

ELDERS' DECLARATION

CONVENED AT THE TURTLE LODGE ON MARCH 27TH, 2013:

We, the Original Free Peoples of Our Land, Acknowledge the Great Spirit.

It is through our relationship with the Great Spirit that we recognize as having a responsibility to lead Our People to practice equality and justice according to the ancient voices of Our Ancestors.

We, the Cree, Anishinabe, Denesuline, Dakota, and Oji-Cree Language People;

- Respect Motherhood as the foundation of Nationhood; and we are:
- Guided by the sacred laws and ceremonies given to us by the Great Spirit;
- Committed to practice, preserve, and uphold the spiritual relationship with the land;
- Resilient and determined People dedicated to the future for our children, grandchildren, and for Seven Generations and beyond;
- Today, tomorrow, and for all the days ahead, as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the water flows.

In a Spirit of Unity,

Our Elder Duty is to empower the voice of the Land, the Spirit of our Ancestors, and the People that will preserve the Spirit of the Water, the Land including the Fire and Wind, and all Living Beings; and

Our Elder Duty is to empower the Leaders of their spiritual responsibility to the People and the Land.

We declare that:

The Indigenous Peoples of Our Land are the stewards of Our Land, which we do not own but owe our existence to; We all belong to the Land and it provides spiritual nutrition for a Good Life.

It is **Our Intention** to live a way of life that will be visible by clean water, abundant land, thriving animals, and sovereign People inspired to follow the laws that the Great Spirit has given us.

Therefore, we call on Our People to:

- ❖ **Uphold the Natural Laws that honour the Land of which they have originated from;**
- ❖ **Honour and Respect the Sacred relationship between the Land and the People; and**
- ❖ **Awaken the spirit to the true identities of Our People that come from the languages, songs, ceremonies, gifts, and natural ways of being.**

We appeal to Our Leadership to uphold the Spiritual Foundation of Our Being and to embrace the Spirit of a Higher Power to direct, align, and inspire their actions, moving forward together based on respectful consensus, extending the natural laws of Our People to the decisions that are made for the collective interests of Our People that they represent.

We appeal to Our Elders from all our Nations to become organized and synchronized so that we maintain the ancient ways that have been given to the People; honouring and respecting the rightful place of our Elders, Men, Women, and Children so that we may serve the greatest benefit to the Land and preserve the knowledge that has been given to us by the Great Spirit.

This declaration has been written in the Spirit of Love for Our Children.

Signed at the Turtlelodge, Sagkeeng First Nation, on March 27th, 2013: