

Appendix 8.13

Reports of Meetings with Elders

Summary of Elders Concerns

St. Theresa Point First Nation

February 17, 2003

- **Hunting and trapping issues are a main concern. Before the settlement occurred in the area there were plenty of wildlife, however, since the arrival of our white brothers, animals have been driven away.**
- **At Warrington Lake, fish eventually died with pollution from settlement.**
- **Outsiders have essentially stolen our livelihood and means of supporting ourselves.**
- **There is not enough information coming into the communities regarding government initiatives and actions.**
- **Deadlines should not be imposed if we are to do a good job and make everyone aware.**
- **The plan implementation may impact the area significantly, eg. Environment, habitat, balance of the eco-system.**
- **We need education programs, information on co-management, resource information, health programs.**
- **We need to preserve our languages and make partnerships and pay royalties to trappers who own traplines.**
- **Burial grounds need to be respected.**
- **First Nation wants the department to take an inventory of all traditional sites in the area for mapping and site protection.**

Wasagamack First Nation

February 18, 2004

- **Lack of respect for terms and conditions of treaties.**
- **There is conflict between development and traditional way of life.**
- **Sodom and Gomorra behavior respecting land use.**
- **There is no respect for Trap-lines.**
- **Wild meat tastes different from years ago.**
- **Lodge owners need to consult with First Nations when bringing in hunters into traditional areas.**
- **Is there hidden agenda with Hydro proposals?**
- **We need to work co-operatively to make right decisions and hope consultation continues so all could benefit including youth.**

- Trapping is still an integral part of the way of life and needs to be strengthened.
- There is oil spills from mining activities, and these need to be cleaned up.

Red Sucker Lake First Nation February 19, 2004

- Treaty rights are not honored regarding land use sharing and hunting rights.
- Ancestors graves not respected, should be protected and sacred lands.
- Current welfare regimes are conditioning people to rely on this on a long term basis. Healthy lifestyles are replaced with modern conveniences such as cars and skidoos.
- Chief welcomes consultation and indicated it is a step in the right direction. First Nations should have an approval role either through co-management or a protocol agreement.
- Revenue sharing should be discussed and made part of the plan.
- We want to know why there was no consultation before with the creation of the parks.
- We cannot use our own trees for what we want. This is our resource. We are continually harassed for trying to sustain ourselves and NRO's confiscate our equipment.

Little Grand Rapids February 23, 2004

- First Nation hunters are not allowed to use Hunting Cabins in the area.
- Is the construction and improvement of the airport be part of the planning initiative.
- We do not hear anything regarding the all year round road and the airport that were to be built.
- When and what process will Manitoba Hydro use to construct their lines.
- We have concerns about our trap-lines and businesses making money on our traditional areas.

Little Black River

December 5, 2003

- **The concern is that monies made by companies and the government from extracted resources are not shared with the First Nations in the area. We as first nation and other communities want to do our own planning on the east side but we need monies to hire consultants.**
- **One project would be clear cutting and the subsequent responsibility of restoration. This process affects the whole environment. Times are changing and Anishinaabe people should approach the province on the issue of compensation for loss of use on traditional land.**
- **The treaties should be taken seriously and look at the traditional territories-along the river**
- **We need to review and define treaty five. We need financial support to be able to review the treaties.**
- **Is the proposed BI-pool project following same line? We understand all of this was started before any consultation.**
- **We understand the all weather road is coming in. There is concern regarding the traffic and the affects to the communities.**
- **We need workshops and information as how to deal with new way of life and the effects of influx of people. We need to listen to what our elders saying. The leaders of the community have to offer new ideas on how to deal with this matter.**
- **Another concern is cottage development in the Whiteshell area. There are approximately 40 to 50 raw sewage systems draining into the waters. We feel the government should not allow new developments to non-native. Some of these initiatives should be used to foster economic development especially within traditional territories.**
- **We were not in favor of the road unless we have a say as to how It will be managed. The fear we have is project will destroy wildlife, trees and other plants. We must also talk about the revenues of the project. We want to be involved.**
- **The main concern we have is the clear cutting done by Tembec. When this is done, the same type of trees should be planted and we want to recommend that there should be no new clear cutting allocations. We also recommend that restoration take place to restore past damages to lands in the cutting or permitted lands and protection of our land, trees, water and plants.**

