

The Royal Proclamation and Modern Treaties

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The Algonquins of Ontario have reached a historic point on a journey of survival, rebuilding and self-sufficiency – a journey of reconciliation – and one that includes reaching out and building relationships with their neighbours across their Traditional Territory. On December 13, 2012, the Preliminary Draft Agreement-in-Principle was released for public review. The negotiations are now approaching the next critical phase in which a proposed Agreement-in-Principle will be put forward to Algonquin Voters for a Ratification Vote. The proposed Agreement-in-Principle, if ratified, is the first step towards reaching a modern-day treaty that would be protected under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

These efforts are the culmination of many years of negotiations between the Algonquins of Ontario and the Governments of Canada and Ontario. The Algonquins were on the Kichissippi (now known as the Ottawa River) and its tributary valleys when the French moved into the area. Samuel de Champlain made contact with the Algonquins in 1603 shortly after he established the first permanent French settlement on the St. Lawrence at Tadoussac.

The Algonquins of Ontario have never had a land surrender treaty with the Crown and their land claim has its earliest foundation with the Royal Proclamation. Algonquin petitions to the Crown seeking recognition and protection for Algonquin land and rights date back to 1772. In 1983, the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation commenced the modern treaty negotiations by formally submitting the most recent petition with supporting research. Ontario accepted the claim for negotiations in 1991 and the Government of Canada joined the negotiations in 1992.

The Algonquins of Ontario claim includes an area of 9 million acres within the watersheds of the Kichissippi (Ottawa River) and Mattawa River, an unceded territory that covers most of eastern Ontario. The negotiations are challenging with more than 1.2 million people who live and work within the Settlement Area and 85 municipal jurisdictions fully or partially covered.

The Algonquin Negotiation Team consists of the Chief and Council of the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation and one representative of the Algonquin communities of Antoine, Bonnechere, Greater Golden Lake, Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini, Mattawa/North Bay, Shabot

Obaadjiwan, Snimikobi and Whitney & Area. These Algonquin Negotiation Representatives are elected by Algonquins for a three year term.

The proposed key elements of a Final Agreement that would settle the Algonquins of Ontario land claim include, among other things:

- \$300 million transfer to the Algonquins of Ontario;
- Transfer of not less than 117,500 acres of provincial Crown land to Algonquin ownership; and
- Recommended approaches to address issues such as harvesting rights, forestry, parks and protected areas, heritage and culture and Algonquin eligibility and enrolment.

These key elements serve as building blocks and initiatives to:

- Reaffirm the honour and pride of the Algonquin people;
- Ensure the survival and prosperity of the Algonquin people and culture;
- Raise awareness and understanding about Algonquin history and culture;
- Stimulate cultural and economic development opportunities; and
- Achieve reconciliation of the relationships of the Algonquins with the Governments of Ontario and Canada.

The Algonquins of Ontario are committed to achieving a just and equitable settlement of this long outstanding claim. The negotiations aim to build and strengthen cooperative relationships between the Algonquins of Ontario and their neighbours living and working across the Territory. Since the release of the Preliminary Draft Agreement-in-Principle in December 2012, there have been extensive consultation efforts in order to obtain feedback from Algonquin Voters, stakeholder groups, elected officials and the general public.

Should the Algonquin Ratification Vote be successful, the proposed Agreement-in-Principle would be submitted to the Governments of Ontario and Canada for approval. Following such approval and signature by the Principal Negotiators, the Agreement-in-Principle, while not legally binding, would form the framework for continued negotiations towards a Final Agreement that will be known as the Algonquin Treaty.

Negotiations leading to a Final Agreement could then begin. These normally take 4 to 5 years to complete. A Final Agreement would also need to be approved by the Algonquins of Ontario

through a Ratification Vote and by legislation passed by the Legislature of Ontario and the Parliament of Canada.