




DEPARTMENT OF LANDS
& NATURAL RESOURCES

Wiikwemkoong
UNCEDDED TERRITORY



What You Need to Know About the Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory Proposed Draft A'ki Naaknigewin



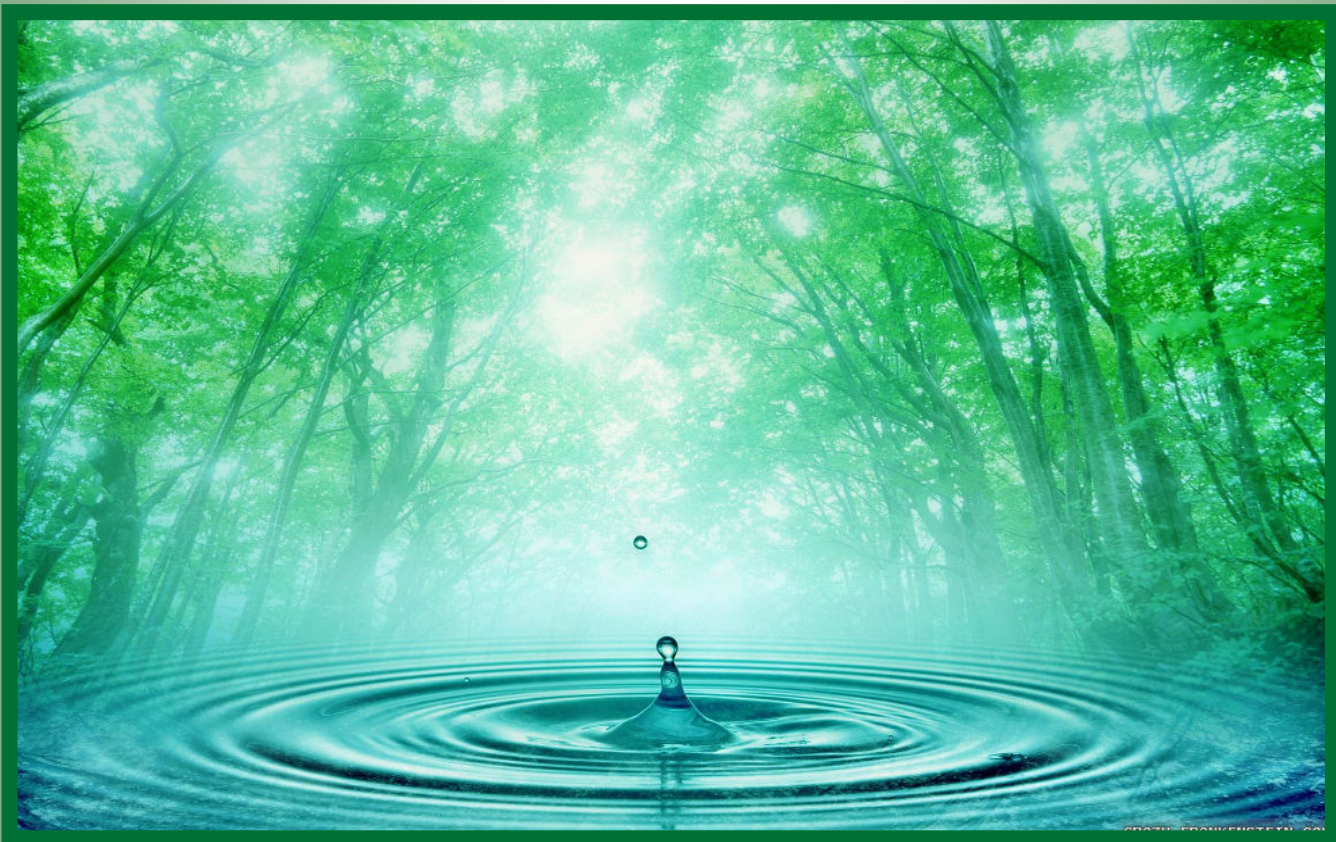
The background of the slide is a photograph of a natural landscape. In the foreground, there is a wooden fence made of horizontal logs. Behind the fence, there is a dense forest of green trees. In the distance, a body of water, likely Lake Huron, is visible under a clear blue sky.

Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory is a proud, progressive, and prosperous Territory steeped in the Indigenous culture and language of the Anishinabek.

Our home is centred on Odawa Mnis and the surrounding islands in Lake Huron. Our lands are Unceded.

We have retained these lands for our future generations so that they can continue to be Anishinaabe. We have not relinquished any of our rights to any of the lands in the Great Lakes Basin to any Nation. We continue to govern the waters, air, and lands including Islands, as our ancestors have since time immemorial. These lands are the homelands of the Peoples of the Three Fires Confederacy: the Odawa, Ojibway and Potawatomi.

