

News Release

For Immediate Release

Canada, Ontario and Williams Treaties First Nations take first step towards a negotiated resolution of *Alderville* litigation

Negotiations to begin towards the joint resolution of longstanding treaty-related dispute

March 27, 2017 Ottawa, ON Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
Ontario Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
Williams Treaties First Nations

The Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario and the seven Williams Treaties First Nations today marked a historic milestone in the spirit of reconciliation, by agreeing to work together toward a shared and just resolution of a longstanding treaty-related dispute.

The parties have agreed to a process to begin formal negotiations to reach a joint resolution of the *Alderville* litigation. Canada and Ontario have also recognized the pre-existing treaty harvesting rights of the Williams Treaties First Nations' members to hunt, trap, fish and gather for food, social and ceremonial purposes in certain areas covered by pre-Confederation treaties. While this is a key first step, much work remains to be done before a negotiated settlement can be reached.

The Williams Treaties were signed in 1923; over 90 years later, questions remain about the making, terms, interpretation and implementation of these treaties. The goal of these negotiations is to reach an enduring settlement that advances reconciliation with the First Nations for the benefit of everyone.

Quick Facts

- The Williams Treaties First Nations are: Alderville First Nation, Beausoleil First Nation, Chippewas of Georgina Island, Chippewas of Rama, Curve Lake First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation and Mississaugas of Scugog Island.
- The *Alderville* litigation was filed by the seven First Nations in 1992 and went to trial in 2012.
- Ensuring the long-term sustainability of natural resources for future generations will be a key priority for all parties.
- No one will lose their private property in this process.
- Consultations with other Indigenous groups, municipalities and other stakeholders will be undertaken during the negotiations.

Quotes

“The Williams Treaties of 1923 form part of Canada’s dark past between the Crown and Indigenous peoples. After well over two decades of seeking to formally engage the government on grievances relating to the Williams Treaties, the Chippewa and Mississauga signatories are now hopeful to create a new relationship with our Federal and Provincial counterparts that is based on honourable conduct, fairness, and good faith. We are cautious in our optimism, yet we are hopeful to honour our ancestors with a negotiated settlement that promotes cultural healing and continuity for the Seven Generations to come.”

Chief Kelly LaRocca, Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Portfolio Chief Williams Treaties First Nations

“This is an historic opportunity to work together in a spirit of co-operation and partnership to settle a dispute that has been outstanding for far too long. Today, we are taking an important first step on a path of reconciliation to renew our relationship with the Williams Treaties First Nations. We are committed to charting our course together toward a fair, respectful and balanced solution for the benefit of the communities and all Canadians.”

*The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, M.D., P.C., M.P.
Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs*

“Our negotiations with the Williams Treaty First Nations will be the first step towards a renewed relationship, working together in the spirit of reconciliation. We are committed to working with Williams Treaties First Nations partners to give full effect to our treaty relationship and ensure that it is a modern and mutually beneficial one.”

*The Honourable David Zimmer
Ontario Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation*

Related Products

Backgrounder: Negotiations with the Williams Treaties First Nations toward a Negotiated Resolution of the *Alderville* Litigation

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