any questions prior to casting their vote.”

The proposed AIP will be considered to be ratified if a majority of the Algonquin Voters who cast their ballots vote in favour of the proposed AIP. Once a vote is completed, the three parties will assess the results and determine the next steps related to the negotiations.

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About the Algonquins of Ontario

Today, the Algonquins of Ontario are comprised of ten Algonquin communities located across the Settlement Area. These include the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation, Antoine, Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini (Bancroft), Bonnechere, Greater Golden Lake, Mattawa/North Bay, Ottawa, Shabot Obaadjiwan (Sharbot Lake), Snimikobi (Ardoch) and Whitney and Area.

These ten communities are working together, based on a Protocol signed in 2004, which provides a unified approach to reach a settlement of the Algonquin land claim.

On June 12, 2015, the Algonquins of Ontario and the Governments of Canada and Ontario announced that their Negotiators had initialed a proposed Agreement-in-Principle (AIP). The Ratification Vote is the next step in the negotiations towards reaching a modern-day Treaty that would be protected under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

More information on the proposed AIP and the Ratification Vote can be accessed online at www.tanakiwin.com.

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