



# *Asubpeeschoseewagong Netum Anishinabek*

GRASSY NARROWS, ONTARIO P0X 1B0 • PHONE: (807) 925-2201 • FAX: (807) 925-2649

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Grassy Narrows rejects Forest Management Plan for the Whiskey Jack Forest 2012 – 2022 on the basis of failure to consult and infringes on Aboriginal and Treaty Rights**

Today Grassy Narrows Chief and Council sent an open letter to Premier Wynne rejecting Ontario's Forestry Management Plan 2012 - 2022 for another decade of clear-cut logging on Grassy Narrows Territory. The Forest Management plan for the Whiskey Jack Forest 2012-2022 is in the final stages of approval and is currently posted for public comment.

The plan sets out a schedule to clear-cut much of what little mature forest remains on Grassy Narrows Territory after decades of large scale industrial logging. This will further erode the Aboriginal, Treaty Rights and the ability of the community to sustain their families and to practice their culture through fishing, hunting, trapping, medicine harvesting, ceremony and healing for all generations.

"Premier Wynne, it is within your power to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated at the expense of another generation of Grassy Narrows children," said Grassy Narrows Chief Simon Fobister. "I call on you to ensure that never again will Ontario attempt to force decisions on our people and our lands."

Premier Wynne, visited Grassy Narrows in the summer of 2012 as Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, saying that she wanted to rebuild Ontario's relationship with Grassy Narrows to "get it right." Instead Ontario has unilaterally pursued this clear-cut logging plan against the will of the community without consent

"This document attempts to make plans to clear-cut log the lands that we use to feed our families and practice our culture. We cannot allow this," said Grassy Narrows hunter Joseph Fobister. "For centuries we have raised our voices to protect our rights and our land. But Ontario and Canada continue to ignore us with devastating consequences for our people."

We do not accept any application of this plan to our traditional lands. The Chief and Council along with community Elders stand united on this issue and are determined to protect the community's way of life; Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.

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Hon. Kathleen Wynne  
Premier  
Legislative Bldg  
Rm 281  
Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A1A1

October 24, 2013

Dear Premier Wynne,

RE: Forest Management Plan for the Whiskey Jack Forest for the 10-year period April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2022

The Grassy Narrows First Nation Chief and Council reject the Forest Management Plan for the Whiskey Jack 2012-2022 on the basis of failure to consult and infringes on our Aboriginal and Treaty Rights

This document attempts to make plans to clearcut log the lands that we use for our physical, spiritual, and cultural survival. We cannot allow this.

For centuries we have raised our voices to protect our rights and our land. But Ontario and Canada continue to ignore us with devastating consequences for our people and our land. This plan is a violation of our inherent human rights given to us by the Creator, as well as our rights as recognized by Treaty 3, the Constitution of Canada, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Ontario has a long and terrible legacy of imposing decisions on our people and our lands against our will and without consent. The theft of our children to residential schools, the damming of our river, the relocation of our community, mercury poisoning, and clearcut logging have all taken a deep toll on our health, our culture, and our way of life.

Premier Wynne, you came to our community in the summer of 2012 and said that you wanted to rebuild Ontario's relationship with Grassy Narrows. You said that this time you wanted to "get it right." Instead MNR officials have continued to unilaterally pursue clearcut logging plans. These planning processes were and continue to be developed without our participation, knowledge and consent. We are frustrated that these processes are conducted entirely outside of the five year long process we have undertaken in good faith with Ontario to reach a mutually agreeable resolution to these issues.

MNR plan sets out a schedule to clearcut much of what little mature forest remains on our Territory after decades of large scale industrial logging will further erode our ability to sustain our families and to practice our culture through fishing, hunting, trapping, medicine harvesting, ceremony and healing.



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We do not accept any application of this plan to our traditional lands. The Chief & Council along with community Elders stand united on this issue and are determined to protect the community's way of life.

You are fully aware that our community continues to struggle with the devastating health impacts from 9,000 kg of mercury that was dumped into our river system in the 1960's with the permission of the government of Ontario. Three generations of our people bear the burden of this degenerative neurological poison.

New clearcut logging will bring even more mercury into our river and our food chain, further prolonging and exacerbating this avoidable tragedy. We condemn such processes and plans.

We have been repeatedly told that Ontario cannot undue what was done over forty years ago, but we are deeply concerned that Ontario wishes to repeat further degradation to Grassy Narrows. It is now within your power to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated at the expense of another generation of Grassy Narrows children.

We call on you to ensure that never again will Ontario attempt to force decisions on our people and our lands.

What will your legacy be?

Chief Simon Fobister