



Media Release

COLDWATER – NARROWS LAND CLAIM SETTLEMENT

Rama First Nation -- December 12, 2012 -- The Chippewa Tri-Council First Nations and Nawash Unceded First Nation have received confirmation that the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), the Hon. John Duncan, has signed the Coldwater-Narrows Land Claim Settlement Agreement, concluding this long outstanding claim. The four First Nation communities are now in the process of receiving full compensation and implementing trust agreements established by their membership as part of a ratification process which took place earlier in the year.

This brings to an end the largest specific land claim in Canadian history. The Coldwater-Narrows Land Claim began more than 30 years ago when research into the claim began. In 1991, the claim was formally filed with the federal government. While Canada initially rejected the claim in 1996, it was eventually accepted in 2002. Ten years of hard negotiations led to this historic outcome.

The Chippewa Tri-Council First Nations, which include the Chippewas of Rama First Nation, the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation and Beausoleil First Nation, all voted to ratify the Settlement Agreement on April 14th, 2012. The Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation ratified their agreement on July 7th, 2012.

A formal signing ceremony with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is tentatively planned for the new year.

Chief Sharon Stinson Henry of Rama First Nation has been a part of the negotiating table since the claim was accepted in August of 2002. She said that the conclusion of the claim is one that has long been a part of her work on behalf of her community. “I am proud to say that our respective past and present Councils played a key role in this negotiation process along with our team. Having attended every negotiation meeting from the outset, I can say that it was a tremendously long and difficult process which will benefit our members and future generations.”

Chief Roland Monague of Beausoleil First Nation echoed Chief Stinson Henry’s comments. “This settlement can really make a difference for the future of our communities”.

Chief Donna Big Canoe, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, is proud of the way the four communities worked together to achieve this outcome. “I have been part of this historic process for a long time, first as a Councillor, now as a Chief. I want to extend my congratulations to all the community leaders, past and present, who have worked so hard on behalf of our communities to arrive at this settlement.”

Chief Scott Lee of the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation said, “The Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation have been honoured to work with the CTC on the Coldwater Narrows Claim. I would like to acknowledge our past and present leadership for all their hard work and commitment in bringing a conclusion to the Coldwater-Narrows Claim. I would also like to acknowledge the commitment of those who worked on the Claim on our behalf and the Membership for their support and direction during this process. The Chippewas of Nawash look forward to the opportunity and benefits the Settlement will provide our people.”

This claim concerns the wrongful taking of the Coldwater-Narrows Reserve in 1836. It was approximately 10,000 acres in size and ran in a narrow strip of land, about 14 miles long by 1.5 miles wide, along an old portage route between present-day Orillia and Matchedash Bay on Lake Huron in Ontario.

For further information, please contact:

Chief Sharon Stinson Henry, Chippewas of Rama First Nation at 705-325-3611
Chief Donna Big Canoe, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation at 705-437-1337
Chief Roland Monague, Beausoleil First Nation at rolymonague@chimissing.ca
Chief Scott Lee, Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation at 519-534-1689