

“In recent years and months, we have worked closely with the Manitoba government to get these revenue sharing agreements signed. The agreement is an important first step towards regeneration and recognition of our treaty agreements with the Crown. Chemawawin Cree Nation will finally benefit financially from the forestry resource in our Treaty 5 territory. This agreement will change lives for the better in our community. It means consistent, predictable and sustainable funding to support critical things our community needs like improving infrastructure, implementing long-term planning and pursuing development opportunities to address the economic, social and cultural needs of Chemawawin people on the lands that have belonged to us since time began.

“Through our forestry partnership we have learned that a strategic, long-term, and collaborative dialogue has to occur in order to facilitate a more principled approach, in turn leading to decision-making that addresses issues early and effectively, and creates greater certainty and better outcomes for all. In addition, our dialogue acknowledged Supreme Court of Canada decisions as a point to move forward from, supporting a new relationship that involves First Nations in natural resource development.

“Finally, for many Cree communities, the concept of prosperity extends far beyond receiving payment for work done, products procured, or royalties shared. Prosperity requires taking a broader and longer view where decisions, efforts, and investments made today will build capacity and infrastructure that will benefit generations to come and drive even greater prosperity in the future. This sustainable approach to reconciliation must recognize that the impacts of decisions made today need to be balanced with future community needs.”

— Chief Clarence Easter, Chemawawin Cree Nation

“The boundaries of First Nation and provincial powers over natural resources is the unfinished treaty business from the 1930 Natural Resources Transfer Agreement. This agreement on timber dues is an important step forward. However, meaningful treaty implementation also means ensuring we are directly involved in decisions about our forests. We look forward to moving ahead with discussions with Manitoba based on recognition of our inherent laws and stewardship responsibilities to our forest lands.”

— Chief Derek Nepinak, Minegoziibe Anishinabe

“Resource revenue sharing enables Mosakahiken Cree Nation to share in the economic benefits of forestry operations near their communities.

“Mosakahiken Cree Nation will have full control of the allocation of these funds into key initiatives that support economic development, education, health, community, and cultural priorities.

“The Mosakahiken Cree Nation in Treaty No. 5 has waited long to receive and become partners in resource revenue sharing, and moving towards acknowledging the treaty—that Mosakahiken Cree Nation prosper as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the river flows.

“The Forestry Revenue Sharing Agreement with the Manitoba government is an important step towards more meaningful discussions on reconciliation, economic prosperity, and continued improvement in relationship building between Mosakahiken Cree Nation and the Crown.

“Nekote, Canadian Kraft Paper and the Manitoba government developed collaborative arrangements through a forestry partnership. Experts and practitioners from the partnership were able to contribute insights and understanding that allowed us to achieve this revenue sharing agreement. The Nekote liaison, Floyd North, was an extremely valuable tool to the Mosakahiken Cree Nation. Mosakahiken Cree Nation would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his hard work. We would also like to thank the Manitoba government, Minister Greg Nesbitt and Manitoba forestry staff for working with us. This agreement would not have been possible without their full support.”

— Chief Vincent Bercier, Mosakahiken Cree Nation

“I am pleased that the Manitoba government is now sharing resource revenue with First Nations as a result of our legal settlement. We are committed to working with the Manitoba government in future resource development and revenue sharing opportunities.”

— Chief Larson Anderson, Norway House Cree Nation

“For several years, Opaskwayak collaborated with Nisokapawino Forestry Management Corporation to complete a new 20-year Management Plan. This plan would detail the use of the land within Opaskwayak’s traditional territory.

“This past winter, on February 15, 2023, Opaskwayak made history when we signed an agreement with the province.

“Reconciliation isn’t just land acknowledgements anymore, it’s putting action behind those words and really seeing concrete results. I am pleased to see the province following through with a tremendous opportunity that not only benefits our community but it also benefits the entire province.

“A small ceremony took place at the Kikiwak Inn in Opaskwayak. Community members had the chance to see firsthand the signing of the historic Timber Dues Revenue Sharing Agreement. Afterward, everyone in attendance feasted together.”

— Chief Sidney Ballantyne, Opaskwayak Cree Nation

“Signing a revenue sharing agreement with the Manitoba government was long overdue, and my council is happy for the positive impact this will have on our people. We are starting businesses in Brandon and Swan River and can use this money to address addictions and housing struggles at home on the reserve. The logging industry supports many families, and as First Nations people we must ensure responsible practices and that we receive a fair share from the resources within our territories. We will continue to work with the government as long as there is transparency and consultation. Let us remember that for every tree removed, another one must be planted in its place.”

— Chief Elwood Zastre, Wuskwi Sipiik First Nation