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Treaty Presentation to the Environmental Commission

Presented by Dwayne Blackbird, Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation

April 19, 2007

Anishinabe people moved into the area in the 1700s from what today is Northwestern Ontario. Others arrived with fur-traders from the Sault Ste. Marie area. Still others came north from the area that is Wisconsin and Minnesota today. The Anishinabe recognize there were other indigenous people in the area before them, including the Assiniboine and the Cree, who are known to have jointly inhabited the region for a period.

Between 1763 and 1821, the Assiniboine and Cree gradually abandoned the Red River Valley, the lower Assiniboine River and the Manitoba Interlake. The Anishinabe took up the region left by the Assiniboine and the Cree and by the early 1800s were established as the dominant society of the Riding Mountain region.

In 1871, Queen Victoria sent Commissioners to Manitoba House on Lake Manitoba to negotiate Treaty No. 2, which would cover most of western Manitoba. While some indigenous communities were settled around Lake Manitoba, one group in particular was known as "The Riding Mountain Band." In the Treaty, the First Nations agreed to open their lands for immigration and settlement, and were given the assurance that they would be able to continue their usual pursuits on all unoccupied lands. The Anishinabe people had seen from settlement around the Red River that the settlers would be interested in farming, but recognized that very little of the land on Riding Mountain and its immediate area would be suitable for that occupation. A very small part of the land was set aside for the exclusive use and benefit of the Anishinabe people.

Treaty No. 2, which includes all of the Riding Mountain region and most of central and southwestern Manitoba, stipulated a reserve for "The Riding Mountain Band" of the Anishnabe Nation. Subsequently, a reserve today known as "Keeseekoowenin," was set out near Elphinstone.

Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation has approximately 1012 band members, of which about 500 live on the Keeseekoowenin Indian Reserve 61, located wholly within the RM of Strathclair.

Concerns

In the last few years there was a proposal by a landowner in the RM of Strathclair to establish a hog plant, with up to 5000 hogs, a few kilometers from the Keeseekoowenin IR. The Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation is concerned about the impacts of such a plant in the vicinity of its community. Our community members have voiced concerns over the following issues:

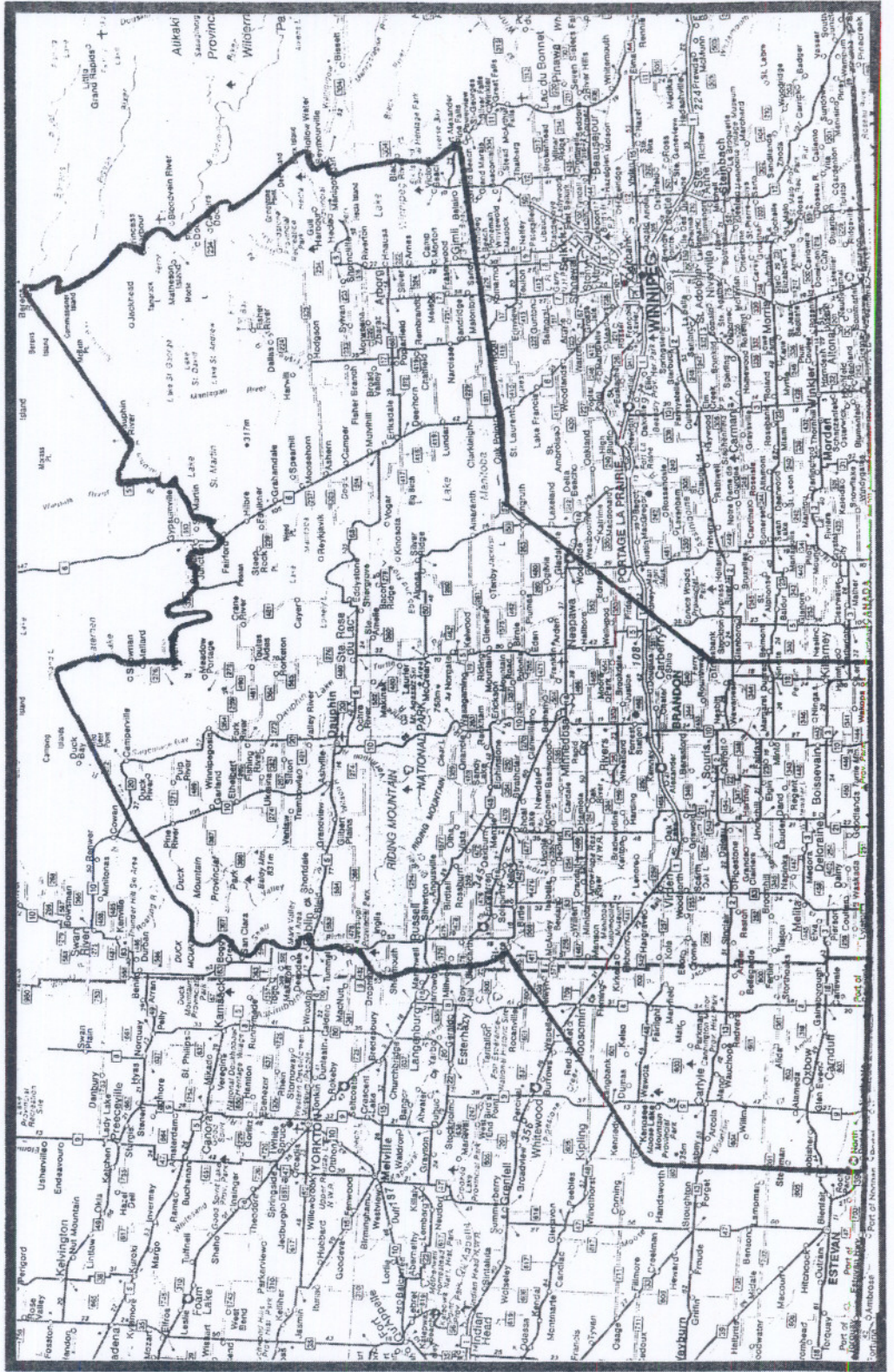
- Environmental impacts short and long-term
- Contamination of groundwater/aquifer, surface water
- Waste disposal, and smell
- Public health impacts on the community members
- First Nation philosophy on land use and environmental stewardship

Section 35(1) of the Canadian Constitution recognizes and affirms the inherent rights of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada. Keeseekoowenin takes the responsibility of upholding the spirit and intent of Treaty #2 that was to sustain our past, present and future generations "For as long as the Sun Shines, the Grass Grows, and the River Flows."

We therefore state that we must be consulted with matters concerning the environmental impacts that will affect our land recognized under Treaty #2, August 21, 1871.

NOTICE

This Land Lies Within Treaty N°2



**So long as this lot is not settled,
First Nation Signatories to the Treaty
RESERVE ALL RIGHTS
arising from Aboriginal Title**

**Parties interested in resource use
of this land should contact
the nearest Treaty N°2 First Nation
for further information.**

The Treaty 2 First Nations are:

- Lake Manitoba First Nation
- Little Saskatchewan First Nation
- Keeseekoowenin First Nation
- Dauphin River First Nation
- Waterhen First Nation
- Ebb & Flow First Nation
- Fairford First Nation
- O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi First Nation
- Lake St. Martin First Nation