



PRESS RELEASE

AGREEMENT TO RESOLVE BARIL MOSES DISPUTE: CREE NATION OF WASWANIFI CALLS FOR PROTECTION OF ITS LAST INTACT FORESTS

Waswanipi, July 13th 2015. Parallel to today's announcement by the Quebec Government and the Cree Nation Government on the protection of 9134km² of land in Eeyou Istchee, the Cree Nation of Waswanipi calls for complete protection of their proposed Protected areas, and a complete stop to all logging and road building within their last intact areas of traditional land. The community membership unanimously opposed today's announcement related to protection in the Broadback area since it ignores the vast majority of Waswanipi's proposed protected area and opens the door to new logging and road building, thus threatening unique ecological and cultural heritage on Waswanipi land. The additional letter attached to the Agreement for today's signing ceremony to confirm "meaningful discussions" with involvement of the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi was unanimously rejected by Council and affected tallymenn as it does not mention the southern portions of the Broadback which were included in original proposals submitted by the community.

"We have witnessed 90% of our traditional land being heavily logged and fragmented by the industry. Today we declare that the last 10% that is still intact shall remain pristine for the next generations to come" has declared Chief Marcel Happyjack of the Waswanipi Cree Nation. The Protected Areas are viewed as an issue separate from the Baril-Moses Dispute by the community. *"From now on, any trees cut within our last intact forests shall be considered as highly controversial onto the international markets"*.

Waswanipi, a Cree community in the Nord-du-Quebec region, will outreach to international markets asking large wood, pulp and paper customers to avoid buying products coming from the pristine Broadback area. The Broadback Valley is also viewed by the international community as an essential forest in the battle against climate change, storing more carbon dioxide per hectare than the Amazon forest.

Despite more than 10 years of negotiations, meetings, proposals and counterproposals, the Quebec government still refuses to protect the last intact forests on Waswanipi lands, home to endangered woodland caribou and key elements of the Cree way of life. A majority of areas submitted for protection fall above the northern limit that cannot be harvested by Forestry operations and consist of mainly burnt forest.

Following Chief and Band Council, Cree Trappers and General Assembly resolution, the Crees of Waswanipi state their disagreement to their last unaffected traplines being harvested as a solution. Today's announcement will save less than 30% of last pristine areas, they will continue to fight for legal protection of the last standing Intact Forest, and view this agreement as a process undertaken without their Consent.

"Our Community, our Hunting Leaders, our Cree First Nation Council, our NGO allies and the scientific community all agree that the value of our last intact forest is much greater than what the industry can make of it by cutting down our trees, fragmenting our forest and deteriorating our land" declared Chief Happyjack. *"Our connection to the land is at the core of our Cree culture and we will stay committed to protect our last intact forests by communicating directly to the public, international buyers and other stakeholders."*

**For further information please contact:
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