Little Grand Rapids Community December 5, 2003

- **Our traditional way of life is still very valuable to us. We need to be assured that all the forest will not be destroyed. What will happen in the future to our children? Future generations will not find any trees to build and heat houses.**
- **We believe traditional medicines are being destroyed by chemicals they use to kill undesired brush.**
- **We stand by the treaties, which were signed in 1874. Our elders never sold the land and yet to this day there is no presently no arrangement to share the resources or gain any revenues from the resources.**

Bloodvein First Nation December 5, 2003

- **In our community we wish to stop the land, wildlife and plants destruction, We have many people living off land in the way of trapping and fishing. Wild berries and wild rice is main source of food for many of our people**
- **Our creator gave us this land and we must act as protectors and not allow it to be destroyed. We must preserve it for the generations to come. We must do this in unity.**
- **We are concerned about the young people who are receiving social assistance. The work ethics and desire to become self-sustaining must be revived.**
- **One person would like to see the road go through to reduce the cost of goods particularly food items. The cost of living on isolated communities is unbearable.**
- **The government or who ever constructs the all weather road must take every precaution to protect the environment.**
- **The concerns and recommendations from these communities Must be taken seriously and involve people who reside in these communities.**

Sagkeeng First Nation(Fort Alexander)

December 5, 2003

- **Sagkeeng would like to share their experiences for the people living north in the planning area when the all weather road goes through. Some of the experiences they have encountered when the road went through their community were alcohol and drug related problems, heavy traffic, dusty conditions and youth problems and disruption of livelihood, particularly, hunting and trapping. People were more attracted to move away from the reserve and affected traditional values were lost.**
- **There was a concern that not enough information is given to people in these communities, especially when projects are taking place. We need to make sure governments take time to inform people what the plans are.**

Hollow Water & Little Black River Recommendations:

December 5, 2003

- **Protect and preserve environment as much as possible.**
- **Elder's consultation and involvement in the planning process.**
- **Revenues from resource should go to communities.**
- **Help restore traditional way of life in the area.**
- **Open communication between communities and the governments.**
- **We would like to see more workshops in the future.**

Comments made by Oji-Cree Elders on December 5, 2003:

- **Not sure if we should dialogue with the provincial government as our Treaties are with the Queen Mother**
- **The (ESPI) Video states we should get involved but we are cautious about sharing our knowledge without a formal process as to how this information will be utilized.**
- **It also states our Treaty Rights will be recognized and yet the province has done little to do so in the past. Why will things change?**
- **We cannot give up hope, as this will have a huge impact on future generations.**

- In the end the government will be judged by its actions and not its promises.
- Government should come out and see the impacts that exist currently so it has something to measure against future activities.

1) What do you see as the greatest social and economical challenges facing your community?

- Lack of employment opportunities for our people. This has led to alcohol, drug and substance abuse. There are also numerous instances of family abuse, which we never had before.
- The youth are not participating in our traditional activities.
- Foreign things are brought into our community without any thought as to the impact. Satellite dishes, computers, video games. There are good and bad things in all of society, the elders know this and these things were introduced without explaining the bad. The negative impact of such things.
- Our lifestyles have changed and we are suffering for this. We need to try and get back to how we were. Before we used to be healthy by living off the land and today we can't or we won't.
- We need to stress to our youth the importance of things such as education and the importance of being active.
- You cannot differentiate us from the land, what is done to the land is done to us. People in the south as well as governments do not recognize this, for if they did they wouldn't allow what has happened to us. I don't think they would allow these things to happen to their families. We don't either, but we've been powerless.

2) How do you see the ESPI process assisting your community?

- We cannot fully answer this question because this is the first time we've been asked to participate and to be heard in this process.
- There are already a lot of things that are having a negative impact on us as a people. I hope this can assist our communities to correct the past wrongs and to ensure they do not repeat the same mistakes.
- We need to consult all members of our communities so everybody is aware of the process.
- Information has to be translated into syllabics so the elders can read the information and be able to offer advice when information is sent out to the communities.

3) What role do you see for the Elders in the ESPI?

- Elders should be recognized and acknowledged for their contribution as keepers of the knowledge of the previous generations.

- A process should be identified to protect the sanctity of the TEK before all of it is shared.
- Elders need to be informed of the processes to allow them time to disseminate information before they can offer advice.
- We need to be allowed more time than currently allocated for us to be effective.
- The interaction of youth and elders has to be brought back into our way of thinking, without our input our youth are/will be lost.

4) What actions in the (short, medium, long term) need to be taken to improve conditions in the First Nation communities?

- We need to inform our people of what is going on.
- There has to be recognition of the Elders and the knowledge they possess and to be utilized more effectively.
- We need to stress the importance of education and traditional values to our youth. It is important to have knowledge of both and to have balance.
- All information has to be shared; partial knowledge of a process is not beneficial to anyone.
- There has to be an ongoing process for our involvement
- We need to respect each other in order to be effective.

Sun raises with today's purpose and the sun set gives you time to reflect on what you've

2 Elders from each community participating

Manto-Sipi Cree Nation

Bunibonibee Cree Nation

God's Lake First Nation

Norway House First Nation

- I am concerned with the view of environmentalists. We agree that the environment must be protected but we also need development in our communities and areas.
- What about the Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) with Poplar River and others? Where does that leave us as we attempt to use this process.

- Video is not revealing the issues of the community. Video should include objectives of the process and examples of how mining and timber harvesting will change nature. Elders require more information.
- There were concerns with water quality. Recently, for example, snow color is changing. Elders believe development does change nature but don't know to what extent the damage is. We would like to see this planning take its time so we know the extent of any damage to the environment. We need to do this for our children.
- Nobody ever mentions how hydro projects were going to destroy our water and environment. We can't drink water or eat fish from our water. Moose, muskrat and beaver don't taste the same anymore. God didn't destroy the land, hydro did. Elders must have more meetings to plan to do something about it.
- As a young person I was able to eat anything, it is not like that anymore.
- With roads built to the north, how will it impact on the environment? I suppose people would benefit by reducing costs.
- I request more meetings to learn what is going on with this planning. A one day meeting of Elders is not enough.
- There are a lot of implications to planning. More information is needed on the broad area planning. We have to know what governments are doing. Change and development is creating change in our community. I realize we have to live within means, however, our traditional way of life is still important but is difficult. Gasoline has increased but our income has not. Although the hydro line promised a decrease in price it never happened. Impact of hydro line has never been considered.
- We must do something now about the conditions faced in our communities today.
- Would like to have seen the purpose and intent of meeting beforehand. This will have an impact on our way of life.
- Government response is always slow when it comes to forest fires.
- We see the benefit a road to the communities would bring. High prices take up all our allowances for food.
- We use to make a living on commercial fishing. This is not possible today.
- Hydro put a line through my trap line and paid me a small amount.
- Governments today have authority over everything and interfere with what we do. Especially over our traditional way of life.
- Hydro it seems has had a negative impact, new sicknesses and diseases exist that we never experienced before.
- Younger generations have a hard life today and it is difficult to try teaching them.
- There is a cost to our community for development and it affects our community negatively.
- The government has to be willing to let us be main players in this process.

- When hydro was put in we were told costs would go down but now we pay more for hydro costs than people do in the south.
- We need to gain something from this process. There are a lot of barriers that have to be torn down.
- We need to be given an opportunity at long term investment. Governments use us. This is an opportunity.
- There is a University professor who said that the treaties override all other authority or development.
- I feel we have the capacity to make changes in our communities.
- We need to revisit that video with more examples, what planning? What impacts? We need to reveal all this. What forestry and mining activities are there going to be? Where are potential tourism sites? What studies on fisheries have been done? What about the winter road, how far is it going? What about hydro? We hear one thing and Ontario hears another.
- We need this info, but at the same time this is a government initiative. Governments now realize that partnerships with First Nations have to be arranged.
- Tourism will only benefit outsiders. Hunters only take the antlers. Forestry only takes what they need and leave the rest of the trees lying there.
- They are using us for their gain. Yet they use our knowledge for their gain. If we want to work in partnership we need more dialogue. Many people can't read the information in English.
- What insights will Elders input have with other experts, or do we need to hire biologists before governments will listen?
- I was hoping to have more discussion on the process. What is the broad area plan? I hope this can be discussed when the secretariat comes to our community.
- Elders from communities should be involved in every meeting.