



MATAWA FIRST NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Matawa First Nations Stress *Duty to Consult* during Mining Act Consultations

Consent from individuals living in the impacted First Nations is the foundation for successful resource development in the North according to Chief.

Toronto, Tuesday September 9th, 2008 – Representatives from nine Matawa First Nations are participating in today's Ministry of Northern Development and Mines' (MNDM) *Revisiting the Mining Act Consultations* in Toronto, Ontario. Matawa First Nations will emphasize the need to introduce and enforce strict policy for industry and governments regarding Duty to Consult at the First Nation level in any proposed amendments to the Ontario Mining Act.

Matawa First Nations spokesperson and Chief of Neskantaga First Nation, Peter Moonias says...
"Consultations need to start at the community level first. It is the people of our communities who govern and own the traditional lands where our hunting grounds and burial sites are located. If a company stakes a claim without community consent, they could easily be working somewhere we don't want them to be. We need to have regulations in place that impose the duty to consult to avoid potential conflicts in the North. As far as we are concerned, planning and community engagement builds the foundations for successful resource development and so we don't understand why anyone would take issue with this approach to doing business."

The current Ontario Mining Act presents numerous challenges for Matawa First Nations and their economic strategy to build resource-based working partnerships with industry. Matawa First Nations are hopeful that the outcomes of the Mining Act Consultations will lead to future win-win-win solutions in the North and a greater appreciation of First Nations' needs at all levels.





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“We believe that today’s meeting is an important educational piece for all stakeholders,” continues Moonias. “Matawa First Nations’ Chiefs are making it abundantly clear that mining companies must be required to consult with our community members before they begin their exploration and the investment community must also know these facts to ensure that they protect their investments. Moreover, working with Political Territory Organizations such as Nishnawbe Aski Nation does not constitute consultations with our First Nations.”

Other recommendations being presented today by Matawa First Nations include the need for improved community-level education and information, mineral skills development programming for regional First Nations, the establishment of a database of skilled persons in the North and changes to environmental policies to ensure the preservation of natural resources in the Boreal Forests whilst supporting economic development opportunities.

Matawa First Nations are a group of First Nations that are proactive in resource development and have signed several Agreements with mining companies who have begun exploration on their traditional lands. They are also the first major tribal council to participate in the Prospectors, Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) conference.

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