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PRESS RELEASE

Algonquin Chief Harry St. Denis Denounces “Algonquins of Ontario” as a Fiction Created by Ontario and Canada to Extinguish Algonquin Rights and Title

(Kipawa, Algonquin Territory/March 6, 2014) Chief Harry St. Denis today stated, “I agree with Eagle Village Chief Madeleine Paul’s questioning of the so-called Algonquins of Ontario collective. The AOO collectives, including those who call themselves the Mattawa / North Bay Algonquin First Nation and the Antoine First Nation are, in my view, groups of individuals whose claims to be Algonquins and Algonquin First Nations are dubious at best. As an example, I personally met Davie Joannise in the late 1990’s during the days of the Timber Train, and I asked him if he was an Algonquin and he responded at the time that he didn’t have any Indian blood in him at all. Now he is calling himself an Algonquin Chief, I’ve asked myself how did that happen?”

Chief St. Denis also stated, “I’ve seen that Davie Joannise was quoted in the March 1, 2015, Mattawa Recorder accusing the leadership of Pikwakanagan as being ‘traitors to their people’ a real Algonquin Chief would never make such accusations.”

The “Algonquins of Ontario” were recognized as a “collective” by the governments of Ontario and Canada in the process of negotiating with the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan (Golden Lake) the only recognized Algonquin band in Ontario. The governments of Ontario and Canada are now saying there are 10 Algonquin “communities” who form the AOO.

The AOO Eligibility and Enrollment system has been established without any participation from the legitimate Algonquin bands now headquartered on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River, and the definition of an “Algonquin” or “Algonquin Community” or “Algonquin First Nation” under the AOO negotiation process will negatively impact the rights and title of the legitimate citizens of the entire Algonquin Nation, including the Wolf Lake First Nation.

Chief St. Denis continued, “Just because the governments of Ontario and Canada include the Mattawa / North Bay Algonquin First Nation and the Antoine First Nation ‘collectivities’ in Comprehensive Claims negotiations doesn’t mean it is legal.”

On January 23, 2013, the Wolf Lake First Nation (along with the Timiskaming and Eagle Village First Nations) presented a **Statement of Assertion of Rights and Title (SAR)**, to the governments of Ontario, Quebec and Canada. The territory covered by the SAR measures over 34,000 square kilometres, straddles the Quebec-Ontario border along the Upper Ottawa River, with a large portion located in Ontario. The evidence, which has been in preparation for years, shows that these communities are descended from the Algonquin bands that traditionally used and occupied the territory, and that they meet the legal tests for establishing rights and title.

Chief St. Denis added, “We know we have never surrendered our Aboriginal title and rights by treaty or any other means to anywhere in Quebec or Ontario, and because of that we hold unextinguished Aboriginal title. We will not stand idly by while the governments of Ontario and Canada attempt to negotiate the extinguishment of our Algonquin Aboriginal Rights and Title with individuals or ‘collectivities’. There is no such entity as an Algonquin “collectivity” in law!”

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