Like our ancestors before us, Wiikwemkoong continues to move forward, by building partnerships that reinforce our values and traditions with various organizations and local, provincial, and federal governments.



Our History

The Odawa inhabited Odawa Mnis or “Manitoulin Island” for many years prior to any other tribal settlements; Manitoulin Island has also been called “Ogemah Mnis”, the home of the ancestors as recorded by many Chiefs having been buried here. Prior to European contact, Confederacy of Anishinabek tribes composed of the Odawa, Ojibway and Pottawatomi controlled the Northern Great Lakes areas including Manitoulin Island.

In 1836, Wiikwemkoong was signatory to the “Bond Head” Manitoulin Treaty, of which all of Manitoulin and the surrounding islands would be a place of residing for Anishinabek free from the settler population. No surrender of land as part of this treaty.

Many Upper Canada Indians did not migrate to Manitoulin Island as intended by the Crown. Therefore, in 1862, the McDougall Treaty was initiated and signed. This treaty targeted the surrender of lands on Manitoulin Island.

In 1968, an amalgamation took place among three bands: Manitoulin Island Unceded Indian Reserve, Point Grondine and South Bay. This amalgamation created the Wiikwemkoong Unceded Indian Reserve. In 2014 the Constitution – Wiikwemkoong G'chi Naak-nigewin was ratified, subsequently changing the name to Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory and birthing a renewal of pride in our unique political and legal history.

The people of Wiikwemkoong take great pride in the living history, culture and language of their community and in the diverse traditional arts that are present. In 2006, the citizens of Wiikwemkoong formally implemented a community-based Anishinaabemowin Language Strategy to retain our language for all future generations. It was also during this time that the Department of Canadian Heritage designated Wiikwemkoong as one of several Cultural Capitals of Canada.





Wiikwemkoong Department of Lands and Natural Resources

Wiikwemkoong A'Ki Miiinwaa Enoodewziingak Genwendgik (Wiikwemkoong Department of Lands and Natural Resources) is inherently responsible for all matters related to land management, protection of our waters and natural resources of Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory within the Great Lakes.

Mandate

The Department of Lands and Natural Resources will facilitate the development and implementation of a comprehensive approach to lands stewardship by working towards a balanced approach between individual and collective community interests.

Mission

The Department of Lands and Natural Resources will facilitate the development and implementation of a comprehensive approach to lands stewardship by working towards a balanced approach between individual and collective community interests.

Vision

To reclaim our rightful stewardship for the lands, waters, environment and natural resources consistent with the traditional beliefs and practices of the Anishnabek people of Wiikwemkoong Unceded Indian Reserve.

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST NATIONS LAND MANAGEMENT

The agreement was originally signed by the Government of Canada and 13 First Nations in 1996. The Agreement was an initiative by the 13 First Nations to take over management and control of their lands and resources.

The Framework Agreement sets out the principal components of this new land management process, but it is **Not a Treaty** and does not affect treaty or other constitutional rights of First Nations.

In 2016, Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory signed an adhesion document, agreement with Canada to commence the developmental activities to work towards a Land Law and a vote on the Individual Agreement between Canada and Wiikwemkoong.

This agreement will result in the recognition of our inherent rights to govern our own reserve lands and natural resources.

By signing the agreement, we agreed to develop our own Land Law. Once approved, the Federal Government will no longer be involved in the management of WUT lands.

The Ogimaa and Council along with WUT Anishinabek will work together when making land and resource management decisions.

Once the agreement was signed by WUT in December 2016, we began working on two documents required as a signatory to the Framework Agreement, “Aki Naaknigewin” and “Individual Agreement”.





Aki Naaknigewin

The A'Ki Naaknigewin is specific to the Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory and will replace the 34-land management provision of the Indian Act. The land law and its contents will be drafted by Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory and its Wiikwemkoong Anishinabek and will make provisions for the following matters:

- Identifying the reserve lands to be managed.
- Develop general policies and procedures for the use and occupation of these lands by Wiikwemkoong Anishinaabek and others.
- The making and publishing of other Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory Land & Resources related laws.

The Land Law will provide increased protection for Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory reserve land and resources .



INDIVIDUAL AGREEMENT

The second document is called the Individual Agreement – This Agreement between Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory and Canada will be negotiated to deal with such matters as:

- The reserve lands to be managed by Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory,
- The specifics of the transfer of the administration of land from Canada to Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory,
- The transfer of revenues,
- An interim environmental assessment process.
- And the funding to be provided by Canada to the community for land management.
- Once these two documents are completed Wiikwemkoong Anishinaabek on and off reserve will approve them through 1) Wiikwemkoong Chi-Naaknigewin passing of laws and/or 2) through a community vote. (This to be determined)
- The A’Ki Naaknigewin and Individual Agreement will be in their final form.

“Nothing will be finalized without continued community consultation and through 3 readings before O’Gimaa and Council by way of the Chi-Naaknigewin Law process and with membership approval.

