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Three Northern Ontario First Nations to Develop Processes for Shared Traditional Territories

Thunder Bay, ON, September 7, 2011 - In attempt to unite First Nations and prevent industry from plotting communities against each other, three Northern Ontario First Nations have signed a letter of intent to work together on common interests in shared traditional territories. Aroland, Ginoogaming, and Long Lake # 58 First Nations have committed to develop processes together to ensure that the First Nations are aware of activities occurring, or about to occur, within their traditional territories and that they jointly benefit from developments through proper consultations and consent.

Chief Veronica Waboose of Long Lake #58 First Nation says; "Currently companies and industry are approaching our First Nations individually and we don't have the resources. Working together as three First Nations, we can assist each other and guarantee we are all in the know about projects happening within our traditional territories."

All three communities are located approximately 350 kilometers Northeast of Thunder Bay, Ontario. Chief Sonny Gagnon of Aroland First Nation says; "Our First Nations are all going to be impacted by development happening in the area- not just one of the communities. These are our shared territories...this isn't about divide and conquer."

The three First Nations have identified that the absence of a government to government process for consultation and accommodation between First Nations and the Federal and Provincial governments as a major issue.

The Matawa First Nations Chiefs signed a Unity Declaration in July to stand together to protect the natural resources and territories of member First Nations; The three Chiefs agree that signing the letter of intent, is the next step for the declaration.



Chief Celia Echum of Ginoogaming First Nation says; "If you look at the history, these three communities are all interconnected. All of our membership has ownership of the lands- it is shared territory."

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