



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMC opposes Manitoba plan to privatize provincial parks and sell off cottage lots

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) is issuing this statement in opposition to the Province of Manitoba’s plan to privatize provincial parks. The province has issued a request for proposals (RFP) for a contractor to come forward with a plan to “renew and modernize Manitoba’s provincial parks.” Media are also reporting that this strategy entails selling cottage lots that are currently leased by cottage owners within the provincial parks in Manitoba.

“This is a very concerning issue for many of the AMC member First Nations, who have been displaced and removed from their traditional territories and lands in order for authorities to establish these provincial parks. I strongly condemn the proposed plan to sell off lands – whether they be public, park or Crown lands - without consultation with First Nations. First Nations must be accommodated and, if necessary, compensated under the Treaty Land Entitlement Committee for any proposed land transfer. Although affected First Nations are confined to their reserve lands, these provincial parks, such as the Whiteshell, are located on Treaty territory; furthermore, these public lands – including the Whiteshell provincial park - hold very sacred and spiritual meaning for the Anishinaabe, whose petroglyphs and ancient medicine wheels are still maintained and used to this day by Knowledge Keepers, the Midewan Society and by all Manitobans who wish to learn about the history and spiritual practices of the First inhabitants of the lands that are now designated as provincial parks,” stated AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas.

“All lands now designated as provincial parks hold ceremonial and historical meaning to all First Nations in Manitoba. There is a concern that if park land is privatized, and that if these cottage lots are sold, it may limit access to our sacred ceremonial sites not only in the Whiteshell but in many other sites across the province.”

Grand Chief Dumas added, “There are many reasons why the duty to consult and the right to be compensated may be triggered with this proposed plan, including any amendments to the *Provincial Parks Act* that may be required to enable the privatization of provincial parks. On this 150th anniversary year of Manitoba, I call on the Province of Manitoba to act in good faith and to meaningfully consult with the affected First Nations, so that their histories, ceremonies, and inherent and Treaty rights within their homelands not only continue to be a foundational aspect of Manitoba but are protected and preserved for the next 150 years.”

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About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Ininew (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.