



MATAWA FIRST NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Matawa First Nations introduces Ring of Fire Coordinator

January 25th, 2010, Thunder Bay, ON- Today Matawa First Nations introduced Raymond Ferris, of Constance Lake First Nation, as the new Matawa First Nations Ring of Fire Coordinator. Effective immediately, Ferris will be working on behalf of the nine Matawa First Nations to ensure the communities and their members have the opportunity to participate and benefit from developments in the area.

Ferris has a wealth of experience in the land and resource sector, serving as a former deputy Grand Chief for Nishnawbe Aski Nation, and as Chief of Constance Lake First Nation. Most recently, Ferris worked for Matawa First Nations as the Mining Exploration Advisor and has previously served as the Matawa Board of Director's President for three years.

CEO David Paul Achneepineskum says; "Matawa congratulates Raymond on his new role. This position will be vital to the future of our people and is desperately needed to help coordinate relationships between our First Nations, Government, and Industry. Matawa First Nations are committed to building economic strength and sustainable development in their traditional territory for the benefit of current and future generations, and Raymond will ensure our best interests are put at the forefront during the entire process."

Currently the Ring of Fire area is said to hold some of the richest minerals in Canada. These natural resources are attracting the interest of hundreds of companies who want to explore the land that includes the traditional hunting trapping and fishing territories of Matawa communities. Ferris says; "My first step will be to work with those communities that are most impacted by the possible development- Marten Falls, Neskantaga, and Webequie First Nations. Working together as a group will ensure that necessary policies, protocols and resources are implemented to protect our traditional lands, our land use rights and our way of life."





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Close to 100 mining companies have staked claims in the Ring of Fire, but to date there is not one single advanced exploration or mining agreement in place between any of the First Nations and any mining company. Ferris says; “One of my main goals is to get better agreements for the communities. We need to let the industry know that before they advance any activity they need to have an agreement in place with us. Issues like revenue sharing, environmental monitoring- these all need to be included in agreements, and they need to be drafted at the very beginning. I have spent most of my life ensuring the land that my people call home is protected and used for the benefit of First Nations people—I will continue to do so, as the new Matawa First Nations Ring of Fire Coordinator.”

Matawa Chiefs continue to demand that exploration agreements be negotiated with each impacted First Nation and that process be properly funded by the government and industry. Chief Arthur Moore of Constance Lake First Nation says; “The new Ring of Fire Coordinator will help our communities communicate to industry that the only way to bring developments into our territory is with proper land use planning, protecting the natural environment and wildlife, accommodating the needs of local First Nations people and benefit sharing through partnerships.”

Continues Chief Moore; “It is critical that during the initial stages industries and government agencies ,both Federal and Provincial, respect First Nations protocols that will be identified in the exploration agreements to necessitate good relationships and benefits.”

In his new role as Ring of Fire Coordinator, Ferris will develop a comprehensive strategy that will respond to short-, medium- and long-term goals. In cooperation with Matawa, Ferris will also implement policies that ensures continuous and effective communication between the communities, government and industry.

Matawa First Nations announced the need for a Ring of Fire Coordinator in October of 2010.





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Quick Facts:

- The Matawa First Nations Management is a tribal council that is non-profit and serves 9 First Nation communities in the north central part of Ontario.
- Five of the communities are remote and the remaining 4 are road access communities. The total registered population is approximately 8,500.
- The Ring of Fire area is in and around McFaulds Lake which is north of Marten Falls First Nation and west of Webequie First Nation.

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