



# *Asubpeeschoseewagong Netum Anishinabek*

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## **Asubpeeschoseewagong Anishinabek Aaki Declaration**

[Grassy Narrows First Nation Land Declaration]

### **SUMMARY**

1. We are the indigenous people of this land.
2. We love our land and our way of life.
3. Our land and our way of life are under attack.
4. Industrial logging makes our ongoing mercury crisis worse.
5. We stand by the decisions of our people.
6. We declare our Anishinabe Territory an Indigenous Sovereignty and Protected Area. We will make our own decisions and there will be no industrial logging on our Anishinabe Territory.
7. We exercise our right of self-determination to ban certain land uses on our Indigenous homeland, and allow others.
8. We will rebuild our livelihood and enjoy our Anishinabe way of life again.
9. We demand compensation for our losses and support for good jobs to heal our people and our forest.
10. We will enforce our Declaration under our own authority. We call on Ontario and Canada to recognize our Declaration.

## 1. INHERENT SOVEREIGNTY AND RIGHTS

### **We are the Indigenous people of this land.**

Since time before memory we, the Asubpeeschoseewagong Anishinabek (Grassy Narrows First Nation, ANA), have lived our way of life on our Anishinabe Territory. As Indigenous people we keep our own language, culture, land, governance, and spirituality.

*We assert our inherent sovereignty and our inalienable right to self-determination on our Indigenous homeland. Our land and our rights are given by the Creator and only the Creator can take them away.*

Some of these rights are recognized under Treaty 3, the *Constitution Act of 1982*, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Canadian statutory and common law, and under international human rights instruments that are binding on Canada.

## 2. LAND AND WAY OF LIFE

### **We love our land and our way of life.**

Our relationship to the land is our primary value and the foundation of who we are as Anishnabe people. The land supports us so that we can enjoy our good Anishinabe way of life – hunting, fishing, trapping, and all traditional gathering – living off the forest and waterways as our families have for countless generations.

We continue to follow the teachings of our Elders to be responsible for the land and to ensure that it stays healthy and can sustain future generations of life. **Manaachitootaa Aki** – protect the land. We take care of our land and it provides for us. We take only what we need and we leave the rest for our relations in the animal, plant, bird, fish, and spirit life.

Our relationship with our land sustains us physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually as Anishinabe people.

*We need the land for our survival as a people.*

## 3. ATTACKS ON OUR LAND ARE ATTACKS ON WAY OF LIFE

### **Our land and our way of life are under attack.**

Our sovereignty and our rights have been repeatedly violated by harmful decisions forced on our people by government and industry.

Our way of life has been under attack by residential schools, flooding, relocation, mercury pollution, and racism. *What remains of that way of life is under threat from industrial logging.*

For decades industrial logging damaged our Anishinabe Territory against our objections. Now our fish are unsafe, the moose and caribou are nearly gone, we have less marten, wild rice, and blueberries. Our

medicines are tainted. In despair, our trappers end up on the streets in the cities to become homeless people living off the soup lines.

*Our ability to traditionally harvest to feed and support our families, as we have for millennia, is at risk. This threatens to annihilate our very existence as a people. We cannot accept this anymore.*

We refuse to watch as our forest, and our future, vanish before our eyes on the backs of huge logging trucks. We refuse to watch as outsiders stake claims and mine on our Anishinabe Territory.

## **4. MERCURY CRISIS**

**Industrial logging makes our ongoing mercury crisis worse.**

After our river was poisoned with mercury by the Dryden paper mill, we tried to protect what was still safe in our traditional way of life – our forest based hunting, trapping, guiding, and gathering. Instead, the government expanded clearcut logging and degraded our forests, attacking another pillar of our way of life. This has been a hard blow to our community, which was already suffering from mercury poisoning.

The clearcut logging released mercury that was held safely in the forest soil, further raising mercury levels in our lakes, rivers, and fish.

Industrial logging has made our five decade long mercury crisis deeper and longer. More industrial logging would make our ongoing crisis worse.

## **5. AFFIRMATION**

**We stand by the decisions of our people.**

For many decades we have tried to get respect for our rights and way of life on our Anishinabe Territory. We have consistently voiced our concerns and worked in good faith, but we have seen little progress. We see more clearcut logging plans on the horizon.

We affirm our moratorium of January 17, 2007 on further industrial activity in our Indigenous homeland. We have not given our consent to industrial logging on our land and our moratorium stands.

We respect our community referendum of September 2015 in which we decided that there will be no more industrial logging on our Anishinabe Territory. We will honour and enforce this direction from our people.

## **6. DECLARATION**

**We declare our Anishinabe Territory an Indigenous Sovereignty and Protected Area.**

**We will make our own decisions, determine our own future, and care for our Indigenous homeland.**

**There will be no industrial logging on our Anishinabe Territory.**

We call on the Government of Ontario to withdraw our Anishinabe Territory from Forest Management Planning and mineral staking and to cancel all wood supply commitments from our Anishinabe Territory which were made without our consent. We demand that the Government of Ontario remove the Whiskey Jack Forest and the Area of Undertaking (the part of Ontario that is open to industrial logging) from Anishinabe Territory.

We call on Weyerhaeuser Corporation, Kenora Forest Products, Domtar, and all other companies to commit clearly not to use or sell wood from our Anishinabe Territory.