A photograph of a forest scene. In the foreground, there is a stone wall made of irregular stones, and a dirt path covered with fallen leaves. The background is filled with tall trees with green and yellowing leaves, suggesting an autumn setting. The entire image is framed by a green border.

Community Ratification Process

To ensure membership is fully aware of the process of approving the Land Law and Individual Agreement a Community Ratification Process (CRP) document has been developed.

A CRP document sets out the procedure by which the community will decide whether to approve its Land Law and the individual Agreement, specifically, how the community vote will be set up, voting procedures and how the will be monitored and verified.



Why have a Land Law?

Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory lands and resources have been managed by the Federal Government under the Indian Act. The community has since had very little to no decision-making powers over lands and resources.

Throughout history the Indian Act has been highly invasive and protective. The Act enabled the Canadian government to determine our land base and to have total control and management of our lands and resources.

By approving our Land Law and Individual Agreement, the community will take back control.

This may be the single most historic accomplishment, not only for Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory but for all First Nations this century, to have us recognized as governments with our own law-making powers and control over our own lands.

Land Law Benefits

A National Study on the Framework Agreement benefits to First Nations operating under their own Land Law showed that...

- Land Management activities are completed much faster
- Values & vision are strengthened
- Relationships with financial institutions are greatly improved
- The ability to borrow for capital investments are strengthened
- The level of interests & participation of membership is increased
- Internal investment & external investments are increased
- Jobs and opportunities are being created

The study also noted that, of the communities who are operating under their own land law, NOT ONE would ever go back to land management under the Indian Act.

Today, there are 77 First Nations in Canada operating under their own Land Law, with an additional 61 communities in the process of going to vote.

15 First Nations in Ontario have approved their own Land Law. They include Atikameksheng Anishnawbek (Whitefish Lake), Dokis, Georgina Island, Henvey Inlet, Long Lac #58, Magnetawan, Mnjikaning (Chippewas of Rama FN), Nipissing and Shawanaga to name a few.

Meeting the Community's Needs

The Indian Act provisions on Lands and Resource Management does not meet the needs of our community.

Historically, the Indian Act has caused lengthy delays when it comes to infrastructure and business development; as well as, land management activities.

Having our own Land Law will allow the community to accomplish these tasks in a more efficient and timely matter.

A Land Law is not a treaty and does not affect our treaty and aboriginal rights.

A NO VOTE MEANS THE WIIKWEMKOONG UNCEDED TERRITORY LANDS WILL CONTINUE TO BE MANAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS UNDER THE INDIAN ACT.





How will a “YES” vote help the community?

The community will take control over land and resource management and ensure their protection for future generations.

We can prepare and administrate our own land designations for business, commercial, residential, recreational and heritage sites.

We can place ourselves in a much better position to attract businesses, investments and partnerships that could lead to revenue and job opportunities for the community.

We will be able to identify, document, protect and manage our custom lot holdings by creating and maintaining our own Lands Registry System.



How did we get to the voting stage for our land law?

Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory signed the Adhesion Document with the Government of Canada in December of 2016. to commence the developmental work on creating a land law and other related activities pertaining to a transition from Indian Act to Self Governing on Lands & Natural Resources. BCM # 499-2016

- Land Law Team initiated in April of 2017
- Introducing the concept of Aki' Naaknigewin Land Law to on and off reserve community members from May to August 2017
- First Draft of WUT Aki'Naaknigewin Land Law September 2017
- On and off reserve community consultations from October 2017 - January 2018
- Second Draft of WUT Aki'Naaknigewin Land Law June



Registering for the community vote on the A'ki Naaknigewin

Wiikwemkoong Anishnaabek who are 18 years of age and older prior to the potential vote date, may be required to vote on the Wiikwemkoong A'ki Naaknigewin.

A voter registration and information package will be sent to the last known address of all eligible voters at a minimum of 56 days prior to the vote.

It is important for Wiikwemkoong Anishnaabek who live off reserve to provide the Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory Membership office of your current address to ensure you are kept up to date of news and events in Wiikwemkoong.



WHAT A “YES” VOTE MEANS FOR WIIKWEMKOONG UNCEDED TERRITORY:

- A Vote Yes means a positive change
- A Vote Yes means continued growth and development
- A Vote Yes means to move away from the Indian Act which was not created by Indigenous People
- A vote Yes means it will allow us to continue practicing our governance under our G’chi Naaknigewin
- A Vote Yes means it gives Wiikwemkoong control over its lands and resources
- A Vote Yes means making history
- A Vote Yes means securing lands and resources for our future generations
- A Vote Yes means increased opportunities in business development and job creation

For more information please contact:

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OR

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Please also check out the following website
for more details:

First Nations Lands Management Resource
Centre: www.labrc.com

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Land Law Development and the First Na-
tions Lands Management Resource Centre***

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