## **7. LAND USES**

**We exercise our right of self-determination to ban certain land uses on our Indigenous homeland, and to allow others.**

**We ban the following land uses on our Anishinabe Territory:**

- Industrial logging
- Supply to the industrial mills
- Logging by outsiders
- Mineral staking and mining
- Hydro damming
- Oil and gas extraction and transportation
- Biomass extraction
- Radioactive materials mining, transport, storage, and disposal
- Any other uses that do not have ANA's free, prior, and informed consent.

**The following uses by our people are allowed on our Anishinabe Territory:**

- All traditional gathering which includes hunting, fishing, and trapping
- Harvesting firewood

- Building cabins, houses, camps, lodges, and docks
- Making snow shoes, tiki-nags, canoes, and other traditional items
- Small scale selective logging for our own use
- Harvesting of plants and animals for use as medicine, food, ceremony, gifts, etc.
- Sustainable harvesting of plants and animals for sale (eg. Furs, fish, teas, wild rice, etc.)
- Operating lodges and camps
- Maintenance of ANA roads, bridges, trails, culverts, landings, camp sites, portages, etc. by ANA people and our helpers.

**The following uses are allowed on our Anishinabe Territory with a permit from ANA:**

- Travel through the area
- Hunting, fishing, boating, and camping by non-ANA people
- Camps and lodges for fishing, hunting, tourism, healing, recreation
- Eco-tourism
- Scientific studies and monitoring
- remediation and restoration

## **8. SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL ECONOMY**

**We will take steps to rebuild our livelihood and enjoy the Anishinabe way of life again.**

For countless generations we have been a vital and self-sufficient nation. We as a people remain resilient and determined to reclaim our health and way of life. We seek control over our territory to heal and recover what we have lost of our health, culture, livelihood, and environment.

We will manage the wildlife, issue permits, monitor, maintain, guard, guide, restore, and enforce to ensure appropriate uses on our Anishinabe Territory and to recover the health of our forest. We will create work for our people that is harmonious with our belief system and sacred relationship with our Anishinabe Territory. We will welcome guests to our territory on Anishinabe terms. We will heal our forests and our waterways. We will enjoy the Anishinabe way of life again.

**Reconciliation** requires that Canada and Ontario support us in rebuilding our sustainable and culturally harmonious livelihood within our Anishinabe Territory.

## 9. RECONCILIATION, RESTORATION, AND REPARATIONS

**We demand compensation for our losses and good jobs to heal our people and our forest.**

For several hundred years we have shared the land with others. But government and industry have abused our generosity and acted recklessly. They have taken from us and degraded our homeland with impunity. We have suffered greatly as a result.

We demand a new future in which the highest standards of care are applied to prevent further negative impacts on our land and people and to heal what has been broken. Moving forward in a good way requires that the wrongs of the past are made right.

**Reconciliation** starts with acknowledging and repairing the damage that was done and continues with supporting our vision of our future. This requires restoration of our rights and reparations for our losses.

Together we must **restore** respect for our sovereignty, our role as caretakers of our land, the health of our forests and waterways, the abundance of our wildlife and fisheries, the strength of our way of life, our livelihood, and our health.

We demand **reparations** to compensate for the damage that was done to our people and our environment by decades of logging against our will. Roughly 20 million trees were taken from our Anishinabe Territory against our will in a 20 year timeframe.

## 10. ENFORCEMENT

**We will enforce our Declaration under our own authority. We call on Ontario and Canada to recognize our Declaration.**

We invite Ontario and Canada to join us at a new table to recognize and implement this Declaration under our leadership. We can walk a new path together.

We call on the Governments of Canada and Ontario to respect our Declaration through legislation, and to support us in caring for and restoring our Anishinabe Territory and way of life.

We call on all corporations and people to respect our Declaration.

We call on all nations to stand with us in asserting and enforcing our sovereignty and this Declaration on our Anishinabe Territory.

We look forward to working with you to implement the will of our people.

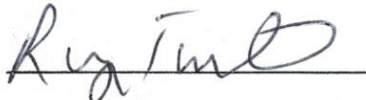
If you disrespect this Declaration, we will have no choice but to take peaceful action, along with the support of our allies, in the forest, markets, legislatures, streets, and courts to assert our sovereignty and rights as the Indigenous people of this land.

Gaa Ki Ke Kamik.

## 11. Amendment

This declaration is irrevocable, but it can be amended, as needed, by a proper community referendum (75% + 1 of votes in favour, and participation by 50% or more of eligible voters) and a quorum of Council.

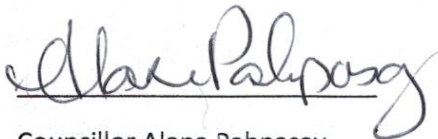
### Asubpeeschoseewagong Netum Anishinabek Chief and Council



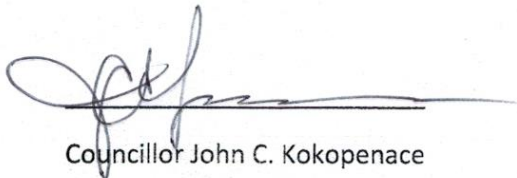
Chief Rudy Turtle



Deputy Chief Cody Keewatin



Councillor Alana Pahpasay

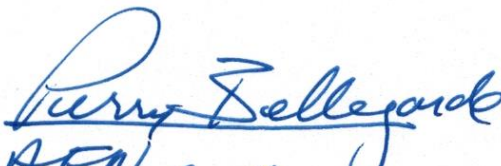


Councillor John C. Kokopenace



Councillor Jason Kejick Sr.

October 9, 2018

Witnessed by:   
AFN  
National Chief